

ENGLISH ACROSS CULTURES: ADAPTING TO NEW REALITIES¹

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Abstract

As a complex adaptive system language coevolves with its environment changing to maintain language/environment equilibrium is indispensable for its effective functioning. Fundamental environmental changes trigger the equilibrium punctuation (Dixon, 1997) which is exhibited in language functional deficiency. To re-establish the equilibrium and to cover the communicative deficit the dynamics of natural adaptation is enhanced. In this paper mechanisms of the English language adaptation to the new realities it encountered beyond the initial territory were studied. Adaptation process consisting in the transmutation of the products of the speech community perception of the altered environment into cognitive and linguistic structures was modeled. The results suggest that the incorporation of these structures into the extant conceptual and lingual systems manifests the equilibrium recovering.

Keywords: adaptation, perception, conceptualization, verbalization, equilibrium.

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Introduction

The study of English as a world language is at the stage of its general theory systematization. With varieties of English having been investigated and described in the slightest details, specific characteristics of each and every form of English analyzed and determined, relationships among them revealed, and classifications compiled, researchers have a solid ground for colligating all the data into an integrated theory. Moreover, the analysis of the latest research (Algeo, 2001; Bailey and Görlach, 1982; Bauer, 2002; Burchfield, 1994; Chambers, 1975; Kachru, 1990; Lindquist, Klintborg, Levin & Estling, 1998; Mair, 2003; McArthur, 2003; Melchers, 2003; Ramson, 1996; Schneider, 1997; Trudgill, 2002; Trudgill, 2004; Turner, 1966) demonstrates that this process is in good progress. Actually, every author tends to enucleate the main tendencies of the English language transformation into a world language and conceptualize the essence of this process.

In my earlier works (Skybina, 1996; 2000), a theory of the English language transformation into a pluricentric language was developed. The theory revolves around the idea that despite the fact that English appears to exist in its variants, it nonetheless develops as a holistic entity. The second key thesis argues that variability has critical importance in supporting language system continuity and integrality across different varieties of English by virtue of being the key facilitator of the language homeostatic mechanisms. When not under the stress of extra-lingual and/or internal factors, language tends to reach a state of natural equilibrium. As the pressure of factors threatening the equilibrium increases, the volume of variability expands. The widely accepted view is that increased variability necessarily leads to language change. In contrast with this opinion, I argue that increased variability provides the means for both language stability and language changeability.

Variability exhibits dualistic nature in language capability to make use of any element variously, at the same time maintaining the most functionally and structurally significative elements and attributes.

Variability, on the one hand, creates preconditions for language changes and, on the other hand, makes these changes unnecessary as the variants sustain equilibrium with essential properties and characteristics of the system and its elements being retained.

In this study an attempt is made to generalize the activity of the mechanisms of the English language adaptation, the mechanisms that enable the language to modify in a certain way when the speech community is introduced into a new cultural space. In this work, as in the previous ones, English is analyzed as a Gestalt functioning in the form of its partially discrete variants.

Language adaptation has traditionally been included in the discussions pertaining to *language evolution* problematics (e.g., Campbell, 1998; Christiansen & Kirby, 2003; Keller, 1994; Kirby, 1998), but lately a number of issues have been singled out into a relatively separate sub-field. In its framework special attention is given to the elucidation of the conditions under which language becomes maladapted for serving new functions or expressing new concepts, to the resources used to restore *status quo*, to the policies implied and strategies employed, to the resulting transformation of language system and modification of language use. The main goal of the research in this field is to enucleate “how languages adjust when they come under pressure resulting from new or changed functional requirements” (Coulmas, 1989, p. 2) as well as “how different communities adapt their languages to their communicative needs, and how different languages lend themselves to adaptation processes” (Coulmas, 1989, p.15).

This research, focusing on the adaptation of English to the new needs on the territories it was transplanted to from the sixteenth century downward, is aimed at the comprehension of the essence of the phenomena underlying the metamorphosis in the language system arising from its acclimatization to the altered environment and at comprehension of the technology of language adaptation to the new reality.

Of principal significance for the research were two ideas. One was expressed by F. Newmeyer (2003) who theorized that originally language might have been used as a tool of conceptualization rather

than communication. Developing this idea I hypothesized that in the course of evolution, after the basic conceptual system had been configured, the mechanism of conceptualization gradually transforms into that of re-conceptualization. The second principle was formulated by R. Allot (2001), who sees language as “a world-analyzing device” which “facilitates a decomposition of experience” (p. 13).

Theoretical Background

Language history can fundamentally be perceived as a manifestation of transformations that linguistic systems undergo in an attempt to adapt to changing functional requirements and transforming environment – biological, linguistic, social, political, technological. These alterations, which stagger the state of equilibrium, deteriorate communication effectiveness. To restore the equilibrium, the mechanisms of adaptation are activated. Their work leads to modification of language elements, structures and usage rules in the direction of communicative deficit covering. Consequently, language evolution is a process of punctuated equilibrium (the concept introduced in Eldredge & Gould, 1972) restoration due to the activity of the mechanisms used in accordance with particular adaptation strategies.

