

УДК

Понтус І. – ст. гр. 11

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LEXICAL AND PHONETICAL BORROWINGS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DURING THE NORMAN CONQUEST

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The history of English goes back much further. English is one of a family of languages called Indo-European. The languages of this family, which includes most of the modern European languages and some other languages spoken in western Asia from Iceland to India, as well as such important languages of antiquity as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, all resemble each other in a number of ways, particularly in vocabulary. Their parent tongue, called Proto-Indo-European, was spoken about 5,000 years ago by nomads believed to have roamed the southeast European plains.

The Middle English period was marked by great extension of foreign influence on English. The Norman Conquest brought England under French rule. The English language, though it did not die, was for a time of only secondary importance. French became the language of the upper classes in England. Spoken mainly by uneducated people, English had also tremendous grammatical changes as most of the inflections or case endings of Old English disappeared, and word order therefore became of prime importance. Latin, remaining the language of the church and of education, also had a considerable and varied influence on English.

Only twenty years after the Conquest, the Norman scribes of Domesday Book, writing phonetically and without influence from English tradition, spell local and personal names in a way which shows that the oral language had undergone certain changes that do not regularly manifest themselves in native writings until much later.

New conditions made certain influence on the inflectional structure of the spoken language. The use of the French language among large classes of the population, which has left such profound traces in the English vocabulary, must have tended to accelerate the movement towards disuse of inflectional endings; though this influence must remain rather a matter of abstract probability than of demonstrable fact, because we have no means of distinguishing its effects from those of other causes that were operating in the same direction. Perhaps the use of the preposition *of* instead of the genitive inflection, and the polite substitution of the plural for the singular in pronouns of the second person, were due to imitation of French modes of expression; but, in order respects, hardly any specific influence of French upon English grammar can be shown to have existed.

Some French words were borrowed into English language before the Battle of Hastings. Though in 9th century in ancient English texts was met French word soȝ – unwise man; in 10th century the word mūnt – mountain, cactel – castle, tūr – tower, prūt – proud, pryt – pride.

Перелік посилань.

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