

Features of sustainable development of a sociocultural space of the Russian Germans in the Altai region (on the example of a foreign language)

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Abstract. Human capital is a prerequisite for sustainable development. The objective form of accumulation, storage, and transmission of human experience is language. This article discusses the transformation of the sociocultural space of the German National District of the Altai region from the point of view of the changes taking place in the German and Russian languages, respectively. The article emphasizes that a distinctive feature of this environment at the language level is the penetration of words from one language into another. Germanisms are investigated in the historical aspect, as well as at the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical levels. As a result, the need to preserve a special socio-cultural space on the territory of the German National District of the Altai Region becomes obvious. Preserving the diversity of cultures and languages is a necessary condition for the further development of human society.

Keywords: sociocultural space, German National District, language, diversity, cultural diversity

1. Introduction

In the regions of the Siberian Federal District, there are about 160 thousand ethnic Germans, who are the descendants of several waves of resettlement occurred in the XIX-XX centuries. The largest diasporas live in the Altai, Omsk, and Novosibirsk regions. The Germans are ranked second in their national composition [1].

As of today, about 50 thousand ethnic Germans live in the Altai region. Therefore, a whole district with compact residence of the Russian ethnic Germans has developed in our region. The area of the German National District (GND), which is located in the northwestern part of the Altai Region, is 1,450 km². The economic potential of GND is great and significant for the entire Altai region. The main activity of the district is agriculture, namely the production of grain, sunflower, milk, and meat. The territory of farms of the region is 133,949 hectares of agricultural land. The territory is located in the zone of risky farming, namely in the Kulunda steppe. The area of arable land amounted to 115,140 hectares, including 60,170 hectares in agricultural organizations, 54,970 hectares in peasant farms (at the beginning of 2018) [2].

2. Materials and Methods

The main methods of our research are the general scientific methods: analysis (in particular, analysis of the literature on the research topic), synthesis; a historical method, comparison, abstraction, concretization, generalization. We also used a number of empirical methods, such as a survey, questioning, interview.

3. Results

Note that the GND is of great importance not only in the economic sphere of our region. GND is not only an area with great economic potential, it also has a certain socio-cultural status. A district can be considered as a local organism with certain social and cultural components. After all, the district is not limited only to the territory, it is a special sociocultural space established in the district that ignores all the boundaries.

Victor Tomenko, Governor of the Altai Region, who visited the Russian-German cultural notes in his welcoming speech the importance of preserving the ethno-cultural environment of the Russian Germans [3]. In particular, he states, “The socio-cultural space is a single whole, the components of which are united by common values. It not only forms special human types and styles of human behavior, but also unites people inhabiting it with a sense of special experience of space” [4].

In our opinion, the socio-cultural space cannot be static, it is in constant development. Culture is an important mechanism of human interaction, which helps people to live in their environment, to preserve the unity and integrity of the community, while interacting with other nations. Language – as an element of culture – is an objective form of accumulation, storage, and transmission of human experience.

Therefore, we want to consider the transformation of the sociocultural space of the GND in terms of changes taking place in the German and Russian languages, respectively. As a result of contacts between different cultures on the territory of this region, a peculiar transformation of the socio-cultural space occurs. It is reflected in the language. Persistent multilingualism is characterized by a peculiar ethno-cultural environment. A distinctive feature of this environment at the language level is the penetration of words from one language into another. “Neologism is a new word or expression, as well as a new meaning of the old word” [5, p. 409]. The enrichment of the vocabulary of a foreign language with words-neologisms from another language is a continuous process. Germanisms (the words borrowed from the German language), like other borrowed words and expressions, came into the Russian language in a period of several centuries, as the centuries-old history of Russian-German interaction testifies.