The adaptation strategies employed are varied and correlate with a specific form of adaptation (artificial or natural) and an actual adaptation challenge, while the resources used are the same – borrowing and/or language own reserves. The strategies are historical in nature as they are spatiotemporally bounded: “different speech communities have different preferences, and the preferences may change in the course of time” (Coulmas, 1989, p. 15).

Though the terms *artificial* and *natural* seem rather ambiguous, as neither characterizes the essence of the process, they do stress the difference between the two forms of adaptation, primarily the degree of spontaneity of the speech community participation in the course of adaptation. In this context several other critical differences between these forms of adaptation should be ostended. First, artificial adaptation

is a purposeful activity with the preassigned goals while natural adaptation is a process and not a teleonomic one. Therefore, “artificial adaptation can be managed or legislated or monitored, but natural adaptation is normally not managed or legislated or monitored” (Daswani, 1989, p. 88). Second, artificial adaptation has time boundaries defined by its goals whereas natural adaptation is a continuous development. Third, artificial adaptation is called forth by the speech community demand in the language adjustment to new functional challenges but natural adaptation is sustained by the continual transformation of the language environment.

In accordance with the above, in this study the term *natural adaptation* is used to designate a perpetual process of the incorporation of new (novel or modified) entities into the existing system and that of the system restructuring in the result of its re-analysis from the point of view of the level of its homology to the extra-lingual reality. It is maintained, that being perpetual, the process of natural adaptation has the periods of semblant inertness, when the system gradually integrates new objects, processes, relations and phenomena, and the periods of *bustle* when all language resources and speech community efforts are activated to fill the lacunae formed in the result of the major environmental changes. At the same time, this process is not uniform over time. On the contrary, the mechanisms employed are in instant dependence on the particular type of adaptation need the language faces: to apperceive and introduce new entities or to re-assess their place in the system.

The course, strategies and mechanisms of natural adaptation were observed during the research of the English language evolution in the seventeenth – twentieth centuries, primarily its dissemination beyond the initial territory and transformation into a pluricentric language. The analysis of the empirical data enabled to construct models in which a very complicated process of the English language adaptation to the new habitat was schematized. Three main types of strategies were singled out. The first one is engaged when language lacks the means of a new entity² representation; the second is employed when new

aspects of the entity need to be embodied; the third is applied to restructure the language unite in accordance with the re-assessments of the entity's characteristics.

The essence of the first phase of adaptation consists in primary apperception of the novel entity, its contraposition with the known one(s), elaboration and verbalization of the concept and its introduction into the existing system. If the entity appears to be of major value for the community, its propagation begins, which is manifested in the adaptation process transference to its second phase. This is the time when the community is enriching its understanding of the entity, chiefly in the course of its utilization which, in its turn, causes the entity's modification. In such a way preconditions for the third phase are created, the real meaning of which consists in continuous re-analysis of the transmuting entity and redefinition of its place in the extant system.

In effect, the three strategies are the consequent phases of an integral procedure but they can be so distant in time that sometimes appear as detached occurrences. Of significance in this context is the fact that while the first strategy is in demand predominantly when a new entity needs to be introduced into the conceptual and language system, the other two act permanently either in latent or in overt form.

Figures 1-3 represent the models of the strategies discussed.

Figure 1 shows that the first phase of adaptation comprises three major developments: (1) conceptualization of the entity the community was confronted with and its gradual internalization by means of building up a *virtual denotatum* (VD);³ (2) verbalization of the VD and the concept⁴ genesis; (3) incorporation of the concept and lexeme into the native system. Each stage is itself a script denoting the steps of adaptation.

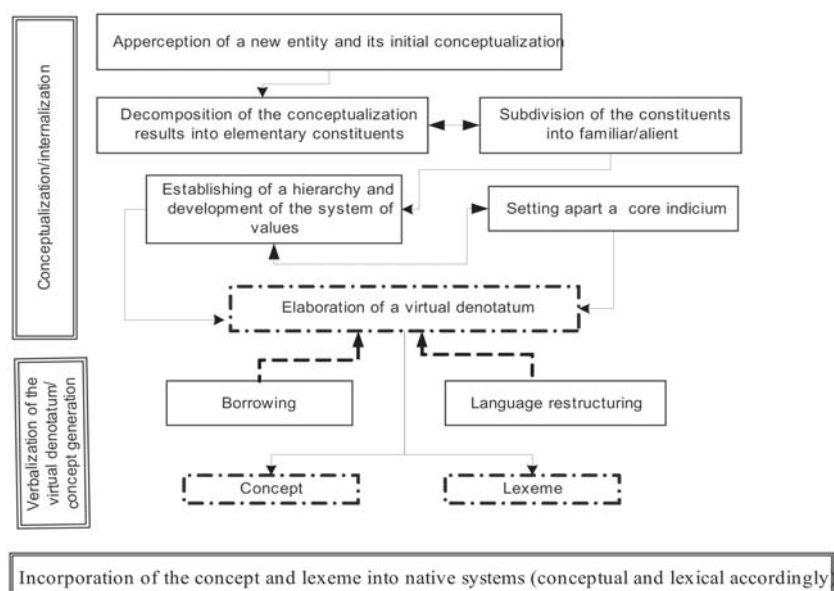


Figure 1. Model of the initiation of a new entity into conceptual and lexical systems

At the first step a new entity is perceived as a whole with the language having no means to represent it. Apperception of the entity is a gradual procedure consisting in outlining a general picture of the reality explored and its initial conceptualization. Paradoxically, holistic picturing of the entity is accompanied by its decomposition into elementary constituents.

