ISLAMIC VOCABULARY IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Abstract: The paper discusses Islamic vocabulary in Modern English from the point of view of thematic relevance, determines the percentage of the represented groups. It also analyzes the basic directions of the semantic classifications of islamisms in the process of their assimilation.

Keywords: the English language, religious vocabulary, islamism, assimilation, semantic change.
Nowadays Islam is becoming the major fastest-growing religion in the world. According to sociologists, the world's population has grown by 137% over the past 50 years. The number of Christians has increased by 46%, and the number of Muslims – by 235%. The geography of Islam in modern world is very extensive. Muslim communities exist in 120 countries (including the UK and the USA), Muslims make up the majority of the population in 35 countries, and Islam is recognized as an official religion in 28 countries [1]. Thus, the study of the functioning of religious vocabulary in modern society is relevant and acute.

The object of description in the paper are islamisms present in Modern English – borrowed lexical units which are typical of the realities of Islam.

The study material is represented by the lexical units selected by the method of continuous sampling from the English-Russian dictionary of religious vocabulary by A.A. Azarov [2] and the on-line dictionary of Islamic terms [3]. The overall number of lexical units amounts to 108 examples.

The penetration of islamisms into the Modern English vocabulary can be explained by the exchange of scientific and cultural achievements, the participation of Great Britain in the Crusades, the colonization of certain Arab-speaking territories, the translation of the Koran and many other Arabic texts into English. Economic and political collaboration also plays an important role in stimulating cross-language communication.

One of the basic criteria of classification of lexical units belonging to a certain terminological set is their thematic reference. According to this principle, linguistic units related to Islam can be subdivided into the following groups:

- **names of the supreme Deity and divine beings** (7 units – 6,5%):
  
  *Allah* is traditionally used in any language, meaning both God himself and one of his names. According to the faith of Muslims, Allah is the creator and ruler of all things. One of the names of Allah in Islam is *Al-Ahad*, formed from the adjective *Ahad*, which means «unique»;
Malak is an angel created by Allah to fulfill his will, decisions and orders;

• **names of the realities of the afterlife** (8 units – 7,4%):
  
  *Jannah* is the paradise;
  *Jahannam* is the hell; a place where infidels and sinners descend after death;
  *Akhirah* is the Netherworld, the only eternal and important life for a man;

• **names of creatures embodying evil** (4 units – 3,7%):
  
  *Shaitan* is the evil spirit, the demon, the devil;
  *Dajjal* is similar to the Christian Antichrist. His appearance is one of the signs of the approaching doomsday;

• **names of church premises, settlements, structures** (6 units - 5,6%):
  
  *Mosque* is a prayer house for Muslims;
  *Imaret* is a charitable institution, usually opened at mosques and supported by alms of parishioners;
  
  *Minaret* is the tower with which the muezzin calls upon believers to prayer;

• **designation of utensils, vestments, religious attributes** (6 units - 5,6%):
  
  *The Koran* is the final scripture given by God to people through God's last messenger - the prophet Muhammad;
  
  *Namazlik* is a prayer rug;

• **names of people in relation to the Muslim faith: representatives of clergy, ranks, classes, believers/non-believers** (25 units – 23,1%):
  
  *Alim* is a person who has fundamental scientific knowledge and spends the bulk of his time improving it, while educating other people and not forgetting his responsibilities to the Almighty;
  
  *Imam* is the spiritual head of a separate religious community, leading collective prayer in a mosque;
  
  *Shahid* is a believer who suffers martyrdom during the war against enemies, fights for Allah, defends his faith, homeland, honor, family. Used in the meaning of «a martyr for the faith»;

• **names of customs, rites** (13 units - 12%):
Abdest is an ablution of hands, neck, forehead, head and legs, performed before prayer, reading the Koran and entering the mosque;

Azan is a call for obligatory prayer;

Namaz are obligatory Muslim prayers that are performed five times every day;

• dates and events (6 units – 5,6%):

Hegira is the starting point of the Muslim calendar, which meant the relocation of the Muslim community under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.;

Ramadan is a month of obligatory fasting for Muslims. During the month of Ramadan, faithful Muslims refuse to eat, drink, and have intimacy in the daytime;

• regulation of Islam (33 units – 30,5%):

Ahkam are the laws. The following types of these laws exist: Wajib (binding laws), Mustahab (recommended laws), Muharramah (forbidden laws), Makruh (non-recommended laws), Halal (permitted laws);

Adab is the etiquette prescribed by Shariaht;

Shariaht is a set of precepts that define beliefs, as well as form a religious conscience and moral values of Muslims. Shariaht regulations are enshrined in the Koran and act as sources of specific norms governing almost all spheres of the daily life of Muslims.

The analysis of the islamisms in Modern English has proved that the vast majority of them belong to the thematic groups of regulations of Islam, nominations of people related to the Muslim faith. It may be explained by the overwhelming devotion of Muslims to religious rules and demands, their sacred rituals and traditions.

Figure 1. Islamic Vocabulary in Modern English
It is worth mentioning that not all the words have preserved their original meaning in the English language. The analysis of the Oxford Dictionary of Foreign Words [4] allows us to consider the basic trends of the semantic development of Islamisms in the process of their assimilation in the English language.

- **extension of meaning** can be illustrated by the following examples:
  - **Imam**: in the early 17th century it was the spiritual head of a separate religious community, leading collective prayer in a mosque. Since the middle of the 17th century it is the spiritual and secular head of the **entire** Muslim community [4, p. 190].
  - **Minaret**: at first, it was only the tower from which the muezzin calls upon believers to prayer. Since the middle of the 19th century it is **any** tower (object) of the same structure [4, p. 263].
  - **Hegira**: it means the resettlement of the Muslim community under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, which occurred in 622 BC. However, since the middle of the 18th century **hegira** means any **flight** [4, p. 181].
  - **Bismillah**: it is the first word of the Koran. Since the end of the 18th century it is an exclamation used at the beginning of each prayer [4, p. 42].

- **degradation of meaning** can be illustrated by the following example:
  - **Shahid**: it was a believer who suffered martyrdom during the war against enemies and fought for Allah. Used in the meaning of “a martyr for the faith”. In the 21st century, the word **shahid** is widely used (mainly in journalism) in relation to Islamic terrorists, especially those who commit suicide bombings.

- **amelioration of meaning** can be illustrated by the following example:
  - **Sheikh**: in the late 16th century it was the title of rulers of principalities and leaders of nomadic tribes in Arabia. Then it meant a representative of the highest Muslim clergy, a theologian and a jurist. In the early 20th century a new meaning appeared – an extravagant lover [4, p. 394].

To sum up, we may conclude that in Modern English islamisms represent an open group, expanding under the influence of several factors of the extralinguistic nature: globalization processes, interest in Muslim culture, and especially political events in
the Middle East. Most of these borrowings occur in the English language without any changes in the semantics. However, a number of words have undergone various semantic transformations in the process of adaptation.

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