At different historical stages, Germanisms played a different role and had a different emotional tint. Officially, several such stages could be highlighted. First of all, the period from the middle of III BC to the 1st century AD. During this period, the contact between the ancient Slavic and ancient Germanic tribes was due to the territorial proximity between them in the area of the Oder Basin. Integration between languages occurs in the sphere of trade and life. Household sphere contained the name of household items (dish *блюдо* – *biutta*, board *доска* – *tisc*) and military affairs (regiment *полк* – *fulkaz*, helmet *шлем* – *helmaz*, shaft *вал* – *wuolkn*), domestic animals and plants (donkey *осел* – *asilis*, radishes *редис* – *reddis*, onions *лук* – *lauka*). Most often, they became the subject of trade. From the sphere of trade, the ancient Slavs adopted the name of the coins and the verb “buy.” At that period, the process of language integration is conditioned by equal relations between two language families and information exchanges between them.

During the Middle Ages (XIII-XVI), borrowing into the Russian language took place during the active colonization of the neighboring territories by the Teutonic Order. During this process, the Russian-speaking population enriches its vocabulary: *фоготь* (der Vogt), shpilman *шпильман* (der Spielmann). In the same period, the first foreign experts arrive on the territory of Moscow state. They bring with them their language and traditions. Among the specialists who arrived were the masters of mining, gunsmiths, the foundry workers of cannons, gold and silver masters, techniques for the explosion of fortifications.

Thanks to the activity and active foreign and domestic policy of Peter I, the XVIII century becomes the dawn of the active entry of Germanism into the Russian language. During this period, there are three main ways of borrowing words from the German language: (1) from translations of scientific or etiquette books; (2) from the speech of foreign specialists – officers, engineers or craftsmen who served in the Russian service and did not know the Russian language; (3) from the speech of the Russian people sent on the initiative of Peter I abroad, where they studied and worked often for many years [6].

The newly arrived foreigners are beginning to actively study the Russian language for more correct contact with their wards, but do not forget about their native language. Social interaction between people leads to multicultural and information exchange. Due to direct communication with native speakers, the Western terminology comes to the Russian language, since there are no analogues in the native language for some of the symbols. These words include *scale*, *dial*, *barrier*, and many others. The borrowed words were russified, modified, and acquired a new meaning: a fine (die Strafe) meant any kind of punishment, including a whip. In the Russian language, this word becomes a monetary punishment. In addition, the mentality of the Russian and German peoples come together, they are largely beginning to understand each other, which is reflected in the replenishment of the phraseological piggy bank. Some German proverbs and stable expressions come to the Russian language: *на голову побить неприятеля* (*beat the enemy in the head*) — aufs Haupt schlagen; *выиграть битву, баталию* (*win the battle*) – dem Feind eine Schlacht abgewinnen; *таки пришел в себя* (*still came to life*) – Er ist wieder zu sich gekommen.

Similar processes of borrowing words and phrases from the German language occurred in further periods. For many centuries, Russia had close foreign relations with Germany. In the first half of the 20th century, the ideology of communism seemed to pave the way for a huge number of borrowings, but this did not happen. As in Germany, the capitalist system, alien to our ideology, reigned. But despite this fact, expressions consonant with this period are included in the Russian language: *пионер-движение* (the pioneer movement), *сверхлевый* (the superleft), *целиком и полностью* (fully and completely), and others.

In the difficult period of the Great Patriotic War, Germanisms were unpopular, but their use was inevitable in the territory occupied by the Nazi troops: *комендатура* (commandant's office), *гауптвахта* (guardhouse), *оберст* (oberst), *фюрер* (Führer), *долметчер* (dolmetcher).

The subsequent stages of the history are characterized by a more active influx of Anglicisms, displacing the Germanisms. Nevertheless, the borrowings from the German language are found at the present stage.

4. Discussion

Like any borrowing, a Germanism often undergoes a process of russification, masking them under the Russian words. Several levels of russification could be distinguished (phonetic, lexical, and grammatical), the essence of which was reduced to the changes necessary for ease of pronunciation of borrowed words.