The period of decomposition is the time of the in-depth penetration into the essence of the entity perceived while the entity itself might be changing. What happens at this stage can be called 'disintegration' of the encountered entity, which weakens the stress of the alien environment and the intellectual and psychological pressure accompanying it. Certainly, the anxiety is allayed not by the decomposition itself but by the detection of the known elements in the unknown whole.

To be of relevance for the general process of adaptation, the constituents obtained should be structured along two vectors – familiar / alien and /or relevant /irrelevant. In the course of classification along the former vector, the elementary constituents are collated with the native system components, as any new entity can be comprehended only in comparison with and in the context of the amalgamated conceptual system established in the ethnic collective memory (Geeraerts, 1993; Rosch, 1978; Pavilenis, 1986). The results of this classification will be used (a) for the second type of classification leading to the development of a hierarchy in the system of values and (b) in the process of verbalization.

After the hierarchy has been established, the conceptually relevant indicium declares itself. This very indicium then forms the core of the VD, the elaboration of which signifies that the community has internalized the entity, and serves as the foundation for verbalization and concept generation. I do not judge that verbalization process initiation happens at this time. On the contrary, my research provides evidence that the whole course of the new culture apperception is relevant for verbalization as the name is nucleated in the interior of the cognitive activity. What is formed in the result of verbalization is, evidently, not only a lexeme but also a concept which is steeped in native culture and accreted with new notions.

Incorporation of the results of the two stages (conceptualization / internalization and verbalization) into the native system is the postlude of the first phase of adaptation. With the new entities having been imbibed, language restores the full volume of its functionality and thus re-establishes the equilibrium.

The complete stage of first phase of adaptation is neither final nor does it begin when the verbalization ends. On the contrary, as the new entity is apperceived in the context of assimilated ideas and notions, its propagation into the existing structure accompanies the entire adaptation being its integral part throughout, and when the new entity is tuned to the native structure, neither its cognition nor development stops. As the community broadens its understanding (or

misunderstanding) of the entity and adjusts it to the changing requirements, the new notions are developed. Such course of events means that the language is in need of further adaptation which transfers into its second phase.

Figure 2 represents the second phase of adaptation which also consists of three consequential stages – (1) deepening of the comprehension of the essence and structure of the entity and its re-conceptualization; (2) verbalization of the new notion(s) and its(their) introduction into the extant concept structure; (3) redefining of the concept and lexeme structural relationships with other elements of the system (conceptual and lexical accordingly).

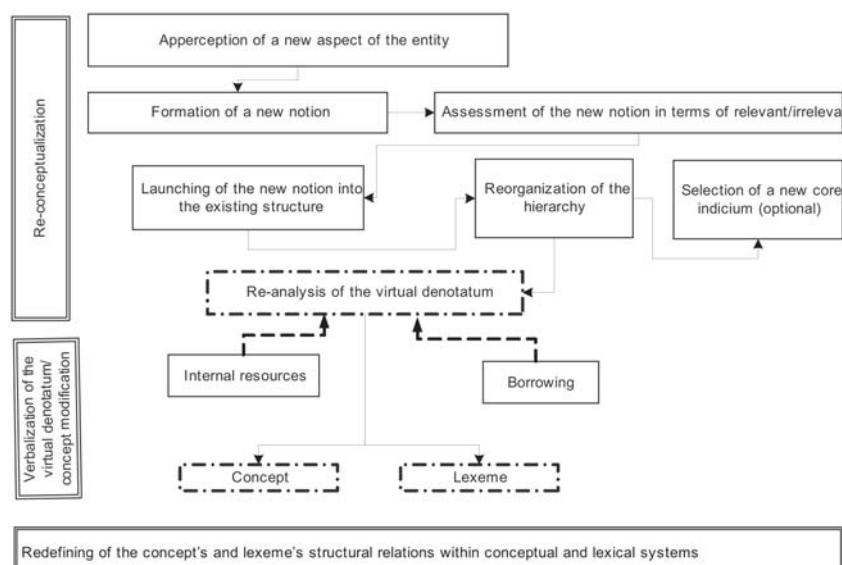


Figure 2. Modal of the new notion induction into the extant structure

Unless a new notion is developed a natural course of evolution leads to the third phase of adaptation, which consists in the entity continuous covert scrutiny and actually lasts as long as the entity exists or is of communicative relevance for the speech community.

