

Theoretical Basis of the Influence of English on the Modern Chinese Language

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Abstract: In today's era of globalization, interlingual relations are becoming increasingly important. In particular, English, as a means of international communication, has influenced many languages. Chinese is no exception. This article examines the theoretical foundations of the influence of English on the modern Chinese language.

Keywords: globalization, migration, media and information tools, global language, language contact, code switching

Introduction

The role of external influences in language development is important and multifaceted, and it can lead to language change, enrichment, and sometimes weakening. External influences in language development mainly include cultural and social contacts, the influence of science and technology, political influences, migration and globalization, and media and information tools [1]. In particular, when languages come into contact with each other, especially through cultural and trade relations, their vocabulary increases. For example, many new words have been absorbed through the influence of Arabic, Persian, and Russian on the Uzbek language. With the emergence of new scientific and technical achievements, new concepts also come into play. Often, these concepts are borrowed from foreign languages (mainly English). For example, words such as computer, internet, smartphone. In historical periods, political ruling powers determined language policy. For example, during the Soviet era, Russian was the main language of communication, and many Russian terms were absorbed into the Uzbek language. New language elements are introduced through the migration of people to other countries or the influx of foreign labor. Global culture (cinema, music, internet) also has an external influence on the language. The influence of foreign languages is increasing through television, cinema, and social networks. This is especially noticeable among young people - they begin to use foreign words and phrases more often.

An estimated 1.5 billion people in the world understand or speak English as a native or second language. The number of native English speakers is approximately 360-380 million. The number of non-native speakers of English as a second or foreign language is much higher than the number of native speakers (~1.12 billion)[2]. English is one of the most widely used languages on websites and online content on the Internet. For example, according to the "Languages used on the Internet" table, there are ~1,186,451,052 English-speaking Internet users, which is approximately 26% of the total number of languages used. In China, approximately 300-400 million people are learning English, and the number of English speakers is approximately 200-350 million [3].

In today's globalization environment, English has become the main means of international

communication. China's rapid economic and cultural development and its international activity are further strengthening the influence of English in this country. Especially in technology, business, education, and everyday life, words and phrases from English have begun to occupy a significant place in the lexical and communicative system of the Chinese language. Therefore, the theoretical study of the influence of English on the Chinese language is one of the current issues in linguistics.

The purpose of writing this article is to analyze the influence of English on modern Chinese based on linguistic theories.

Tasks:

1. Analyze the theory of language contact and illustrate it with the example of the influence of English on the Chinese language.
2. Identify lexical units and grammatical calques that are being absorbed from English into Chinese.
3. Highlight the role of English in cultural and communicative processes.
4. Summarize the positive and negative aspects of the influence of English.

Main part

1. Fundamentals of language contact theory

In linguistics, the concept of “linguistic contact” refers to the phenomena that occur when different languages come into contact with each other. E. Haugen (1950) analyzed the processes of assimilation and explained the introduction of new words and their finding their place in the language system [4]. W. Weinreich (1953) emphasized the processes of code-switching and calculus in interlingual contacts [5]. The relationship between Chinese and English is also considered within the framework of the theory of language contact. Because words borrowed from English are adapting to the lexical system of Chinese, and sometimes even influencing it at the grammatical and phonetic levels.

According to the theory of language contact, lexical, phonetic, grammatical, and stylistic changes occur as a result of the interaction of two or more languages [6]. The relationship between English and Chinese is a vivid example of this process. In the process of global communication, English introduces many new concepts into Chinese.

2. The global status of English and its role in Chinese society

English has become a “global language” (David Crystal, 2003) and has become an important language in all regions of the world [7]. In China, English is also considered an essential tool in international relations, education, and technology. According to statistics, 300–400 million people in China are learning English, which is about one-third of the country’s population (Wei, 2018). English is taught from school, and exams such as the College English Test (CET) are required in universities. This process has helped the English language to take deep roots in Chinese society [8].

3. Directions of influence of English on Chinese

a) Lexical influence

The greatest influence is observed at the lexical level. For example, in the fields of science, technology and business, there are many words that have come from English, either directly or through adaptation. For example:

- 科菲 kafei (coffee),
- 因特网 yintelwang (internet),
- 沙发 shafa (sofa),
- 卡拉OK kalaOK (karaoke).

These words are used in a way that is adapted to the phonetic and morphological system of the

Chinese language and are gradually gaining a firm place in the vocabulary of the Chinese language [9].

b) Phonetic influence

Elements of English pronunciation are especially noticeable in brand names and technological terms. For example, abbreviations such as Wi-Fi, IP, APP are used in a form close to their original pronunciation [10].

d) Grammatical and syntactic influence

Although English has not had a strong grammatical influence on Chinese, there are some syntactic borrowings. For example, short and clear English sentences are more common in the speech of Chinese youth. Also, along with some terms, their English word order is also partially adopted. There are also cases of syntactic borrowings in Chinese. For example, combinations such as “服务中心” (service center) from English have entered the language through direct translation. The direct influence of English sentence structure is noticeable in advertising and the media [11].

e) Cultural and communicative influence

The cultural influence of the English language is increasing through global media, the Internet and social networks. The use of English phrases and abbreviations (OK, VIP, IT) is becoming widespread among young people. This situation is creating new trends in the modern speech style of the Chinese language. The English language has an impact not only through language, but also through cultural phenomena. Through Internet slang, pop culture expressions, music and film products, English expressions are often found in the speech of young people. For example, words such as "OK", "bye-bye", "fans" have entered everyday speech [12].

4. Positive and negative aspects of the impact

The positive aspects include: expanding opportunities for international communication, faster adoption of scientific and technical innovations, and increased intercultural communication. The negative aspects include the loss of the purity of the national language, the excessive increase in foreign words, and sometimes leading to misunderstandings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of English on the Chinese language is a natural consequence of globalization and an integral part of language development. The influence of English on Chinese is more noticeable at the lexical and cultural level, the acquisitions in the lexical system, grammatical patterns and cultural expressions are a clear manifestation of this influence. However, the excessive influence of English also raises the issue of preserving the identity of the national language. Therefore, it is extremely important to study the influence of English on a deep scientific basis and preserve the national values of the Chinese language. Theoretical study of this process is relevant for linguistics and will be of great importance in the future in the field of language policy and education. The influence of English on the Chinese language, along with positive opportunities, also poses certain risks. Therefore, it is necessary to study this issue in depth on a scientific basis.

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