

Tchotchke

The word “hotchpotch” appeared in 1964 in American English meaning "a small knickknack or decorative piece". There are actually many variations in spelling and pronunciation of the word and the original word has been corrupted as the term passed through various dialects and areas.

Because the word has been passed around, it could be theorized that it stood for something that was common throughout various cultures. Also, it indicates when it was most used, there were bodies of different languages close together or at least easily linked through, for instance, trade.

The oldest origin of the word can be traced to Yiddish from a Slavic source - the Russian word “tsatska” but this is far from the origis of the word. It is theorized the earliest form of the word is from a now extinct dialect of Polish and is derived from the word “czaczko.”

The word is probably a blend of Yiddish, Hebrew and other eastern european languages. It has been found that all these languages seem to have a word that is very similar in sound which all have the same definition.

The most interesting definition I fould is from the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “tsatske.” “Tsatske” appears in modern Hebrew slang meaning “a sexually loose and provocative young woman.” Not too surpriseing, In "Joys of Yiddish" Leo Rosten lists it as “a sexy but brainless girl.”