In this process it is also possible to distinguish three stages, represented in Figure 3: (1) alteration of the concept; (2) modification of the lexeme; (3) redefining of the concept and lexeme structural relationships with other elements of the system (conceptual and lexical accordingly).

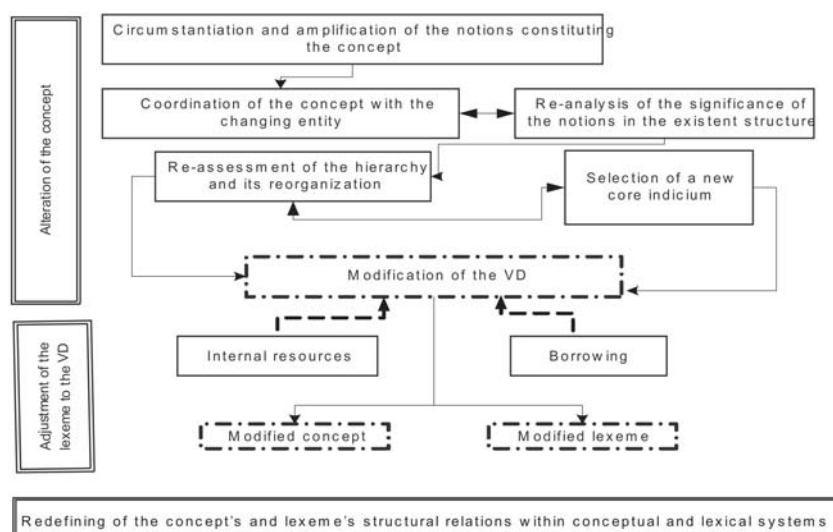


Figure 3. Modal of the re-analysis of the entity's essence and place in the system

It is evident that the models simplify the procedure but at the same time make it observable and tangible.

The theory is further illustrated by the material of English. Due to space limitation, two stages of every phase are characterized here. The third ones, whose mechanisms differ essentially, will be analyzed in a separate paper.

Discussion

The history of English has known a few periods of its equilibrium punctuation. The most critical for its evolution were those during Danish

and Norman invasions as well as the periods of the language dissemination beyond the borders of its original territory. The difference between them lies in the fact that the former two occurred on the territory where English was “at home”, while the third one pertains to the processes which have been taking place in the realm of alien cultures that imposed additional tasks on adaptation.

Under these circumstances previously dormant adaptive mechanisms were instantly activated. The operation of these mechanisms, which will be described in detail below, alongside with dialect contacts and contacts with indigenous and some European languages, led to the extension of variation and development of a number of new language variants. While at the beginning of the transplantation to the new habitat English was a national language, nowadays the term *English* comprises at least three groups of variants: English as a National Language (ENL), English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language (for a broader discussion of this issue see Allerton, Skandera & Tschichold, 2002; Kachru, 1990; McArthur, 2003; for classification of research on World Englishes see Bolton, 2003). Observation of these variants proved that the evolution of English has been guided by the processes going on in ENL variants. The second, and especially the third group, while adding to the nomenclature of elements and the volume of variation, has not influenced the trends of evolution (Skybina, 1996). Consequently, to enucleate the essence of the processes underlying the English language adaptation to the new conditions of existence beyond the British Isles national variants of English – American (AmE), Canadian (CanE), Australian (AuE), New Zealand (NZE) and South African (SAfE) – should be investigated.

Accordingly, in the research, which was carried out in three stages, these very variants were scrutinized. At the first stage historical and ethnographic documents were studied, then dictionaries of AmE, CanE, AuE, NZE and SAfE were analyzed and the transformations in the English word-stock⁵ on the new territories were singled out, and at last

the data obtained at the two stages were juxtaposed. It was natural adaptation that the main emphasis was laid on.

It was found that, due to the dualism of the national varieties of English (every variety is an integral component of a comprehensive system and at the same time is structurally and functionally self-sufficient), the main adaptation techniques are identical for every variety and for the mega-system of the world English as a whole. Consequently, the entire dynamics of the English language adaptation can be described on the example of one variety. Furthermore, concentration on one variety allows us to discuss *modus operandi* of the adaptation in detail, which is most appropriate at this stage of the research. In this paper it is done on the material of AuE.

The data for the analysis were collected from historical documents (Davison, 2000; Farrell, 1990; Davison, Hirst & Macintire 2001), encyclopedias (Bambrick, 1994; Horton, 1994) and dictionaries (Basset, 1986; Delbridge 1982; Heaton, 1879; Hughes, 1989; Ramson, 1988). The discussion naturally starts with the initial phase of adaptation (see Figure 1) which begins immediately after the first fleet's arrival at the end of the 18th century.

Conceptualization/Internalization

Apperception of a New Entity and its Initial Conceptualization

In Australia this process was an abrupt one as proper discernment and understanding of the new world was crucial for survival. The continent the first settlers came into contact with was characterized by the following main features: vast territories, endemic fauna and flora, arid lands, population belonging to a different race. All this, taken together, imposed insistent demands on the mode of life and economic activity.

