

Lecture 10 The New English Period. General Characteristic.

The NEP begins in the 15th century. So the NEP is the period from the 15th century up to our time. There are subdivisions here: - early NE, which is the period of the development of the E nation as a nation from the political point of view and the period of the formation of the uniform literary language and of the establishing of the literary norm. Unlike the borderline between the ancient times and the Old English Period, and the borderline between the Old English Period and the Middle English Period when there were some cataclysms, battles and so on, the borderline between the Middle English Period and the NEP is not so historically marked. There were no cataclysms, nevertheless some very important events and particular events took place in the country and new conditions came into play. As early as the 13th century within the feudal system new economic relations began to take shape. The villeins were gradually superseded by copy-holders (пожизненные арендаторы).

New industries and trade began to develop; new crafts appeared and these very new crafts began to be separated from agriculture. Together with the decay of the feudal system, the development of new relations within the feudal system, the development of new industries and crafts new social groups came into being: artisans, rich merchants, owners of workshops, money lenders - they were typical of the capitalist system. It couldn't but change the situation in the country in all its spheres. The most crucial periods were the 15th and the 16th centuries. A new mode of production developed rapidly, new industries sprang into existence. The development of industry required new resources and new markets. So it was a period of great projects, of great maritime projects. All these changes influenced the cultural situation in the country: different regions of the country, which had been isolated before, were brought together through commerce, transportation, trade. It stimulated the necessity to have greater contacts and a uniform language.

They had heated discussions as to how the language should develop. There were 3 main groups of opinions: 1) the language can borrow as many words from other languages as possible => it would enrich the language. 2) strongly against borrowings: English should remain a monosyllabic language as it was. (Спенсер - Faire Queen - старался показать, что он приверженец старины). 3) «leave the language as it is and let it develop by itself» (это не цитата!). Unification: it was a period of normalization, which achieved not by itself, but through the activity of many people. As to the spelling, they were trying to work out certain general fixed rules of spelling, but at the beginning of the NEP the spelling varied from writer to writer yet. For example, Sir John Cheke doubled his vowels to mark their length. The first grammars and the first comprehensive and fundamental dictionaries appeared. Bullock's «Brief Grammar for English». New genres sprang into existence during the early NEP: the genre of newspaper - Still and Edison - they started newspaper in England. Sentimentalism, realistic novels began to develop. It was then that the novel was born. (рубеж 17-18 вв.).

The Middle English Period. The Main Sound Changes.

Vowels: 1) The Great Vowel Shift (с большой буквы). It was rather lengthy: 15th century - part of the 17th century. It affected all the long vowels. All the long vowels tended to become more high, more narrow and more front. Those that were narrow enough turned into diphthongs. a > eɪ (это объясняет необычное звучание английского алфавита Aa [eɪ]) e (открытый) e (закрытый) i > aɪ o (открытый) > ou o (закрытый) > u: u > au 2) The shortening of «u» (до великого сдвига): a) the earlier (the 15th century); 'u' was shortened before the dental sounds [t, d] e.g.: blood, flood; b) the later (the 18th century); 'u' was shortened before [k] e.g.: took. 3) The development of the short 'a': (in a close syllable) hag – ə (before 'l') hall – o: (preserved by [w] was labialised) what – a before a combination of consonant) ask – a: 4) The development of the long 'e': e > e (short) before [d, t] - dental sounds; bread (но в mean (i: по шифту). 5) Delabialization of the short 'u': u > ^ blood – bl[ʌ]d 6) The formation of new diphthongs which have [нетрапльн] for the glide: [iə], [ɛə], [uə]. «a vowel + r» - it's called vocalization of 'r', but: her [h :/3:] here [hi]; in ME her = here = [her] => if the vowel was short, the resulting sound was a long vowel; if the vowel was long, the resulting sound was a diphthong. Consonants: 1) the development of the sound [h], but there were also [x], [x'] (= в немецком [,]) both the hard and the soft [] in the middle of the word were dropped causing the lengthening of the preceding vowel thought, taught [x] (in ME) light: ME [lixt] > [lit] > NE [lait] dropped 2) Vocalization of 's' (see vowels) 3) voicing of fricatives (Verner's law in NE) fricatives [s] and [] were voiced, when they were preceded by an unstressed vowel: his [z], tables [z], game cats [z] (но это слово прошло уже вторичную ассимиляцию), exhibit [z] ŷ exhibition [s] 4) the development of the combinations [tj, sj, dj, zj] in borrowed words (mostly French) into fricatives [,] and affricates: precision [ʒ], decision [ʒ].

The process of the formation of the uniform language was further supported by printing. The first printer was William Caxton (the second part of the 15th century). He founded the first printing house (before that all written matter was written in hand). Caxton printed his first book in 1476 in the London dialect which strengthened it. At first glance it may seem that the process of the development of the national language was a peaceful process, but in reality it was a painful process. Many people, who were more or less concerned with writing: writers, scholars, had their hands in the development of the language.