ЧИТАЯ В ОРИГИНАЛЕ

(Любительское исследование из области филологии)

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В 2023 году исполняется 210 лет со времени публикации (1813 год) романа «Гордость и предубеждение» английской писательницы XIX века – Джейн Остен.

Не смотря на то, что роман был опубликован в 19-ом веке, написан он был, судя по свидетельствам биографов писательницы, в конце 18-ого. Это даёт нам право считать, что язык романа является английским языком восемнадцатого столетия. И тогда у всех, кто хотя бы немного интересуется лингвистикой и историей языка, возникает соблазн исследовать язык романа на предмет поиска отличий в языке 18-ого и 21-ого веков.

Вниманию читателя предлагается попытка увлечь учащихся поисково-исследовательской деятельностью через чтение художественных произведений в оригинале с целью развития их аналитического мышления, в основе которого лежат наблюдательность, осмысленность, умение сопоставлять и сравнивать, обобщать и делать выводы.

Так как настоящая статья адресована учителям английского языка, занимающимся подготовкой обучающихся к участию в НПК (научно-практических конференциях) школьников, то всё наше небольшое исследование мы публикуем на английском языке.

Jane Austen was born in a small village in Hampshire, England, in 1775. We know that she would read out her early attempts at novels to her family and refine and hone the words based on their response. In this way she completed the first draft manuscripts of “Sense and Sensibility” and “Pride and Prejudice”. She also wrote the manuscript for “Northanger Abby” the same way.

In 1800 her father decided to move to the City of Bath. It seems that urban society didn’t really suit Austen, and her output as a writer fell away for the next few years.

So, we see that the novel “Pride and Prejudice” was written in the 18-th century. It means that the language of the novel also belongs to that very century, and it was respectfully preserved by the HarperCollins Publishers in the edition published in 2010 which we have used for our work.

The Language Peculiarities

In case we deny any possibility of misprinting or the author’s possible mistakes, as Jane Austen surely was a well educated person thanks to reading a lot, we realize that she wrote using the language typical of her time, the language that was spoken in the society of hers. Her language reflected its phonetic, grammatical and lexical peculiarities, the spelling and the usage manner, for example, the collocations from the colloquial speech which surrounded her.

Phonetics

Analyzing the text of the book we learn some interesting facts concerning, for instance, the former rules of pronouncing words, beginning with the letter “h”: the usage of the article “an” in front of such words as “*hundred*”, “*husband*”, “*hasty* kiss” and “*hopeless* business” show that the sound [h] was constantly fully omitted.

Another, unusual for us, example of the usage of the article “an” is that in front of the word “*union*”. So we cannot even imagine how the noun was pronounced in the case.

Spelling

We also can suppose that in the 18-th century it was not yet fixed how to spell some words: ‘*to shew*’ (instead of “to show”) and ‘*to chuse*’ (instead of “to choose”). As we see, the spelling of the words reflects the way of pronouncing them. It is interesting that the second and the third forms of the verb “*shew*” also contain “e” – “*shewed*”, “*shewn*”; but the verb “*chuse*” possesses “o” in its second and third forms.

As far as it concerned spelling we also paid attention to the fact that the words we write in one word nowadays, at Jane Austen’s time were written sometimes separately and sometimes together, in one word - for example, *“every where”, “every body”, “to any one else”, “any thing and every thing”, “up stairs”, “down stairs”*, etc.

* I could forgive him any thing and every thing.
* …manners to every body.

So we can suppose that there were no strict rules for the words of the kind.

Grammar

Article

It is strange for us to see the indefinite article used with ordinary numerals, for instance, “to dance *a second time*”, or no article at all as in the phrase “*on second thoughts*”. Though, the word “first” is always used by Austen with the definite article.

The same concerns the usage of the indefinite article with the adjectives in the superlative degree – “*a most charming* young lady”, “*a most valuable* living”, etc.

But at the same time, Austen uses the definite article in the similar cases – “*the best men that ever breathed*”, “*the most disagreeable man*”.

However, there are some peculiar cases with adjectives and adverbs in the comparative degree, too:

* …which was *the more probable…*
* I am *the less* surprised at what has happened.
* … was *fonder* than ever of Georgiana. (The comparative degree of the adjective which is a part of the predicate).