It is important to remember that, although the first British settlement was made in Eastern Australia, rapid exploration of the continent began before the first settlement was founded. This process

was so intensive that by 1829 (only 40 years after the arrival of the first fleets) the whole continent was a British dependency.

Decomposition of the Conceptualization Results into Elementary Constituents.

The results of the decomposition can be presented by the set of the following constituents:

- the land with no signs of being anybody's property, that is, with no fences or barriers
- in the East – areas of grasslands
- the rest of the territory – desert tracts of barren land, too hot and dry to support many people, covered by different types of vegetation
- the climate with the temperature getting hot during the day, then dropping considerably at night
- the exceedingly flat land which is also arid, getting very little rain
- variety of endemic flora and fauna species
indigenous people belonging to a different race and religion, speaking different languages with various cultural beliefs, practices and traditions
- local people nomadic life with no land cultivation or cattle breeding, but hunting and gathering.

Subdivision of the Constituents into Familiar/Alien.

This is the stage at which the new world cognition takes the form of contraposition of the native and internalized cultures. Thus, the constituents are distributed along two vectors – familiar/alien. Here *familiar* means the existence of the appropriate notions (not obligatory the phenomenon or object) in the ethnic world picture. The results of the distribution are shown in Table 1.

Distribution of the Constituents along the Scale Familiar/Alien

Familiar constituents	Alien constituents
Areas of grasslands	The land with no signs of ownership
Desert tracts of barren land covered in various vegetation	Endemic flora and fauna species
Continental climate	Anthropological features of the natives
Flat, arid land	Cultural beliefs, practices and traditions
Indigenous people's nomadic way of life	Local languages

Establishing of a Hierarchy in the System of Values.

Of primary importance was the apprehension of the continent as 'terranullius', open for squatting. In this context, the state of the land and weather conditions as well as local flora and fauna are the next in order of significance. Indigenous people as a whole turned out to be on the periphery of this scale of values.

Setting Apart the Core Indicium.

Taking into consideration the fact that those were basic life necessities that the first settlers were preoccupied with, it is evident that the only conceptually relevant factor was the *degree of applicability and availability of a certain territory for life sustaining*. As a result a dichotomy 'seashore grassland fit for cultivation versus the unsettled territory beyond this rather narrow strip covered in natural vegetation' developed in the conceptual system of the newcomers to the Australian continent. It was the notion of *no man's land* that constituted the nucleus of the nascent concept.

Elaboration of a VD.

The analysis of the data (Bambrick, 1994; Basset, 1986; Davison, 2000; Davison *et al.*, 2001; Farrell, 1990; Heaton, 1879; Horton, 1994; Ramson, 1988) gives ground to build a horizontal structure of the emerging VD which sooner represents the amount of conceptual space occupied by the comprising notions than their relationships. This structure is represented in Figure 4.

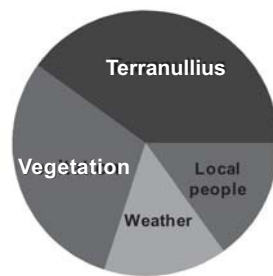


Figure 4. Structure of the VD (the end of the eighteenth – the beginning of the nineteenth century)

With the elaboration of the VD the process of conceptualization/ internalization, which in this case consisted in the acceptance of the land as habitat, approached its concluding stage.

Verbalization of the VD and Concept Generation

In this particular case the language own resources were used to name the land opposing to a consuetudinary landscape – lexeme *bush*.

There seems to be a number of extra-linguistic and linguistic reasons explaining the choice.

Among the former, of principal importance was a resemblance, though faint, of the land in Australia to the uncultivated plots of land in England, an analogy between shrubby areas at home and untilled land in Australia, among the latter – the etymological, and semantic characteristics of the lexeme *bush*.

Etymology reveals a complex structure of the lexeme *bush* semantics in BrE which comprises three main elements – *bush* + *thicket* + *firewood* (see *bush sb* in (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Besides, there is an opinion (Hughes, 1989), that the meaning of the SAfE term *bush*, *n.* and *adj* in its first meaning ‘*the thick vegetation covering any uncultivated area*’, which was first recorded in written sources in 1698 (Silva, 1996), could have influenced semantics of *bush* in Australian English. I do not see valid reasons for such an estimation as, although the first meaning in SAfE was first recorded

in 1698, it was registered in The Oxford English Dictionary as the meaning first recorded in BrE in 1780 which makes its being an integral component of the first settlers' vocabulary most improbable; besides the most Australian meaning of this concept – 'undeveloped, largely uninhabited country' was first recorded in SAfE in 1829 and in AuE in 1803 (see Table 2). Thus, the conjecture of independent development of the term *bush* in AuE appears rather plausible.

