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FORMATION OF AMERICAN ENGLISH LITERARY STANDARD AND CULTURAL FACTORS

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The formation of the American national literary standard had been completed by the mid-1880s. The major historical events in the 19th century – the Westward Expansion and the influence of the Frontier, immigration to the United States, the Civil War and its consequences served as crucial factors in this process. In the 17th c., Indian loans, British dialectisms and archaisms were the hallmarks of American English. In the 18th c., the number of Americanisms extended. In the 19th c., signatures of American English reached their climax both in quantity and quality.

Key words: American English, cultural factors, loan, literary standard, vocabulary.

Кріцберг Р.Я. Формування американської літературної норми та культурні фактори. Формування літературної норми американського варіанту було завершено у середині 1880 рр. Головні чинники цього процесу були західна експансія та вплив кордонів оселення, імміграція до США, Громадянська війна та її наслідки. У 17 ст. індіанські запозичення, британські діалектизми та архаїзми відзначали американський варіант. У 18 ст. розширюється база американізмів. У 19 ст. поступово зростають специфічні маркери мови США у кількісному та якісному планах.

Ключові слова: американський варіант англійської мови, запозичення, культурні фактори, літературна норма, словниковий склад.

Крицберг Р.Я. Формирование американской литературной нормы и культурные факторы. Формирование литературной нормы американского варианта было завершено в середине 1880х гг. Западная экспансия и влияние границы поселений, иммиграция в США, Гражданская война и ее последствия были основными движущими силами этого процесса. В 17 в. американкий вариант отмечали индейские заимствования, британские диалектизмы и архаизмы. В 18 в. разширяется база американизмов. В 19 в. постепенно возрастают специфические маркеры языка США в количественном и качественном планах.

Ключевые слова: американский вариант английского языка, заимствование, культурные факторы, литературная норма, словарный состав.

Development of American English in diachrony and formation of national literary standard have been inadequately studied in sociolinguistics. When American ‘deviations’ from ‘correct’ British usage formed a new model of English, how this process had been developing and reflected in American literature, what extra-linguistic factors promoted these changes – all those issues condition the topicality of the present paper.

The aim of the research is bringing to light the cultural factors which induced the formation of the American literary standard in the 19th century along with dynamics of the language changes. The object-matter is the process of development of American English in diachrony from 17th through 19th cc., the subject-matter includes American language markers on lexical, grammar levels, and spelling of the forms under consideration. American literary sources of the 17-19th centuries serve as material for this paper.

The time when American English (AE) came into its own is a moot point. D. Simpson considers the process completed by 1850: “Thanks to the efforts of two generations of linguistic pioneers and to spectacular rise in the national self-confidence America had by about 1850 a version of English that was recognizably its own” [10, p. 10]. H. Mencken specifies the time-period differently: “From 1814 to 1861 the influence of

the great open spaces was enormous and during those gay and hopeful and melodramatic days all traditional characteristics of American English were developed" [9, p. 148]. They both, however, emphasize the external factors which brought into play language characteristics reflected in literature.

Still, the sweeping historical changes of the 19th century can't be downplayed to 'open spaces' and 'rise in the national self-confidence' only. The peak of immigration to the US from the 1820s to the 1920s with some 37 million of people is unlikely to recur [8, p. 8]. In its turn, the Westward migration that began to take form in the 1840s, because of depression in the Midwest, was different from anything that had gone before. Within twenty years, it swelled to more than a quarter of a million people crossing a distance of 1800 miles. In 1890, the age of Frontier was officially pronounced closed, but its consequences affected American life, institutions, and the national mentality long after that. F. Turner defended the idea of "ever-expanding Frontier" as of great account for all that: "...the advance of American settlement westward explains American development. The American institutions have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people" [4, p. 81]. F. Turner's view has been supported and challenged since then by historians who, as J. Crevecoeur, called the Frontier "a unifying element in American nationalism" [8, p. 8], or, as H. Jones wrote that American culture "arises from the interplay of two great sets of forces – the Old World and the New" [ibid, p. 12]. Anyway, the impact of the Frontier on American life can't be underscored.

Another event that left a profound impression on the national conscience and history was the Civil War. Growing dissension between the North and South had led to two divergent societies based on conflicting economies and ways of life. This contrast was so sharp, the distinction between two parts was so deep that some historians spoke of "divergent civilizations", "two political aliens" and "the bond of diverse States" or even, as E. Pollard put it, "the forced alliance and rough companionship of two very different peoples" [4, p. 293].

