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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 200 (2015) 324 – 329

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

THE XXVI ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, 27–30 October 2015

Russian Nationally-biased Units in the Sphere of Transportation in German Travel Notes of the XIX Century

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Abstract

The article considers words reflecting nationally-biased units in the sphere of transportation (in Russia in XIX c.) basing on German travel notes: means of transportation, people connected with the organization of cabbings, travel documents, etc. Methods to introduce these Russian words into German texts and their functions are investigated.

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Peer-review under responsibility of National Research Tomsk State University.

Keywords: Nationally-biased units, exotic lexical units, travel notes

1. Introduction

In the XIX century Russia had an immense territory stretching from the Baltic sea in the West to the Pacific ocean in the East. A travel through the whole Russian Empire took months. Besides huge distances, other difficulties for a traveler in Russia were: the severe climate, geographical peculiarities, the need to be on a way for a long time (which includes travelling not only at a day-time, but also at night), a probability to be attacked by robbers in nooks, etc. Russian distances were particularly perceptible for foreigners who came from Western Europe. They got into an absolutely different world. The world deprived of the comfort they got used to and filled with everyday difficulties and, sometimes, dangers. But, along with this, this world is interesting in its own way, and it gives an unforgettable life experience of a longtime travelling.

During the XIX century foreigners actively visited Russia. Opinions and evaluations of these people are definitively subjective. Nevertheless, a foreign look on Russia is critically important in order to be fully aware of our

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roads, means of transportation and communication tools at this period. Thus, a historian V.Y. Kurbatov, who wrote an introductory article to the book of J. de Maistre «Religion and manners of Russians», pointed out: «A foreigner in Russia is a separate issue that often is painful for a national identity. His heart raises its hackles and rushes to contradict because of any criticism of original foundations. Meanwhile, sometimes you can see yourself in real through the eyes of others» (Kurbatov, 2010, page 5).

Many phenomena and processes that took place in Russia in the beginning of XIX c. were embodied in travel notes of west-european travelers who have visited Russia. Among those who visited Russia were the British, the Germans, the French, the Austrians, the Swiss and others. These people had a possibility to have their eyes on peculiarities of communication tools and means of transportation, as well as conditions of travelling on Russian roads, and evaluate them, and compare everything with what they had at their motherlands. In particular, there is a large amount of travel notes written in German among those materials that were not translated into Russian, and they are practically unknown in our country.

2. Research design

The focus of our attention in travel notes written in German of the given period are Russian words that reflect nationally-biased units of such a sphere as “the sphere of transportation”. Primarily, it is the case of an exotic vocabulary. It includes foreign words dealing with life peculiarities of the given people which call phenomena, objects and notions that describe its life, manners and culture in different historical epochs (Zelenin, 1992, page 1). Exoticisms are fairly close to such a notion of linguistics and cultural studies and the theory of translation as nationally-biased units which compose culture-specific vocabulary. However, according to S. Vlachov and S. Florin, the notion of nationally-biased unit is broader than exotism, as it includes not only names of foreign phenomena and objects, but also specific expressions like for example addresses, greetings, interjections, etc. (Vlachov, Florin, 2009, page 55). Thus, exoticisms are one of the types of nationally-biased units (in this article these are denotations of means of transportation and travel documents). It is important that these are units with a national and cultural markedness.

As concerns the genre of travel notes, to have a foreign word is its characteristic, especially when a travel of a foreign author is described. But an appearance of such a word in a text may be different depending on several factors (a social status of an author, a degree of his education, the author’s social status, career interests, language skills, etc.). The data for our study are travel notes of 9 different authors of XIX c. (with the total volume of about 2700 pages of a printed text). They describe travels to the wide variety of parts in Russia, from Saint-Petersburg to Kyakhta at the boundary of China. Since travels, particularly in Russia, were always associated with considerable distances, German authors could not stay away from this sphere of transportation: all the authors to a greater or lesser degree obligatory used nationally-biased units that reflect this sphere. We have selected 11 nationally-biased units which in turn could be divided into following groups:

- 1) names of means of transportation (6 items): *Droschke, Telege, Tarantase, Britschke, Kibitke, Troika*;
- 2) names of persons connected with the organization of cabbng (2 items): *Jamschtschik, Iswoschtschik*;
- 3) name of a travel document (1 item): *Podoroschna*;
- 4) expressions imitation a direct speech of a passenger and a cabman (2 items): *paschol, padi*.

The general amount of contexts where these words were used is 133 items.

It should be mentioned that not all of the selected nationally-biased units have Russian origins. For example, *brichka* is supposed to originate from the Polish language (Chernykh, 1999, V. I, page 112); *kibitka* – from Turkic languages (Ibid., page 394); *yamshchik* – from the Turkic as well (Ibid., V. II, page 470). But we abstract away from etymological criterion because these words had been already assimilated in the Russian language in the XIX c. as well. That is why words of first two categories can be referred to Russisms, since nationally-biased units they denote in a consciousness of a west-european were associated exactly with the Russian world.

3. Methods to introduce Russian nationally-biased units into German text

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