Chronology of the Development of the Lexeme Bush in Australia (First Stage) ⁶

Date of the first recording	PS	Meaning
1790	<i>n</i>	Natural vegetation of any kind
1790	<i>n</i>	A tract of land covered in such vegetation
1803	<i>n</i>	Country which remains in its natural state
1803	<i>n</i>	Country which has not been settled or which resisted settlement
1804		
In phrases with verbs of motion, esp. <i>to take (to) the bush</i>		a) Orig. of convicts: to escape from custody or justice; b) to run away; c) (of animals) to run wild

Note: Data developed from Delbridge, 1982; Hughes, 1989; Ramson, 1988.

Complicated was the semantic structure of the lexeme *bush* in English of the eighteenth century that made this lexeme a potential derivational basis:

Bush, *sb*, A shrub ...; a small clump of shrubs apparently forming one plant (1250); in northern dialects extended to sub-shrubs...(1529); † *collectively* A clump of shrubs, a thicket, bushy ground (1523); † a. A clump of shrubs used as a place of concealment (1330), b. begga's-bush (1600); a. A

branch or bunchy of ivy (...) hung up as a vintner's sign; *hence* the sign-board of a tavern (1532); *b. hence* the tavern itself (1625); † anything resembling a bush (1513); A bushy head of hair – (1509); † A bushy tail, esp. of a fox (1575). Colonial meaning functions since 1780.

Bush, *v*¹. † intrans. To hide in a bush, lie in ambush (1623). 2. To protect or support with bushes (1647). (Data adapted from (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

Apparently, juxtaposition of the first settlers' perception of the new land with the semantics of the lexeme *bush* lead to the development of the new meanings represented in Table 2.

Comparative analysis reveals the directions of semantic transformation of the BrE lexeme *bush* which led to the configuring of its specificity in AuE, as represented in Figure 5.

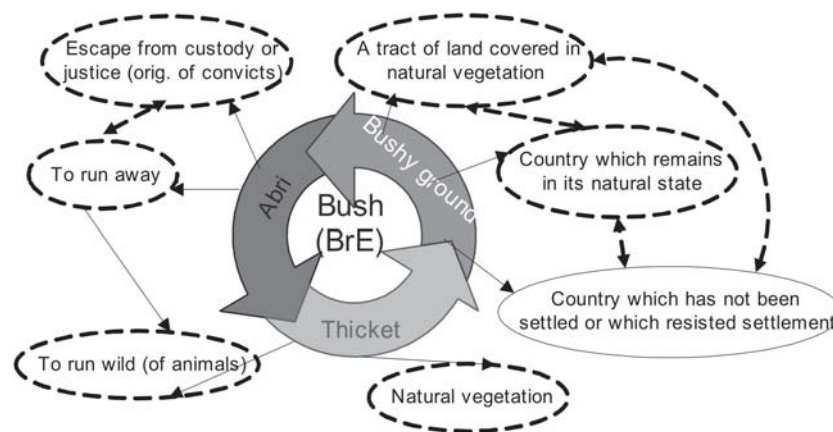


Figure 5. Dynamics of the development of the lexeme *bush* in AuE (first stage)

The central part of the figure illustrates the type of relationships among the meaning of the BrE lexeme *bush* semantics which served

the basis of semantic derivation for Australian meanings. The shapes around it demonstrate the relationships of Australian meanings of the lexeme *bush* with those in BrE and among themselves.

Comparison of the corollary of the VD elaboration with the results of its linguistic representation reveals the discrepancy between the results of a new entity apperception, its cognitive processing by the speech community and the results of verbalization.

The explanation might be found in the fact that while apperception and cognition are limited only by the degree of penetration into the essence of the entity perceived, verbalization is also restricted by the linguistic characteristics of the term.

In this particular case it concerns such components of VD as *local people* and *weather* which became an integral part of the concept *bush* without formal semantic representation in the lexeme.

In the course of further apperception and cognition of the new world, the process of re-conceptualization comes to the front but it was the Australian concept *bush* that was re-conceptualized. Accordingly, the second phase of the English language adaptation in Australia began (see Figure 2).

Re-conceptualization

Apperception of a New Aspect of the Entity

As the new settlers searched the interior parts of the country and settled down in the bush the initial vision was expanding. This expansion was determined by both better understanding of the reality and by more intensive utilization of it. Parallel to squatting in the interior regions, the settlers were developing urban culture under more congenial conditions of the seashore. Accordingly, the interior parts – the bush, where sheep breeding was the main occupation – were opposed to the more civilized city regions with their more sophisticated mode of life.

Formation of New Notions

Consequently, in the nineteenth century a number of new notions indicating the ongoing exploration evolved. Among them the notions of *country*, *rural dwellers*, *rural life* were the first. Their offshoots included *hard life*, *traditional life*, *rural*. As life in the interior areas was assessed in comparison with that in the growing cities, the notions of *leave the town*, *to escape* developed. There also developed a number of notions related to indigenous people: *not white*, *traditional life*. The notion *natural vegetation* was supplemented with the implication of indigenous and the perception of flora/fauna as a source of food and materials. Hardships of life in the bush which reduced human demand to basic necessities promoted the development of such notions as *simple*, *improvised* (of artifacts) and *unsophisticated* (of people), *worthless*, *unmarketable* (of animals).