The Reconstruction period after the war took some time. Economic and social progress in the South and signs of its recovery grew on in mid-1880s. It was actual reunion of the country, a necessary provision for one common language to function, with close economic ties, single currency system on undivided territory. Here a few historical parallels can be drawn: the decay of feudalism and the rise of an absolute monarchy with a high degree of political centralization in Britain of the late 15th century that contributed to predominance of the national language over dialects; unification of France in one nation in the 16th century and the rise of literary French; the restoration of territorial integrity of Spain after the re-conquest of Granada in 1492 and the formation of the Spanish national tongue in the 16th century; the end of the feudal disintegration of Germany and the formation of the German literary standard late in the 18th century.

Hence the analysis of extra-linguistic background of that time speaks for moving the period of formation of the American national literary standard ahead of the dates suggested by D. Simpson and H. Mencken: from 1850s or 1860s to 1880s.

The study of American literary sources of the 17–19th cc. shows how this process had been developing.

17th century: The language of the earliest American literature does not differ much from that of England. Captain J. Smith was the first who gave picturesque presentation of a New World in his memorable works "A Map of Virginia" (1612), "A Description of New England" (1616), and "The General History of Virginia" (1624). His nascent American Language does not differ much from that of British English with the exception of new names of the Indian origin. "A Description of New England" is preceded by a vocabulary with 76 entries in total: "Because many doe desire to knowe the maner of their language, I have inserted these few words" [1, p. 136]. This collection contains native names of fish (*Copotone* "sturgeon"), weapon (*Attawp* "a bow"), numerals, household goods (*Matchcores* "skins or garments", *Tussan* "beds"), tools (*Accowpets* "shears"), topographic and astronomic names (*Chepsin* "land", *Musses* "woods", *Suckahanna*

"water", *Pummahumps* "stars", *Keskowghes* "suns"), miscellaneous notions (*Kekughes* "life", *Righcomoughes* "deaths", *Marrapough* "enemies", *Netoppew* "friends", *Maskapow* "the worst of the enemies", *Mawchik chammay* "the best of friends") [ibid]. The author includes also the figures of speech indispensable to survive in the surrounding and accompanied by the English translation, a guide for a 17th century reader: "What call you this", "In how many daies will there come hether any more English ships?", "I am verie hungrie, what shall I eate?", 'Run you then to the king…and bid him come hither","Get you gone and come again quickly!" [ibid]. Of this vocabulary only 3 items have survived up to present-day: *Moccasin*, *Tomahacks* (*tomahawk*), and *Netoppew* (*netop*) "salutation to an Indian by the American colonists". The rest is silence.

It goes without saying that Native American borrowings are taken at their phonetic value, far from anglicized standard form and grate on a modern reader's untrained ears as an alphabet soup. Thus *Chechinquamins* is modern *chinquapin* "dwarf chestnut", *Pawcohiscora* is *"hickory"*, *Tockawhoughe – tuckahoe* "edible plant or root arrow arum", *Aroughcun – raccoon*, *Mussascus – musquash* "muskrat". The following examples from Captain J. Smith's works illustrate the actual usage:

"In all these places is a severall commander…and their assistants or their Elders called Caw-cawwassoighes' (*cockarouse* "senior citizen, an elder, a person of authority)".

"...This they call Chechinquamins, which they esteeme a great daintie...". (*chinquapin* "dwarf chestnut").

"The water will be coloured as milk which they cal Pawcohiscora and keepe it for their vse ...(*hickory*). *The chiefe roote they haue for food is called Tockawhoughe ..."* (*Tuckahoe* "the plant floating arum").

"Pocones is a small fruit that groweth in the mountains which being dryed and beate in powder turneth red (now *poke, pokeweed* "a tall North American plant used in dyeing)".

"There is a beast they call Aroughcun much like as badger, but useth to live on trees as squirrels doe" (*raccoon*).

"A small beast they have they call Assapanick but we call them flying squirrels". (now assapan "a flying squirrel Sciuropterus volucella").

"They plant also Maracocks a wild fruit like a lemmon which also increase infinitely". (now more *maypop* "passion flower"). [1, pp. 136–45].

W. Bradford's language in "Of Plymouth Plantation" (1630) does not reveal peculiar American features [2], apart from a few British archaisms and dialectic words which later came into disuse on the British Isles but were preserved in Standard American English, as *estate "class, society"* (the last usage in Britain was in 1643), *lusty "strong"* (1692):

"... by which means he was very helpful to their outward estates, and so was every way as a common father unto them...".

"… a lusty young man called John Howland".

"But a lusty sea man which steered bade those which rowed ...".

"So he bid them be of good cheer and row lustily" [ibid].