Suffix

We have also noticed that Jane Austen adds the suffix “-*est*” to the so called “long” adjectives, putting them into the superlative degree – “the *handsomest* of her sex”, “their *pleasantest* preservative from want”, and an especially interesting case – “he was always the *sweetest-tempered*, *most generous-hearted* boy in the world”. The last example displays, as we consider, her creativity in the language (“the sweetest-tempered” instead of “the most sweet-tempered”) and her awareness of the way of using “most” with long adjectives.

By the way, Jane Austen often uses the adjective “*handsome*” in her novel. In her text it refers to both men and women, and even things or events.

But nowadays the adjective is not used as far as it concerns women. Thus we have to admit that a language is always changing, and we have a happy opportunity to observe it with the help of the preserved texts of the previous centuries.

Negation

There are a lot of examples when Austen does not use an auxiliary verb to make up a negative sentence:

* …she *knew not* how to believe…
* I *have not* the pleasure of understanding you.
* … and Miss Lucas … *cared not* how soon that establishment were gained.
* I *doubt not* but you will be …

But at the same time we meet plenty of sentences with the auxiliary verb:

* …and Mrs. Collins did not think it right to press the subject.
* I did not know before that you ever walked this way.
* If she does not object to it, why should we?
* Her objecting does not justify him.

The fact lets us suppose that there was no strict rule of building a negative sentence.

The Influence of the German language

English and German both belong to one group of languages. May be, because of that in England of the eighteenth century there remained the way to build numerals in the way the Germen do:

* with *four-and-twenty* families
* I am not *one-and-twenty*
* Such I was from eight to *eight-and-twenty*

You meet the same when you read in the original, for instance, *The King’s Own* by Frederick Marryat, the British writer of the beginning of the 19-th century.

“Shall” or “Will”

We are taught that there are two auxiliary verbs of the Future Tense – “shall” to use with “I” and “We” and “will” for other personal pronouns.

But in Austen’s texts we meet both “will” and “shall” after “I” and “We”:

* I will try to do what I think to be wisest.
* I will go to Meryton.
* She is very headstrong foolish girl and does not know her own interest, but I will make her know it.
* I will go directly to Mr. Bennet.
* I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require.
* Oh, what hours of transport we shall spend…
* I shall depend on hearing from you very often, Eliza.
* I will not trust myself on the subject.

At the same time the verb “shall” is often used as a modal one with such pronouns as *you, she, he*:

* … when your sister is recovered, *you shall*, if you please, *name* the very day of the ball.
* She added that *Elizabeth shall be brought* to reason.
* Let her be called down. *She shall hear* my opinion.
* *He shall* not be in love with me, if I can prevent it.

So we can say that the two verbs are rather modal than auxiliary ones.

Contracted forms

It seems strange that Jane Austen never uses contracted forms, even in dialogues.

There is a lot to discuss in Austen’s texts. For instance, some interesting (for us) constructions:

* *Many a stupider* person
* Applied to *many a woman* who
* *So very fine a* young man
* You are *too sensible a* girl.
* It was *rather too early* to begin.
* Have *quite many enough*
* *She was the better* *able* to bear
* My uncle and aunt *were horrid unpleasant* all the time…

The indefinite article with abstract nouns:

* After *a short silence*
* To have *a thorough knowledge*
* Of *a fine, stout, healthy love*…

The indefinite article with “something”:

* *There was a something* about her more wrong …
* She must possess *a certain something* in her air…
* The application was *a something* to look forward to.

The plural of abstract nouns:

* In pompous *nothings* on his side
* *The attentions* of the officers…had increased into assurance.
* Mrs. Bennet was profuse in her *acknowledgments*.

The enumerated phrases need to be further thought over to see if the phenomena they contain continue to exist in the modern English.

В заключение, следует признать, что не все издательства печатают этот роман в оригинале. Например, в версиях романа, изданных другими издательствами, мы не найдём, в частности, «ошибок» в спеллинге. Поэтому издание *the HarperCollins Publishers* 2010 года – счастливая находка для любителей читать художественные произведения в оригинале.