Assessment of the New Notions in Terms of Relevant/Irrelevant

The very fact that the new notions developed proves that they all were of certain relevance for the speech community. However, the degree of significance varied from the highest in *rural life* to the lowest in *traditional life*.

Launching of the New Notions into the Existing Structure

It is generally accepted that the new entities enter the periphery of the conceptual world and language system. But with the development of the concept *bush* it was not the case. Perhaps, due to the exceptional importance of *the bush* for the life of the community as a whole (whether in the city or in the bush), the new notions instantly became "legitimate" elements of the concept *bush*. I drew this conclusion from the analysis of the literature as well as the investigation of the derivatives of the lexeme *bush* in AuE. They revealed that though the perception of the *bush* as a *vast territory covered in abundance of vegetation* retained its position in the structure of the concept, new social aspects of the concept were proliferating rapidly.

Reorganization of the Hierarchy

At this stage, with the first stations being started, the incipience of a new culture in the interior parts characterized further exploration and utilization of the continent. Accordingly, the system of values was transforming and those were the notions of (unknown) country and the hardships of life in it that appeared on the top of the hierarchy; the nature, mainly the flora which served as a source of food and materials, was the next most important notion. At this very time the bush and the life there receive derogatory evaluation as being simple and unsophisticated. Corresponding notions, along with those associated with the life of indigenous people, occupied the periphery of the VD structure.

Selection of a New Core Indicium (optional)

Consequently, it was the notion of *hard life in an unknown country* (with all its attributes) that triggered the process of the VD structure reorganization. As a result, a notion of *adventurous exploratory life* substituted the initial core indicium of *no man's land* and the following transformations in the VD occurred. Figure 6 illustrates the results of the re-conceptualization.

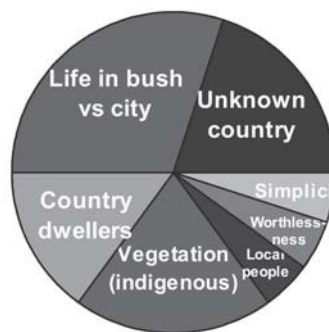


Figure 6. Development of the VD structure in the nineteenth century

(Re-)verbalization of the VD and Concept Modification

As transformations of the VD were not only quantitative but also and primarily qualitative, different scenarios of verbalization were

possible, however, as all the new notions that developed in the nineteenth century were basically but the augmentation of the original ones, language response consisted in variability extension via semantic derivation. Its course and results are represented in Table 3 and Figure 7.

Chronology of the Development of the Lexeme *Bush* in Australia (Second Stage)

Date of the first recording	PS	Meaning
1825 – 1842	<i>v</i>	To camp, often involuntary, in the bush
1825 – 1983	<i>n</i>	The country as opposed to the town; rural as opposed to urban life; those who dwell in the country collectively
1827 – 1978	<i>adj</i>	Of Aborigines: living outside white society
1828 – 1960	<i>adj</i>	Of or pertaining to natural vegetation or to a tract of land covered therein: compare Bush <i>n</i> 1790
1828 – 1846		(With it): to go into the bush; to make an expedition into unknown country
1829 – 1904		
In phrases with verbs of motion, esp. <i>to take (to) the bush</i>		To leave the town for the country
1835 – 1982	<i>adj</i>	By extension, and with connotations depending on whether the perception is urban or rural: of artifacts, constructions, etc., simple (crudely, ingeniously, etc.), improvised; of people, lacking an urban sophistication; of domestic animals, useless, unmarketable, fit to be put 'out to grass'
Date of the first recording	PS	Meaning
1839 – 1981	<i>adj</i>	Of artifacts: made with branches, saplings, etc., as materials
1839 – 1874	<i>v</i>	(With it): to live, usu. under conditions of hardships, in the bush
1841 – 1847		
In phrases with verbs of motion, esp. <i>to take (to) the bush</i>		Of Aborigines: to return to traditional life
1845 – 1978	<i>adj</i>	Of or pertaining to rural, as opposed to urban life. Cf. Bush <i>n</i> 1825

1870 *adj* Of flora and fauna: indigenous; also used of these as a source of food. Compare Bush *n* 1803

Note: Data developed from Delbridge, 1982; Hughes, 1989; Ramson, 1988.

As was the case with the initial phase of adaptation, here again the lexeme *bush* lags behind the VD in the coverage of all its aspects. Perhaps to overcome the discrepancy, other adaptation strategies were employed parallel to the expansion of the semantics of the lexeme *bush*: compound words and derivatives were coined by means of which different features of life in the bush were specified. In the same way, endemic species of flora and fauna got their names.

All these developments enriched the concept and modified its structure in the direction of social aspects prevalence over material.

As the bush retains significance for Australian way of life and mentality, the process of re-conceptualization continues while adaptation enters its third phase (see Figure 3).

