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## RESPECTUS PHILOLOGICUS Nr. 29 (34)

### MOKSLINIS TĘSTINIS LEIDINYS

Leidžia Vilniaus universiteto Kauno humanitarinis fakultetas ir Jano Kochanovskio universiteto Humanitarinis fakultetas Kielcuose du kartus per metus (balandžio 25 d. ir spalio 25 d.).

Leidinyje lietuvių, lenkų, anglų, rusų kalbomis skelbiami originalūs moksliniai straipsniai, atitinkantys svarbiausias fakultetų humanitarinių mokslinių tyrimų kryptis: lingvistikinius tyrinėjimus, literatūros naratyvų ir kontekstų problematiką, reklamos diskurso paveikumą, vertimo teoriją ir praktiką.

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### **ETYMOLOGIC FEATURES AND PECULIARITIES OF THE PROCESS OF INDIGENOUS VOCABULARY BORROWING IN AMERICAN ENGLISH**

*In this study, certain problems of taxonomy and etymology associated with the borrowings from indigenous languages into American English have been solved. The vocabulary of Amerindian and Eskimo-Aleut languages of the indigenous ethnic groups of North, South, and Central America in American English are the research material. After analyzing the etymological sources of autochthonous lexical units in AmE, it has been found that the process of borrowing lasted for five centuries (XVI–XX centuries). Despite this fact, the most part of the vocabulary has been lost in the absence of nomination objects, substituted by English synonyms or moved into the category of archaisms and historicisms and has not kept its relevance to the English-speaking usage. However, the author of this article has analyzed native lexical units, which are an integral part of the lexical system of modern American English; this fact is confirmed by the necessary introduction of the given lexical items into the register of authoritative lexicographical sources: references, explanatory dictionaries, and special dictionaries describing the lexical structure of modern AmE.*

*KEY WORDS: autochthonous lexical units, borrowing, American English, the northern, central, and southern Amerindian languages, etymological characteristics.*

The borrowings from the indigenous languages into American English are the object of this study. Etymological and taxonomic characteristics as well as the process of indigenous lexical units borrowing into American English (AmE) are the research subject. The methods of the research are the following: comparative, historical, typological, descriptive, and the elements of component analysis. Etymological features are provided by the study of vocabulary materials (*American English Dictionary* 2015; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 2000; *Borrowings into Native Varieties of English* 2009; *A Dictionary of the American English on Historical Principles* 1960; *The New Oxford American Dictionary* 2001; *O Brave New Words!* 2000; *The Oxford American College Dictionary* 2001; *Pocket Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus* 2010) and taxonomic features on the basis of earlier studies (Домнич 2002а; Домнич 2002b; Домнич 2003; Домнич 2005; Домнич 2012).

In this study, certain problems of taxonomy and etymology associated with the borrowings from indigenous languages into English have been solved. The logic of the paper led to the sequence of specific tasks: to identify the taxonomic features of language contacts and the dynamics of their transformation through comprehensive etymological characteristics of borrowed autochthonous vocabulary in the context of the peculiarities of language situations.

Some peculiar researches of American English served as a theoretical basis for the description of borrowing in American English (Аксютіна 2010; Зацний 1999; Козлова 1998; Скибина 1996; Файнберг 1991; Швейцер 1971, Швейцер 1983; Fischer 2003; Kemmer 1996; Mencken 2009). Factual material is the vocabulary of Amerindian and Eskimo-Aleut languages of the indigenous ethnic groups of North, South, and Central America, i.e., 1256 lexical units (1237 lexical units and 19 lexical units correspondingly) in American English selected from the authoritative lexicographical sources and reference books (*American English Dictionary* 2015; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 2000; *Borrowings into Native Varieties of English* 2009; *A Dictionary of the American English on Historical Principles* 1960; *The New Oxford American Dictionary* 2001; *O Brave New Words!* 2000; *The Oxford American College Dictionary* 2001; *Pocket Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus* 2010).

The study of etymological data showed that the autochthonous lexical items were borrowed into AmE from the native languages belonging to the macrofamily of the northern Amerindian languages, especially from the Algonquian-Ritwan language family, the Wakashan-Salishan language family, the family of Hokan-Siouan languages, the Iroquoian language family, the Na-Dene language family, the Gulf language family, and the Hokaltec language family. The most numerous of them is the Algonquian-Ritwan family.

