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Portmanteau words in the UK and Russia

A portmanteau word is a blended word, which has a structure of two (or even more) distinct words and they are put together in order to form a new one. The etymology of portmanteau comes from French words “porter” and “manteau”, meaning “to carry” and “cloak.” Lewis Carroll was the first person, who used portmanteau to distinguish a special type of word and he did that in “Through the Looking-Glass”, in the poem “Jabberwocky”:

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe ...[2]

‘Slithy’ means ‘lithe and slimy’ and following Michael Kelly Lewis Carroll might have chosen “mimsy” rather than “flimserable” due to the fact that the blend of miserable and flimsy created a more melodic rhythm in third line[3].

In spite of the fact that portmanteaus have colloquial coloring, these words are used in scientific literature quite often and part of such portmanteaus are noted in the Cambridge dictionary. The Russian language has undergone changes as well, for example “Babushkaphobia” is a curious blended word. Simply “babushkaphobia” is fear of grandmother, it sounds quite weird and linguist Maya Ryashchina explained that Russian grandmothers were recognized for their devoted love for grandchildren [4].” Some Russian portmanteaus even have become English words, for example, “Agit Prop” consisting of “propaganda” and “agitatyа” (agitation) after the post-1917 revolution [5].

These are the most widespread portmanteaus in modern English language:

- banoffee is a portmanteau which combines words "banana" and "toffee", this word means some kind of pies;
- brunch consists of two words "breakfast" and "lunch", it is a dish which is commonly eaten between 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m;
- spork is the combination of “spoon” and “fork”;
- chillax consists of words “chill” and “relax”, this word is used in situation where one should calm down;
- fanzine is a portmanteau word combining two words “fan” and “magazine”;
- malware is a word for any type of “malicious software”, malware is used to destroy your device;
- motel is a blend of “motor” and “hotel” this word has become an international one;
- Oxbridge means relating to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge;
- rom-com is a word, which combines such words as “romantic” and “comedy”, this is a type of films about love with a portion of humor;

- smog means a mixture of smoke and fog, often used in big cities where people find it difficult to breathe sometimes;
- staycation is a combination of words "stay" and "vacation" which means a period when a family stays home. What is more, the word has come to refer to domestic tourism in British English;
- vlog is quite a popular word and it is a combination of "video" and "blog" meaning a type of blog where all of the content is showed in video;
- webinar is a word, consisting of "World Wide Web" and "seminar" which is also quite widespread

Actually, portmanteaus exist in different spheres of our life and, unfortunately, the list of original Russian blends is not as enormous as in the UK:

- *lanchevat* (ланчевать) is a word, which means "to have a breakfast" consisting of "lunch" and "делать";
- *samovar* (самовар) is a portmanteau consisting of "само" (self) and "варить" (to boil) which means a traditional Russian device for heating water;
- *moped* (мопед) is a word which is a combination of "мотор" (motor) and "педали" (pedals) means a kind of transport.

Russian portmanteau words are usually borrowed from diverse languages, for example, smog, vlog, webinar, brunch. These portmanteaus are so widespread that both Russians and the British use these words in everyday life, even do not attention to their speech. Portmanteaus are widely used in various social nets, in advertisements, because these words are quite new and have unusual forms which can attract attention of a reader or a listener and make an impact on them [4]. All in all, portmanteau words and their usage are topical nowadays due to the fact that the word is changed to a more familiar form that keeps its original meaning [9]. Finally, taking a look around, it is possible to see new words surrounding every person in modern world brought both by language trends and through language changes over time.

Литература

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