



THE PROBLEM OF BORROWINGS IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 10th January 2025 Accepted: 7th February 2025</p>	<p>The work is devoted to the study of the problem of borrowings in Russian language. The nature, classification, and reasons for the appearance of borrowings, their positive and negative influence on the language are considered. Special attention is paid to the modern stage of borrowings associated with globalization and the dominance of English. The conclusions emphasize the need to maintain a balance between language enrichment and language identity.</p>

Keywords: borrowings, Russian language, globalization, lexicon, adaptation, foreign words, calques, culture, national identity, influence of foreign languages.

The Russian language, like any other language, has been influenced by other languages throughout its history. This is due to cultural, political, economic, and scientific contacts between peoples. Borrowings have played an important role in the enrichment of vocabulary and language development.

The issue of borrowings in Russian language is a relevant topic of modern linguistics. Borrowed words are actively used in speech, occupying an important place in the enrichment and development of the Russian language. However, this process causes controversy related to the preservation of national linguistic identity.

Borrowing is the process of incorporating words from other languages into the vocabulary of the Russian language. Borrowed words come into the language with changes in phonetic, grammatical, and semantic structure for their adaptation.

The process of borrowing words in the Russian language began in antiquity and accompanied its development throughout history. It is a natural mechanism peculiar to all languages, which allows for adapting and enriching the lexical stock in response to changes in culture, science, and society.

In the Old Russian period, borrowings from the ancient Greek and Latin languages began to penetrate into the Russian language with the adoption of Christianity in the 10th century. A significant source of borrowings for the Russian language was the Old Slavonic language. In the 10th-11th centuries, the Church Slavonic language (a close relative of Old Slavonic) had a huge impact on the lexicon. Many words of religious and cultural character entered the Russian language, for example: *angel*, *evangel*, *icon*. These borrowings were adapted to the phonetics and morphology of the Russian language and, over time, became an integral part of it.

During the Mongol-Tatar yoke (13th-15th centuries), Turkic borrowings penetrated into the Russian language. These words denoted everyday objects, military terms, and administrative concepts, such as *arshin*, *kaftan*, *kazna*, *karul*, and *bazaar*.

With the beginning of Peter the Great's reign (late 17th - early 18th centuries), the Russian language was strongly influenced by Western European languages, especially German, Dutch, and French. Borrowings were connected with reforms, the development of science, navy, army, and fashion:

German: *barrage*, *resort*, *sandwich*.

Dutch language: *kok*, *sailor*, *yacht*.

French language: *boutique*, *menu*, *toilet*.

French words especially influenced the language in the 18th and 19th centuries, when knowledge of this language was compulsory among the nobility.

In the 19th century, Russian borrowed many words from German, which was connected with the spread of philosophy and technical sciences. For example: *gymnasium*, *landscape*, *Hermitage*.

In the same period, borrowings from the French language in the sphere of culture continued: *ticket*, *theatre*, *foyer*.

The 20th century is marked by the active penetration of English into Russian, especially after the Second World War. This is due to the development of technology, the emergence of new technologies, and globalization: *computer*, *Internet*, *smartphone*, *marketing*.

In addition, the spread of anglicisms became especially noticeable in the sphere of mass culture and sports: *football*, *trend*, *blogger*, *likes*.

In the 21st century, the process of borrowing continues and acquires a mass character. Due to the influence of globalization and the dominance of English-speaking culture, new terms are actively



entering the Russian language: *content, startup, lifehack, hype, crash*.

Thus, borrowings come into the language due to the need for new concepts. As V. V. Vinogradov noted, «language always strives to express new phenomena of life, and borrowings play a key role here»¹. The era of globalization is characterized by the active exchange of information, cultures, and technologies between countries. In this process, languages act as tools of intercultural communication, and borrowings become a key mechanism for enriching the lexicon. The Russian language in the 21st century is especially subject to the influence of anglicisms, which is connected with the dominant role of English in science, technology, business, and mass culture.

Borrowings in the era of globalization are characterized by the prevalence of anglicisms. In this context, English has become the main source of borrowings for the Russian language during the era of globalization. Words such as *blog, hype, fake, and startup* are actively used in everyday speech. As L. P. Krysin notes, «the analysis of modern texts shows that about 70% of new borrowings in Russian come from English»².

Anglicisms primarily enter the Russian language in the sphere of information technologies, such as *gadget, software, smartphone*, and *upgrade*. Many IT-related terms originally originate in English.

Anglicisms also enter the Russian language in the sphere of business and economics, such as *marketing, freelancing, collaboration, and brand*. In youth slang and mass culture, such as *cringe, vibe, challenge, and meme*, new words are actively used.

Calques (translated loanwords) and hybrid words are often found in the Russian language. For example, a word like 'hype' is formed from the English 'hype' with the addition of a Russian suffix.

Globalization strengthens intercultural ties, and English acts as a lingua franca.

Borrowed words are often perceived as modern and fashionable, which makes them popular in society. Borrowings allow the Russian language to remain relevant and reflect modern realities, such as words like 'zoom' and 'co-working.'