Autochthonous lexical units of the macrofamily of the central Amerindian languages belong to the Tano-Utoaztec language family and the Quiche Maya language family. Lexical items from the macrofamily of the southern Amerindian languages belong to the Chibcha, Arawakan, Caribbean, Kechumara, Araucanian, and Tupi-Guarani language families.

According to the etymological analysis, direct autochthonous loanwords make up the majority (55.97%); there is an indigenous vocabulary of both the southern, central, and northern Amerindian languages. Thus, the greatest number (27.13%) was borrowed through Spanish, French (10.33%), and Portuguese (4.9%), and the lowest number through Neo-Latin (0.13%) and the Dutch language (0.13%) as well as Chinook jargon (1.42%) (e.g. **Apache** *n.* a member of a group of North American Indian peoples of the south-west US and north Mexico; any of several languages and dialects spoken by these peoples [<American Spanish <Yavapai, people]; **Illinois** *n.* a member of a confederacy of North American Indian peoples that lived in north Illinois, south Wisconsin, and parts of Iowa and Missouri; the Algonquian language of this people [<French <Algonquian, ordinary speaker]); **ai** *n.* a South American sloth (*Bradypus tridactylus*) with a greenish coat [<Portuguese <Tupi *ai, hai* <the animal's cry]; **guaiacum** *n.* any of several tropical American trees or shrubs belonging to the genus *Guaiacum* of the caltrop family; the

hard, heavy wood of such a tree [<Neo-Latin <Spanish *guayaco*, *guayacán* <Taino, 1525]; **Manhattan** *n.* island in south east of New York, between the Hudson and East rivers, forming part of New York City [<Dutch <a Delaware (Algonquian) source akin to Munsee <*manah*, island + *atin*, hill, 1620]; **cultus** *adj.* worthless, unimportant, bad [<Chinook Jargon <Chinook *cultus* worthless]).

Vocabulary from both the northern and the southern Amerindian languages was borrowed through French and Spanish, while through Portuguese, the autochthonous lexical units were borrowed just from two southern Amerindian languages (Guarani and Tupi) (see examples above). Some indigenous lexemes were as well loaned through a few, i.e., two or three, languages-intermediaries (e.g. **agouti** *n.* a rabbit-sized, nocturnal rodent (*family Dasyproctidae*) with grizzled fur, found in tropical America [<French <Spanish *aguti* <Tupi-Guarani *akuti*]). According to the made observations, in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the vocabulary is mostly borrowed from the central and southern Amerindian languages, and in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, it was borrowed as well from the other, i.e., the northern Amerindian languages.

After analyzing the etymological sources of autochthonous lexical units in AmE, it has been found that the process of borrowing lasted for five centuries (XVI–XX centuries). The earliest loanwords date back to the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century: 1545 “tuna”, 1560 “mamoc”, 1560 “cassava” (e.g. **cassava** *n.* any of several tropical American plants, shrubs, and trees (*genus Manihot esculenta*) of the spurge family [<French *cassave* <Spanish *cazabe* <Taino *casávi*, *cazábbi*, 1560]). It should be noted that all the loans in this century were from the southern Amerindian languages (Guarani, Quechua, Tupi), and all of them were borrowed indirectly through the languages-intermediaries (Spanish and French) and the lexeme “cassava” through two intermediary languages. In this century, the total amount of autochthonous lexical items is slight (2.75%) (see Table 1).

Based on the research of language contacts, the periods between autochthonous and Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups on the territory of the United States (Домніч 2012: 51), it should be reported that the beginning of contacting of the indigenous population with English-speaking ethnic group started at the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century (1580) (Стингл 1984: 296). It was the end of this century, when there were occasional limited contacts in the nature of trade and exchange of items (weapons, jewelry, alcohol, furs, valuable trophies, etc.). A distinctive feature of this period is that the first who came in contact with the indigenous ethnic groups were the representatives of Spanish (1492), Portugal (1494), and French (1500), i.e., societies who founded their first settlements on the coasts of North America (1526, 1534) (Ward 2003: 10). As a consequence of this historical course, the first autochthonous vocabulary was borrowed into these European languages (Spanish, French, and Portuguese) and just through them into the English language.

