

# FOREIGN WORDS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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## Abstract

This article examines the process of borrowing foreign words into the Russian language, their impact on the development of vocabulary and perception by native speakers. The main sources of borrowings at various historical stages, as well as the role of foreign words in modern speech are analyzed. The opinions of famous writers and critics on the impact of borrowings on the language and culture are given. Special attention is paid to the adaptation of foreign words, their role in various spheres of life and possible consequences excessive enthusiasm for borrowings.

**Keywords:** Foreign words, borrowings, vocabulary, language influence, adaptation, culture, Russian language, Anglicisms, assimilation, purism.

## Introduction

Borrowing foreign words is an integral part of the development of any language. For centuries, the Russian language has absorbed words from other languages, enriching vocabulary, but sometimes causing disputes about the purity of speech<sup>1</sup>. Some see borrowings as a way to make the language modern and convenient, while others see it as a threat to its identity<sup>2</sup>. Already in the XVIII century, the Russian nobility gladly inserted French phrases into their speech, and today young people actively use Anglicisms like "team building", "catering" and "fake". But are these words really necessary or can we get by with primordially Russian equivalents? In this article, we will analyze in detail the process of borrowing, its historical stages, its impact on culture and language, as well as the opinions of the classics about the need or harm of foreign words.

Historical stages of borrowings. The process of borrowing foreign words into the Russian language has taken place throughout history, but several periods have become the most noticeable: the Old Russian period (until the XV century): borrowings from Greek, Scandinavian, and Turkic languages. Examples: "icon" (Greek), "druzhina" (Scand.), "kazna" (Turkic); the Muscovite state (XV–XVII centuries): active penetration of Polish, German and Latin words: "nobility", "fort", "sergeant"; Peter the Great era (XVIII century): mass

1 Tolstoy L. N. O yazyke i slove [On the language and the word]. Moscow, Iskusstvo Publ., 1952. – 150 p.

2 Krysin L. P. Inoyazychnye slova v sovremennom russkom yazyke [Foreign words in modern Russian]. Moscow, Akademiya Publ., 2004. – 256 p.



borrowings from Dutch, German and French: "kamsol", "boots", "regulations"; XIX century: fashion for the French language in high society: "randé", "gallantry", "cavalier"; XX century: the influence of English, especially after the collapse of the USSR: "marketing", "rating", "computer".

How Foreign Words Change the Russian Language. Foreign words do not just get into the language – they transform it, sometimes changing the very way of thinking of native speakers. The influence of borrowed words can be seen in several aspects:

**Creating new verbs.** One of the most striking trends is the formation of verbs from foreign words. "Google" (search on the Internet), "like" (express approval on social networks), "check" (check) - all these words appeared due to technological progress and the widespread use of Anglicisms.

**Changing values.** Sometimes borrowed words take on new meanings over time. For example, the word "office" originally meant "service" (officership), but now it is associated exclusively with the workplace.

**Phonetic and morphological adaptation.** Some words change, adapting to the laws of the Russian language: "respect" (from respect), "user" (from user), "drive" (from drive).

**Confusion of languages in speech.** Among IT and marketing specialists, you can hear phrases like: "zaonbordit a newcomer" (accept a team), "shuffle a file" (share a file), "we have become friends with him" (we have become friends on social networks). Such hybrid expressions are increasingly common not only in the professional environment, but also in the everyday speech of young people.

**Formation of compound words.** Some borrowings give rise to new complex words: "online store", "smart watch", "online course".

Language is a living system, and it inevitably adapts to changing reality. However, not everyone perceives this change positively. Some believe that borrowings make speech dynamic and modern, others fear that due to the dominance of foreign words, the Russian language will lose its originality.

Disputes around borrowings. Some writers criticized the dominance of foreign words. Nikolai Leskov complained that "excessive enthusiasm for borrowings makes the language soulless."<sup>3</sup> Ivan Turgenev in his "Notes of a Hunter" noted that the language of the Russian peasant is rich and expressive without borrowings.

On the other hand, Alexander Pushkin believed that borrowings are a natural process, the main thing is that the language retains its vividness: "The Russian language is strong because it is able to absorb the best."<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Dahl, who compiled the famous "Explanatory Dictionary",

3 Leskov N. S. Essays on the Russian Word. St. Petersburg: Wolf Printing House, 1895. – 245 p.

4 Pushkin A. S. Izbrannye proizvedeniia [Selected works]. Moscow, Eksmo Publ., 2008. – 412 p.

actively fought for the replacement of foreign words with Russians, proposing to say "plane" instead of "airplane".<sup>5</sup>

Arguments against borrowings: clogging the language: critics argue that the abundance of foreign words makes speech artificial and difficult to understand; replacement of native Russian words: the richness of the Russian language allows you to do without foreign terms, because we have excellent analogies. For example, instead of "price list" you can say "price list", and instead of "performance" you can say "performance"; Difficulty in perception: many borrowed words remain incomprehensible to the older generation and people who are not related to certain professional fields.

Arguments in defense of borrowings: the natural process of language development: the Russian language is strong in its ability to absorb new words, but at the same time not lose its originality; convenience and conciseness: borrowed words are often shorter and more accurate than their Russian counterparts. For example, "like" instead of "approval" or "blog" instead of "online diary"; technological and cultural progress: Many terms come to the Russian language along with new phenomena. The words "gadget", "startup" and "crowdfunding" reflect the realities of the modern world, and it is difficult to find their exact Russian equivalents.

### Conclusion

However, it is important to maintain a balance: borrowings can enrich vocabulary, but their excessive use threatens to erode linguistic identity. As I. A. Goncharov said: "A language must be alive, but also preserve its soul."<sup>6</sup>

The Russian language is a dynamic system that is able to absorb new elements, but not lose its basis<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, we should be more attentive to language innovations, leaving only those that are really necessary.

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