W. Bradford uses the word *corn* as *"Indian corn"* in American sense (not British "*grain*"), there was little English grain before 1735, and corn was the main cereal for master, servant, and beast. J. Filson [3] much later in "The Discovery and settlement of Kentucke" (1784) writes:

"Col. Harrod has lately experienced the production of small grain and affirms that he had 35 bushels of wheat and 55 bushels of rye per acre" [3, p. 67].

In the second half of the 17th c. J. Hammond in his "Leah and Rachel, The Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia, and Mary-land" (1658) uses *hog* in a new American sense *"an animal for slaughter"*. In general usage it means *"domesticated species, especially castrated male pig, as well as wild species"*:

"Pleasant in observing their stocks and flockes of Cattle, Hoggs and Poultry grazing, whisking and skipping in their sights" [6, p. 25].

Very few American words are used by J. Alsop in his "A Character of the Province of Mary-land"

(1666), mostly those are Indian names of plants & animals:

"The thre main commodities this country affords for trafique are Tobacco, Furrs, and Flesh, Furrs and Skins as beavers, Otters, Musk-Rats, Rackoons, Wild-Cats and Elke or Buffaloe".

"The Elke, the Cat of the Mountain, the Rackoon, the Fox, the Beaver, the Otter, the Possum ... and several others inhabit here in Mary-Land in several droves and troops" [ibid, pp. 541–549].

The author notes here: "

The sea, the bays the Chesapeake and Delaware and generally all the rivers do abound with fish of several sorts, for many of them we have no English names, except sturgeons" [ibid, p. 542].

Between 1675 and 1677 one of the most devastating conflicts in the history of the New England Frontier in the 17th c. broke out: King Philip's War. The advancing Puritan settlements were encroaching on the Indian tribal and hunting grounds, vital to sustain their living. The Indians who submitted to English rule, faced humiliation and servile dependency. The tinderbox was sparkled when King Philip, the sachem of Wampanoags, was forced to humiliating treaty denying his people hunting grounds without which they would starve.

This ravaging and sorrowful time is reflected in "Narratives of the Indian Wars" 1675–1699" [7]. J. Easton in his "A Relacion of the Indyan Warre" (1675) notes that "one tenth of adult males in Massachusetts were killed or captured, two third of towns & villages suffered directly from Indian raids" [ibid, p. 15].

Another anonymous author, known only as N.S., merchant from Boston, in his work "The present state of New England with respect to the Indian war" [ibid] presents "a list of the number of the English slain & wounded in the battle with the Indians on the 19th December 1675": wounded & slain in all – 207, according to this list. The author gives explanations *"for the better understanding some Indian Words which are necessarily used in the following Narrative the reader is desired to take notice*: *swamp signifies a Moorish place overgrown with woods and bushes but soft like a quagmire or Irish bog over which horse cannot at all or English foot (without great difficulty) passé ".*

"A Sachem is a Prince King or Chief of an ancient family over whom he is an absolute Monarch".

"A Squaw sachem is a Princess or Queen".

"Wigwam are Indian huts or houses" [ibid].

M. Rowlandson in her "Narratives of the Indian Wars" (1675–1699) is more prolific in using Indian borrowings [6]. She was a daughter of the local minister in Lancaster and her book was very well known. No contemporary New England publication commanded more attention in Great Britain than this. The story goes about M. Rowlandson's abduction by Indians and her misfortune as their captive. Here we find *sagamore* "Indian chief", *wigwam, squaw* "Indian woman", *papoose* "Indian child", *samp* "corn broken into coarse rice-like form, boiled & eaten with milk & sugar", *wampum* "small cylindrical beads", *powwow* "quack", *sannup* "Indian husband":

"In the morning when they understood that my child was dead they sent for me home to my Masters Wigwam who was a Saggamore and married kings Phillips wives sister".

"There were many hundreds old and young, some sick and some lame… many had Papooses at their backs, the greatest number at this time with us were Squaws".

" ... as well as for the Indians with their Squaws and Children ...traveled with all they had, bag and baggage".

" …and on Mondays they set their Wigwams on fire and away they went".

"He as dressed in the Holland shirt, with great laces sewed at the tail of it he had his silver buttons his white stockins, his Garters were hung around with shilling and he had girdles of Wampom upon his head and shoulders".

"God would have found a way for the English to have passed this River, as well as for the indians with their Squaws and Children, and all their luggage".

"... and said I must go back again with her ...

and she called her Sannup".

" ... I asked him to give me a little of his broth...he took a dish and gave me one spoonful of Samp". [ibid, pp. 434-468].