From the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, a higher amount of lexemes from the languages of North American Indians began to be loaned: 1605 “caribou”, 1605 “moose”, 1609 “moccasin” (e.g. **caribou** *n.* any of several large North American reindeer [<Canadian French <Algonquian, 1605]). As it can be observed from the above mentioned indigenous lexical units, all of them, as well as a significant part of the autochthonous vocabulary were borrowed indirectly, especially through the French language, but direct borrowings were as

well observed (e.g. **Massasoit** *n.* North American Indian leader: sachem of the Wampanoag tribe; negotiator of peace treaty with the Pilgrims in 1621 [<Eastern Algonquian]). The XVII<sup>th</sup> century, as well as all the subsequent periods, is characterized by the lexical borrowings from the languages of the South American tribes: 1600 “chinchilla”, 1605 “mangrove”, 1655 “barbecue”, 1678 “barracuda”. The substantial part of autochthonous lexemes was borrowed indirectly, particularly through Spanish and Portuguese, but direct borrowings were as well observed (e.g. **barbecue** *n.* pieces of beef, fowl, fish, or the like, roasted over an open hearth, especially when basted in barbecue sauce; *v.* to broil or roast whole or in large pieces over an open fire, on a spit or grill; to cook [<Spanish *barbacoa* <Arawak (Taino) *barbacoa* a raised frame of sticks, 1655]). In this century, the total number of autochthonous lexical units is medium (15.9%).

The XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the previous two, is characterized by a small amount of indigenous borrowings into AmE, i.e., 17.8%. Lexical units were borrowed from both the northern and the southern-central indigenous languages of America: 1774 “cougar”, 1775 “margay”, 1790 “achiote” (e.g. **achiote** *n.* a small tree, *Bixa orellana*, of tropical America [<Mexican Spanish <Nahuatl *āchiotl*, 1790]). Indirect processes of borrowing through Spanish, French, and Portuguese as well as direct can be observed (e.g. **Apache** *n.* a member of a group of North American Indian peoples of the south-west US and north Mexico; any of several languages and dialects spoken by these peoples [<American Spanish <Yavapai, people, 1735]). It should be as well suggested that there had been borrowings of lexical units through two intermediary languages, as it is specified in the above mentioned examples.

In the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, the number of indigenous lexemes increased only slightly (15.9% and 17.8%, respectively) (see Table 1). The distinctive features of these periods are the following factors: the significant wave of immigration into the country from Europe (Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, and Great Britain), the displacement of indigenous people from their native lands. At the same time, the need for new land development requires the intensification of contacts with indigenous ethnic groups and their languages, and these processes could be observed in the reflection of the increase of autochthonous lexical units in the given periods. The process of borrowing of the vocabulary from the languages of the indigenous population directly and indirectly through the Spanish, French, and Portuguese stabilized.

The largest number of the loanwords exceeding for the first three periods is observed in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., more than 50% of all the loans of the autochthonous languages of AmE (see Table 1). These borrowings originated both the northern and the southern-central indigenous languages of America: 1825 “piassava”, 1830 “mesquite”, 1855 “ocelot” (e.g. **piassava** *n.* either of two South American palm trees, *Attalea funifera* or *Leopoldinia piassaba*; the coarse fiber obtained from either of these trees, used to make brushes and rope [<Portuguese <Tupi *piaçaba*, 1825]). Autochthonous lexemes are borrowed indirectly through Spanish, French, and Portuguese as well as directly (e.g. **alpaca** *n.* a domesticated South American llama (*Lama glama pacos*); its wool [<Spanish <Aymara *alpaca*, 1805]).

Despite the elimination of the indigenous peoples by colonizers, as a result of numerous wars for some centuries (*The Encyclopedia Americana* 2002: 15; *The Encyclopedia*

*Americana* 2002: 28–30; Ward 2003: 10) in this period, direct, close and long language contacts were established between these ethnic groups. Thus, the necessity of new developing lands tended to the intensification of contacts with indigenous ethnic groups and their languages (Домніч 2012: 51), and as a consequence, there is an enrichment of the lexical structure of English with the borrowings from these native languages. This situation is paradoxical, because the same purposes lead to rather stable and prolonged contacts with the indigenous languages and Spanish, French, Portuguese, and at the same time, to the displacement of the latter to the periphery of language communication and gradual strengthening of the dominant role of the English language.

