

Classification of borrowings from Italian according to the fields of activity

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Rezumat

În acest articol autoarea abordează tema cuvintelor împrumutate, care este un fenomen caracteristic pentru toate limbile și care a fost întotdeauna o sursă importantă de dezvoltare a vocabularului limbii engleze. Unele cuvinte împrumutate se numesc articole și fenomene noi, altele, înlocuiesc concepte deja cunoscute de către omologii lor străini, care, mai târziu, au devenit neclare din cauza asimilării lor cu cuvintele native.

The problem of borrowings is a topical one nowadays. At present many languages are undergone to this process. Science and technology develop today in an increased speed, and new words are created rather frequently and are later loaned by other languages. Moreover, borrowings show the history of the development of a particular language, the relationships of its bearers with other peoples.

Italian is a European Romance language and is one that contributed many words to the enlargement of the English language vocabulary. „Next to French, Latin and Scandinavian English owes the majority of its borrowed words to Italian.” [3, p. 311]. Borrowings came from Italian as a result of the economic, political, commercial and cultural relations between these two countries. Italy is the motherland of the Renaissance, a period in the history of the humankind that greeted the revival of the antiquity traditions and art. First Italian words entered English during this period, others were introduced later.

„The impact of the Italian language on English was greater in the time of Shakespeare. This supposition may be proved by the fact that the word *Signor* was used in addressing all persons not only Italians.” [2, p.105].

Words borrowed from Italian may be divided into several groups according to the field of activity they belong to. These groups are as the following:

- The first group includes words that are connected with art and came during the epoch of the Renaissance. These words are: *concert, opera, solo, duet, soprano, tenor, colonnade, balcony*, etc. As we may see, the majority of these words belongs to the area of music.
- Another group unites words dealing with the military services and actions: „*corporal, alarm, battalion, infantry, citadel, campaign*, etc. The majority of these words entered English through French in the 16th and 17th centuries.” [1, p. 105].
- The third group gathers words connected with culture and different spheres of life specific to Italians as, for example, *artisan, bandit, lottery, duel, umbrella, parasol*, etc.
- The fourth group represents words connected with foods peculiar to Italian cuisine: *spaghetti, macaroni, pizza, ravioli*, etc.
- The fifth group includes words related to the musical instruments as *cello* (from *violoncello* [actually *cello* is the Italian diminutive suffix]), *trombone, piano*.
- The sixth group includes words naming plants especially those used by people in cooking as *zucchini, broccoli, kohlrabi*. The last word was modified greatly in the process of entering English: its initial form is the Italian word *cavalli rape*.

Italian language contributed many words connected with music as *trio, aria, alto, adagio, staccato, crescendo contralto, basso* and many others. This area of borrowed words is the most important and numerous. Another famous word is *prima donna*.

„In the 14th century English borrowed such words as *ducato, florin, pistol, alarm* (it is considered to come from the Italian phrase *all'arme* meaning *all to arms*), *cartridge*, etc.” [3,

p.312].

Many Italian words entered English through French and therefore had been modified according to the grammatical standards of French. „Due to this fact the majority of the borrowed words could not be recognized as Italian ones because of the modified form. The following examples demonstrate the facts mentioned above: *charlatan, grotesque, bankrupt, brigade, gala, colonel, rebuff*, etc.” [4, p. 32].

The following list includes characteristic Italian words that have been borrowed directly from Italy, but some of these words do not name new concepts but replace them: *archipelago, catacomb, incognito, dilettante, influenza, fiasco, manifest*, etc.

„Many Italian words when entered English had so greatly been modified that it is very hard to define their origin. The process of Anglicizing made them undistinguishable from the native words. The following words illustrate this fact: *cash, deposit, sentinel, chicory, pilot, carnival, gallery, laundry, group*, etc. Some Italian words are so popular that are used in jargon and slang as, for example, *Rialto* for *Broadway*, *ducat* for *admission ticket*.” [2, p. 105].

In general, the majority of the words borrowed from Italian as well from French and Spanish became international and are widely used in many European and non-European languages.

Thus, basing on the facts mentioned above we may say that Italian was a language that had great impact on the development and enlargement of the English language vocabulary. Words borrowed from Italian were of paramount importance to English and served to its enrichment in new terms in the fields of music, art and military.

Bibliography

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