The German diphthongs are russified as follows: *eu* [oops *ой*] is transformed into *ей*: фейерверк fireworks (Feuerwerk). The stress changes, which in German is fixed on the first syllable of the root or prefix. This is not typical for the Russian language: full house *анила'з* (*'Anschlag*). The reduction of vowels and consonants occurs: fine *штраф* (*Strafe*), etude *этюд* (*Etüde*), scale *масштаб* (*Maßstab*). Replacement, loss of consonants from German words, their harder pronunciation also occur: *пациент* (*Patient*), *ритуал* (*Ritual*). Adaptation and change of gender in the nouns: academy *академия* (*die Akademie, f.*), model *модель* (*das Modell, n.*). At the lexical level, various word-building adaptations occur, up to a change in the lexical meaning of the word: hose *шланг* (*die Schlange*).

Based on the fact that in a certain sociocultural space the cultural and linguistic specificity of the peoples living in it is reflected in a special way, the dialogue of cultures reflected in the language is inevitable. The reverse process occurs. Namely, the German language borrows some Russian words; however, they are poorly acclimatized in speech. First of all, these are very stereotypical: *die*

Balalaika, die Uschanka, die Glasnost. As well as names of certain products, drinks, dishes: *die Blini, der Kwas, der Borschtsch.*

The words borrowed from the Russian language go through similar adaptation processes, namely, the spelling, gender, and sometimes the meaning of a word change (*die Babuschka*).

Currently, 336 students study the German undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs in the Altai State Agrarian University (data for the 2018-2019 academic year). In the survey as part of this study, 50 students from different faculties took part. Respondents called words that came into Russian from German. Each of the respondents could name from 3 to 12 borrowed words, mostly they were nouns, the respondents could not name other parts of speech. The most common word is “sandwich.” It was found in 90% of the students surveyed. The vocabulary from almost all spheres of our life was named: from 2 to 4 named words from the agricultural vocabulary (landscape, plow, soil, peat), from military terminology (lieutenant, armor, ranger, camp), medical terms (paramedic, syringe, tablet, bandage). Also, the well-known borrowings were called: hairdresser, accountant, tie, backpack, and others. The German borrowing in the Russian language aroused great interest among students.

The German language replenished and enriched the Russian language throughout the entire process of its historical development. The “borrowed words are such foreign words that are fully included in the lexical system of the Russian language. They have acquired the necessary lexical meaning, phonetic design, grammatical features peculiar to the Russian language, used in various styles and written in letters of the Russian alphabet” [7, p. 142]. The borrowed words have become part of the Russian language, they are understandable to speakers, do not cause difficulties in pronunciation, are used in various styles of speech, sometimes it is not easy to replace them at all with other words, and they do not impede communication.

5. Conclusion

Borrowing is an integral part of the process of functioning and historical change of the language, one of the main sources of vocabulary replenishment. The borrowed vocabulary reflects the facts of ethnic contacts, social, economic, and cultural ties between linguistic communities. Here, we are dealing with an active creative process of enriching the vocabulary of a language. If an object of borrowing, i.e. a concept or a new thing is suggested by the needs of society, then the process itself is carried out in a language that assimilates a new word.

Considering the rich history of mutual penetration of Russian and German cultures at the level of the language, the need to preserve a special sociocultural space in the territory of the GND of Altai region as a source of mutual enrichment and development of the national culture of ethnic Russian Germans and other peoples inhabiting this unique territory becomes obvious. GND can be characterized by a special multi-ethnicity, dialogicity, which fills the social and cultural environment of the district with new multicultural content. Multiculturalism contributes to cultural diversity, it can be regarded as tolerance towards a different culture. At the same time, it could be seen as an understanding and knowledge of this different culture, which differs from personal culture. The culture of another people is identified with the mentality, traditions and customs, rules of conduct, religious traditions, moral principles. Therefore, the interpenetration of neighboring cultures leads to enrichment and development, to filling with new content of each of them. It is a mistake to consider any culture as a dominant one.

Preserving the diversity of cultures and languages is a necessary condition for the further development of human society. Ethnic diversity should be appreciated as a unique component of the sociocultural space. Cultural diversity inherent in any region contributes to the direct enrichment of the language and its own culture with it.

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