In the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the last final processes of borrowing are noted. In this period, the number of loanwords is significantly reduced compared with the previous century and is 12.71% of the total number of all the periods of borrowing from the autochthonous languages in AmE (see Table 1). The examples include the following lexemes both from the northern and the southern-central indigenous languages of America: 1905 “guayule”, 1920 “babessy”, 1938 “oklabar” (e.g. **guayule** *n.* a composite shrub, *Parthenium argentatum*, of the southwestern US and Mexico, yielding a form of rubber; the rubber obtained from this plant [<Mexican Spanish <Nahuatl *cuauhulli* or *huauhulli*, equivalent to *cuahu* (*itl*) tree + *olli* rubber, 1905]). Indigenous lexical items were borrowed in a mediated way through Spanish, French, and Portuguese in a direct way as well (e.g. **Araucanian** *n.* a member of a group of South American Indian peoples of Chile and the Argentine pampas; the language of these peoples; *adj.* of these peoples or their language or culture [<Spanish *Araucano*, after *Arauco*, region in Chile <Araucanian *rau*, clay + *ko*, water, 1900]).

Language contacts between aboriginal and introduced ethnic groups are of regular and permanent nature; however, due to the fact that the displacement of native ethnic groups from the former territories and the final replacement of the indigenous ethnic group to reservations completed, and the contacts acquired the character of aggression from the part of the Anglo-Saxon ethnic group, it lead to the significant reduction in the number of indigenous people as well as almost complete cessation of indigenous languages functioning outside the reservations and the extinction of many autochthonous languages (Домніч 2012: 52). The consequence of this process is that the language contacts are approximately ceased and the completion of the lexical structure of English with autochthonous borrowings ends in this period, as according to this research of etymological data, the last loanwords were marked in the 40s of the XX<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. **Appaloosa** *n.* a breed of horse, developed in the North American West, typically having a spotted rump [<a Louisiana Indian tribal name *Opelousa*, 1920]; **Tex-Mex** *adj.* of, relating to, or denoting the Texan version of something Mexican, such as music, food, or language; *n.* a form of Mexican Spanish having elements of English and spoken near the border of Texas and Mexico [by shortening, 1945]).

During the lives of indigenous ethnic groups in reserves, all the ethnic, social, sociolinguual, linguocultural, and other contacts are not implemented due to the lack of primarily ethnic interaction; thus, the autochthonous language borrowings into AmE are not observed. The ways of autochthonous lexemes completion in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century are not available so far, as not all the above mentioned types of contacts between the ethnic

groups are observed. Autochthonous lexical units were loaned as a result of the nomination process in new introduced undeveloped lands by the ethnic group; however, at the present stage of development of the English language, the reverse process is noted, namely the process of replacing the indigenous lexemes with English equivalents or descriptive lexical items of English, and accordingly, the autochthonous languages were out of use.

Table 1. **Periods of borrowing and quantity of loanwords from indigenous languages in AmE**

Century of borrowing	Autochthonous loanwords ratio, %
XVI <sup>th</sup> century	2.75%
XVII <sup>th</sup> century	15.9%
XVIII <sup>th</sup> century	17.8%
XIX <sup>th</sup> century	50.84%
XX <sup>th</sup> century	12.71%
Total:	100%

Autochthonous lexical units from the macrofamily of the northern Amerindian languages passed into the English language to a large extent directly (88.9%), and only a small part of them (11.1%) indirectly. Borrowings from the central and southern macrofamilies of Amerindian languages appear in completely different trend. Almost two-thirds of these lexical units were borrowed into English directly (67.07%), while one-third (32.93%) in the mediated way (see Table 2).

Nevertheless, the first colonizers of the American north were French settlers (~1535); the first and second decades of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century (~1620) are marked by a significant wave of immigration from Great Britain (СТИНГЛ 1984: 296). Thus, during this period (~80 years), autochthonous vocabulary in English was loaned indirectly, namely through the languages of previous colonizers, i.e., French and Canadian French, but at this time, its amount is insignificant 11.1%, withal a substantial part (88.9%) is direct lexical borrowings.

On the territory of Central and South America, there is the entirely different situation. The Spaniards opened, conquered, and colonized these continents (except some territories where the Portuguese settled). The Spanish and Portuguese domination was observed in these areas for over 350 years (СТИНГЛ 1984: 296). Thus, it becomes clear that two-thirds of autochthonous lexical units (67.07%) were borrowed into AmE indirectly, especially through the first European colonial languages, i.e., Spanish and, to a least extent, Portuguese.