In the text there are few British archaisms and provincialisms: *sick* "ill" (as predicative), *mighty* "strong, big"*; baggage* and *luggage* are used interchangeably contrary to the modern standard. The first American compounds made their way in the literature: *Indian corn, rattle-snake*:

"Some found ears of Indian corn, some found Ground-nut".

"I put five Indian-corns in the room of it: which Corns were the greatest provisions I had in my travel for one day".

" I must go with them five or six miles down the River into a Mighty Thicket or Brush".

"They would eat Horses guts, Dogs, Skunks, Rattle-snakes; yea ..." [ibid].

Thus apart from very few proper American compounds, British archaisms and dialectic words, that later upgraded their status to standard vocabulary, Indian borrowings were the hallmarks of American language and literature in the 17th c.

18th century: Spelling habits of this time are far from being stable. Sometimes they follow the British tradition, sometimes – a new American one. C. Mather in "Magnalia Christi Americana" uses *honor, traveled, judgment* [6, p. 281], C. Colden in "The History of the Five Indian Nations" interchanges *neighborhood, judgment, center* (AE) with *neighbouring, imbellished, honour* (BE) [ibid, p. 406].

B. Franklin who lived long in Europe continues this trend in his "The Autobiography": e.g. *unfavorable, Libelling, Judgments, Labour, Neighbors, favorable, honored* [ibid, pp. 61–116].

Things began to change in the end of the century. G. Washington should be given a credit for contributing much to the rising American spelling tradition with uniform orthography in his works:

"...another anonymous production addressed more to feelings and passions, that to reason and judgment of the Army…I wanted a disposition...consistent with your own honor and the dignity of the Army to make known your grievances...That their endeavors to discover and establish funds for this purpose, have been unwearied...the sincere affection I feel for an Army, I have so long had the honor to command…to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor..." [ibid, p. 80].

R. Beverley in "History and Present State of Virginia" (1705) employs numerous Indian loans and a few American compounds in describing nature and the American Indians: *skunk, possum, cockarouse, bald-eagle, muskrat, mock-bird. Cabin, creek, corn* in American senses are also found in his work, but apart from those, Americanisms are rare [ibid, pp. 550–559].

In the works of the second half of the 18th century, such as "The Hasty Pudding" (1796) by J. Barlow, "The Discovery, Settlement and present State of Kentucky" (1784) by J. Filson, "Travels Through North and South Carolina" (1791) by W. Bartram the American vocabulary is expanding although restricted to agricultural and everyday names: *Johny-cake, hoe-cake, corn-house, corn-stalk, husking* [ibid].

19th century: The beginning of the period of growth of American English outlined in Noah Webster's "Dissertation on the English Language" (1789) is attributed to W. Irving, the actual founder of American literary tradition. Although he mainly follows the British standard, his works, such as "History of New York" (1809), "Sketch Book" (1820), "A Tour on the Prairies" (1835) abound in American compounds connected with plants and animals of the New World, Indian, Spanish and Dutch loans, words employed in peculiar American senses, British archaisms and provincialisms survived in the US, e.g. *witch-hazel, tree-toad, whippoorwill, powwow, doughnut, cruller, sassafras, tulip tree, cabin etc.* Still, his spelling is of irregular character, now British, now American.

This trend – the mix of American vocabulary with British grammar and orthography is visible in the language of such writers, as M. Birbeck ("Notes on a Journey in America", 1817), T. Dwight ("Travels in New England and New York", 1821), Th. Thorpe ("The Big Bear of Arkansas", 1841) and others [4].

A prominent place in development of American

standard that marked a new stage in the American literary tradition belongs to D. Crockett, A. Ward, J. Lowell, and F. Bret Hart. The language of their works in 1830s-1870s, with "no-holds-barred" regarding American spelling, vocabulary, and grammar ushered the M. Twain's era. The most outstanding US writer was the first to make a masterly use of a genuine American English. The climax of his works falls on late 1870s-mid-1880s ("The Adventures of Tom Sawyer", 1876, "The Prince and the Pauper", 1882, "Life on the Mississippi", 1882, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn", 1884, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", 1889) that quite agrees with ripe historical conditions for American English to come into its own.

Apart from historical and literary research, the quantitative analysis of coinage of Americanisms has been carried out [5: 176–79]. The whole period of AE development was divided into 34 time spans (from 1600 through 1930, by decades), and 2624 Americanisms were put in the corresponding decades depending on the time of their coinage. It turned out that the most intensive replenishment of AE stock had been going on from 1820s reaching its maximum by 1880-1890s. And this result agrees well with the literary analysis and considerations on the cultural factors.

The prospects of the further research lie in more detailed analysis of American literary sources of that period to specify the dynamics of the American English development.

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