

PHILOLOGY

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Yiddish borrowings in American English: semantic dynamics

The semantic transformations of the khutspe (chutzpah) lexeme are considered as one of the most significant among other Yiddish loanwords in American English. The most reliable etymon is established, the initial word form or root morpheme on the basis of which the word was built, as well as the correct spelling. A diachronic analysis of the semantics of the word revealed a dynamic in the direction of improving the meaning. It is significant that the original meaning of “an extreme form of arrogance, audacity” is being replaced by “perseverance, determination, determination.” The observed process has a cognitive nature, reflects a change in the conceptual picture of the world of native speakers, and may be the result of linguistic interpretation.

Key words: borrowings, Yiddish, American English, semantic changes.

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