Table 2. **Direct and indirect ways of borrowing of indigenous languages vocabulary in AmE**

Ways of lexeme borrowing	North American Indian languages	Central and South American Indian languages	Total
Direct borrowings	67.07%	32.93%	100%
Indirect borrowings	88.9%	11.1%	100%

Having studied the etymological characteristics of autochthonous lexical loanwords and peculiarities of language contacts in modern AmE, it can be concluded that despite the fact that the area of AmE distribution is limited to the US, the country is situated in

North America, and the lexical units from the northern Amerindian and both the central and southern Amerindian indigenous languages, unlike Canadian English (Дюмніч 2002b: 122–128), were adopted. This feature depends on the course of historical events, as the sources were the languages of the indigenous ethnic groups that inhabited the other colonies and where subsequently Anglo-Saxon ethnic group was introduced and, correspondingly, the English language.

Despite the fact that the process of borrowing lasted for five centuries (XVI–XX centuries), the nature and the number of loanwords differ significantly. The smallest amount of indigenous lexical items was borrowed at the beginning of the first period of contacts, i.e., the XVI<sup>th</sup> century (2.75%), due to the occasional limited contacts between native and introduced ethnic groups. A distinctive feature of this period is that autochthonous ethnic groups firstly came in contacts with the representatives of Spanish, Portuguese, and French people, and as a result of the historical course, the first autochthonous vocabulary was borrowed precisely into these European languages (Spanish, French, and Portuguese) and from them into English.

In the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries, the number of autochthonous lexical items increased, but only slightly (15.9% and 17.8%, respectively). Due to the necessity to develop new lands by conqueror ethnic groups, the contacts with indigenous people and their languages were intensifying, which can be observed in the reflection of the lexemes that increased in both periods. The largest number of loanwords is marked in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and makes up 50.08% of the total autochthonous loans in AmE. Direct, close and long language contacts are made between native and introduced ethnic groups in this century. The process of new land development requires the intensification of contacts with indigenous ethnic groups and their languages, and as a consequence, the completion of the English lexical structure with the borrowings from these native languages.

In the XX<sup>th</sup> century, there was the last final process of borrowing. The number of autochthonous borrowings significantly reduced (12.71%), and so far, the language contacts approximately ceased, and the completion of the lexical structure of English with autochthonous borrowings were completed. The ways of completion of indigenous lexemes in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century are not available, as there are no ethnic, sociolinguistic, linguocultural, and other contacts between the given ethnic groups.

More precisely, European languages of the first wave colonization of the given continent (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Latin as well as Chinook jargon) fulfilled the function of intermediaries between the languages of Aboriginal communities and the English language of the Anglo-Saxon ethnic group.

Historically natural that the largest number of autochthonous vocabulary was borrowed through Spanish (27.13%), and the smallest through Dutch (0.13%) and Latin (0.13%). During all the ages (periods) of colonization, 10.33% and 4.9%, respectively, were borrowed through French and Portuguese, and through Chinook jargon was borrowed 1.42%; direct borrowings from Amerindian and Eskimo-Aleut languages amounted more than half 55.97%, and indirect loanwords in such a way made 44.03%.

Despite the fact that the process of borrowing lasted for approximately 450 years, the most part of this vocabulary has been lost in the absence of nomination objects, substituted

by English synonyms or moved into the category of archaisms and historicisms and has not kept its relevance to the English-speaking usage. However, the author of this article analyzed the native lexical units, which are an integral part of the lexical system of modern American English that is confirmed by the fact of the necessary introduction of the given lexical items into the register of authoritative lexicographical sources: references (*O Brave New Words!* 2000), explanatory dictionaries (*American English Dictionary* 2015; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 2000; *The New Oxford American Dictionary* 2001; *The Oxford American College Dictionary* 2001; *Pocket Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus* 2010), and special dictionaries (*Borrowings into Native Varieties of English* 2009; *A Dictionary of the American English on Historical Principles* 1960), which describe the lexical structure of modern AmE.

Among the promising fields of further study of the factual material, there may be determined the study of structural, semantic and functional aspects of this layer of lexical items in modern AmE.

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