Excessive borrowing can lead to the displacement of native words from the language. As D. S. Likhachev emphasized, «The preservation of linguistic identity is the preservation of the cultural code of a nation»³

¹ Vinogradov V. V. On the Language of Fiction Literature. - M.: Nauka, 1980, p.209.

² Krysin L. P. Foreign-language words in modern Russian speech. - M.: Languages of Slavic Culture, 2008, p.97.

³ Likhachev D.S. Notes on Russian. - L.: Soviet Writer, 1971, p.29

Many borrowed words are adapted to Russian grammar and phonetics. For example, the word 'like' has become a verb: 'to like.'

Fake - fake, to fake.

Challenger - Challenger.

Upgrade - to upgrade.

Globalization has both positive and negative effects on the Russian language. Borrowings enrich the lexicon, but also threaten the linguistic identity. The challenge for linguists and society is to find a balance between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to new conditions.

Borrowings remain an important mechanism for the development of the Russian language. However, their excessive use can threaten the identity of the language. As D. S. Likhachev wrote: «Language is the soul of the people, and it must not be lost in the pursuit of external modernization»⁴.

The history of borrowings in the Russian language shows that they have played a key role in its development over the centuries. Each era has brought new words, reflecting changes in society, science, and culture. However, it is crucial to maintain a balance between enriching the language and preserving its uniqueness to avoid the loss of national identity.

There is a classification system that categorizes borrowings:

Direct borrowings: words transferred without any change (e.g., *business, internet*).

Calques: literal translation or transfer of a word's structure (e.g., *skyscraper, self-government*).

Semantic borrowings: borrowing of meaning without borrowing the form (e.g., *revolution in a figurative sense*).

There is also a classification of borrowed words by their source:

Anglicisms (e.g., *trend*),

Gallicisms (e.g., *boutique*),

Germanisms (e.g., *barrier*).

Borrowings occur for several reasons, including:

Cultural contacts: the introduction of new ideas, technologies, and culture (e.g., borrowings from French in the 18th-19th centuries).

Scientific and technological progress: the need to name new realities (e.g., *gadget, smartphone*).

Fashion for certain languages: the influence of English in the modern era of globalization.

At the same time, the excessive use of foreign words raises criticism from defenders of the Russian language, as it leads to the loss of its uniqueness: overuse of foreign words diminishes the value of the original vocabulary.

⁴ Likhachev D.S. Notes on Russian. - L.: Soviet Writer, 1971, p.38



Difficulties in adaptation arise: some borrowings remain difficult to pronounce and write (e.g., cashback, deadline).

In language stylistics, the inappropriate use of borrowings can degrade the quality of speech.

Despite the criticism, borrowings contribute to language development, expand its semantic and stylistic range, enrich cultural heritage, and make the language more flexible and modern.

Dictionaries of foreign words are reference publications that include borrowed words used in the language, along with explanations of their meaning, origin, and peculiarities of use. Such dictionaries help understand the meaning of foreign borrowings and provide information about their history and adaptation in the language.

The purpose of creating dictionaries of foreign words is to clarify the meanings of borrowed words, especially unfamiliar ones, indicate their origin (etymology), and describe changes in meaning or form during the adaptation process.

As with all dictionaries, they have a headword: the borrowed word in its modern form. Next is the etymology: an indication of the source language (for example, 'football' comes from the English 'football'). Then follows the interpretation: an explanation of meaning and examples of usage. Phonetics and grammar: an indication of pronunciation and morphological features of the word.

In Russian, there is a dictionary edited by F. L. Ageenko and N. P. Vasilenko ('Dictionary of Foreign Words', 1955), as well as an edition edited by L. P. Krysin ('Dictionary of Foreign Words of the Russian Language', 2003), along with online versions of dictionaries (e.g., the database of the Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation).

Dictionaries of foreign words contribute to the improvement of linguistic culture and help use borrowed words correctly in speech and writing.

Also, they record changes in the language, mark new borrowings and disappearing archaisms.

Also, dictionaries of foreign words reflect the stages of historical development of the language, social and cultural changes.

Modern dictionaries are used by journalists, translators, teachers and anyone who faces the problem of understanding or translating foreign words. «The dictionaries of recent decades have recorded a large stratum of the lexicon of foreign-language words, which with the greatest completeness reflect the changes taking place in the life of society. These are words relating to different aspects of life⁵»: medicine

and cosmetics, mass culture and modern music, food, clothes, politics and economics.

Dictionaries of foreign words play an important role in understanding the lexical richness of a language. They help to realise how borrowings expand the Russian language, allowing it to adapt to new realities while maintaining cultural and historical continuity.

So, the process of borrowing is inevitable and natural for any language, including Russian. However, it is important to find a balance between enriching the language with borrowed words and preserving the national linguistic culture. A rational approach to the use of borrowings will help to avoid negative consequences and ensure the harmonious development of the Russian language.

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