In the result of circumstantiation and amplification of the notions constituting the concept, adjustment and re-adjustment of the concept to the changing reality, re-analysis of the significance of notions in the existent structure and re-assessment of the hierarchy, the structure of VD experienced transformations. In the contemporary structure social aspects dominate over material which is totally reflected in the semantics of the lexeme *bush*. With the word-nest *bush* material taken into consideration, this fact becomes even more prominent. Figure 8 shows the components of the contemporary VD and their relevance for the entire structure.

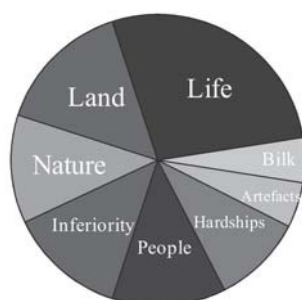


Figure 8. Contemporary structure of the VD

Language responds to this course of development with its own resources as shown in Table 4 and Figure 9.

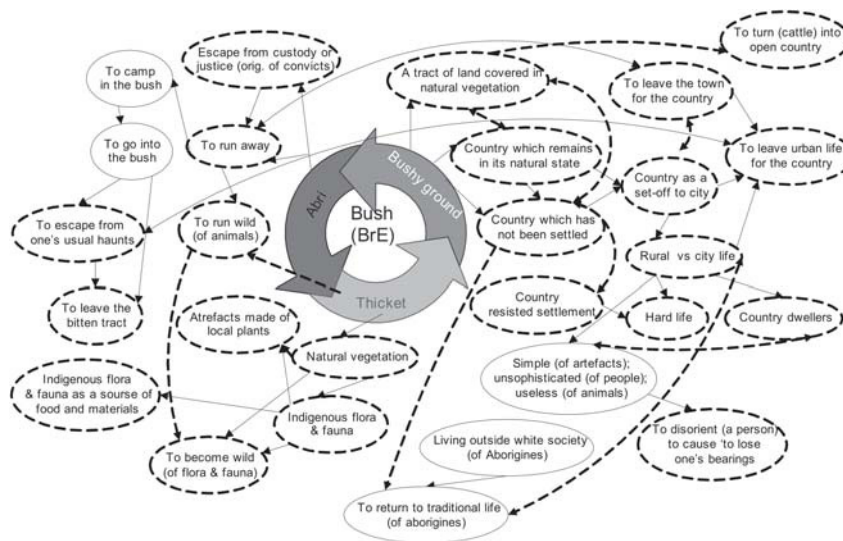


Figure 9. Dynamics of the development of the lexeme *bush* in AuE (third stage)

It is evident that in the course of evolution significance of the notions comprising the concept *bush* for Australians was transforming. While at the early stages the notions of *vegetation* and *land* dominated in its structure, gradually the accents shifted from natural to social components that reflect the new stage of re-conceptualization and proves the thesis of the permanent character of linguistic adaptation.

Conclusion

In this research I have addressed the question of how language steeped in the alien environment which staggered its equilibrium is modified to both meet new demands and regain stability. To answer it national variants of English were studied whereby a theory of the language adaptation to the new cultural spaces was developed. Within

its framework artificial adaptation was demarcated from natural that allowed modeling the course of the latter one comprising its cognitive and lingual aspects. The model consists of a number of mechanisms that together explain how speech community introduces new entities and how they are conceptualized and verbalized. Verification of the model elicited the fact that natural adaptation is not a developmental mechanism which is conserved for “special purposes”, but a perpetual factor of language existence.

I have drawn attention to the fact that adapting to new cultural spaces language is straining the alien world through the sieve of the interior conceptual and lingual systems. The activity of the adaptation mechanisms provides step by step internalization of the new reality in such a way that every innovation is accreted with the native conceptual and lingual flesh. Operation of the adaptation mechanisms mostly in accordance with the internalized scheme is one of the major factors of equilibrium restoration and the language system preservation within the limits of its homeostasis. Therefore, national variants of English should be perceived as culturally stipulated modifications of the initial linguistic entity.

Notes

1. This article is a modified version of the paper presented at the *Workshop 2004: Language and Culture. Expression, Identity and Society*. Sydney, Australia, February, pp. 12-13, 2004.
2. *Entity* is used as a generic term to represent article, phenomenon, idea, and so forth.
3. Introduction of the term *virtual denotatum* ensues from the analysis of the empirical data which revealed the existence of a certain provisional intermediate stage between apperception and verbal symbolization of its results. I introduce the term virtual denotatum (VD) to depict a mental construct representing the result of the new entity apperception in the ethnos' collective memory; in the course of verbalization VD forms the basis of the concept and simultaneously the foundation for the word, which moulds the concept. VD does not dissolve in concept and lexeme but is preserved in a latent form for the purposes of continuing adaptation.

4. Following Yu. Stepanov, concept is understood as a knot of culture in human consciousness (Stepanov, 2001).
5. I admit that adaptation involves all levels of the language system, but in this situation the most urgent necessity was that of the alien world conceptualization and therefore of semantic system adaptation.
6. Segmentations of period are based on the analyses of the English word-stock development in Australia carried out in the author's PhD dissertation (Skybina, 1984) (Footnote to table 2).

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