

BORROWINGS FROM EUROPEAN LANGUAGES IN THE RUSSIAN LEXICON

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Abstract

Borrowings from European languages constitute an important part of the Russian lexical system. Throughout history, political, cultural, and economic contacts between Russia and European countries led to the adoption of numerous foreign words into Russian. These borrowings enriched the vocabulary by introducing new concepts in science, technology, culture, and everyday life. The article analyzes the historical stages of European lexical borrowings in Russian, their sources, semantic fields, and adaptation processes. Special attention is given to German, French, English, Dutch, and Italian influences and their role in the development of modern Russian vocabulary.

Keywords: Borrowing, Russian language, European languages, lexical influence, linguistic contact, lexical enrichment, language history, etymology, linguistic adaptation, vocabulary development.

Introduction

The vocabulary of any language constantly develops and changes under the influence of various factors: social, cultural, economic, and political. One of the most important sources of the development of the lexical system is the borrowing of words from other languages. The process of borrowing is characteristic of almost all languages of the world and reflects the history of contacts between peoples (2, pp. 112–115). The Russian language is no exception: for many centuries it has actively interacted with various linguistic systems, including European languages.

Borrowings in the Russian language occurred at different stages of its historical development and were caused by the expansion of international relations, the development of trade, science, technology, and culture. The process of the penetration

of European vocabulary became especially noticeable during the period of active reforms and modernization of the state, when Russia began to interact intensively with European countries. Many words denoting new phenomena of social life, science, military affairs, navigation, and art were borrowed precisely from European languages.

Researchers note that foreign words gradually adapt in the recipient language: they undergo phonetic, morphological, and semantic changes according to the rules of the Russian language. As a result, they cease to be perceived as foreign elements and become a full part of the national vocabulary. This process is called linguistic adaptation or assimilation of borrowings.

Such European languages as German, French, English, Dutch, and Italian played a particularly significant role in the formation of modern Russian vocabulary. Each of them influenced different spheres of the lexical system: military terminology, scientific terms, everyday vocabulary, art, and music. Thus, the study of borrowings from European languages makes it possible to better understand the history of the development of the Russian language, the features of its lexical system, and the mechanisms of language contact.

The aim of this article is to examine the main sources of European borrowings in the Russian language, their historical stages, and their role in the formation of modern Russian vocabulary.

Borrowing is the process of the penetration of words and expressions from one language into another as a result of contacts between peoples. In linguistics, borrowed vocabulary refers to words of foreign origin that have been included in the system of the recipient language and adapted according to its phonetic, grammatical, and semantic norms (2, pp. 112–115). Linguistic borrowings perform an important function: they help a language designate new objects, phenomena, and concepts that previously did not exist in the culture or social life of its speakers.

In most cases, borrowing occurs when there is a need for a new term to designate a new phenomenon or object. Linguists distinguish several types of borrowings:

Direct borrowings are words borrowed directly from another language (for example, office, manager).

Calques are translations of foreign words or expressions by parts (for example, railway, which is a calque of the German expression).

Semantic borrowings occur when a word acquires a new meaning under the influence of a foreign language.

In addition, borrowed words may be adapted at different levels:

Phonetic adaptation – change in the sound form of the word.

Morphological adaptation – inclusion of the word in the system of grammatical inflection.

Semantic adaptation – change or expansion of the meaning of a word.

The process of borrowing European vocabulary into the Russian language occurred in several historical periods.

The first borrowings from European languages appeared already in the Old Russian period. They were connected with trade and cultural contacts between Rus and European countries. For example, some words related to navigation and trade were borrowed from Scandinavian languages. These early borrowings demonstrate the close economic and cultural ties between peoples.

The borrowing process became especially intensive during the era of the reforms of Peter the Great. During this period, Russia actively adopted European achievements in science, technology, and military affairs. A large number of terms from German, Dutch, and English entered the Russian language. For example:

military vocabulary: army, general, captain;

naval terminology: fleet, navigator, sailor;

scientific terms: algebra, optics, globe.

These words became an integral part of the Russian language and are actively used to this day (3, pp. 90–95).

The German language had a significant influence on Russian in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This can be explained by the close cultural and scientific ties between Russia and the German states. Many German specialists worked in Russia, especially in the fields of science, medicine, and military affairs. Words such as barrier (shlagbaum), accountant, resort, landscape, and font were borrowed from German. These words entered the Russian language and became part of common vocabulary (4, pp. 20–30).

The French language had a particularly strong influence on Russian in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period, French was the language of the aristocracy and diplomacy in Russia. Words related to culture, art, and social life were borrowed from French: ballet, wardrobe, director, menu, hairdresser. Many of these

words became international terms and are used in many languages of the world (3, pp. 110–118).

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, English became the leading source of borrowings. This is connected with the development of science, technology, and globalization. Many Anglicisms entered the Russian language, for example: computer, internet, marketing, manager, startup. Some new English borrowings gradually replace older European words, for example: office instead of kontora, broker instead of makler. This demonstrates that the borrowing process continues today.

The Italian language also had a significant influence on the musical and artistic vocabulary of the Russian language. Words such as opera, sonata, aria, piano, and soprano were borrowed from Italian (5, pp. 70–75). In addition, several military terms came from Hungarian, such as hussar and saber. These examples demonstrate the diversity of the sources of European borrowings.

After entering the language, borrowed words gradually adapt. They begin to follow the rules of Russian grammar and word formation. For example:

manager → managers

office → office-related / office-based

piano → pianist

Such adaptation makes foreign words part of the national language.

Borrowings from European languages have played an important role in the formation of modern Russian vocabulary. They reflect historical, cultural, and economic contacts between Russia and European countries and represent an important source of lexical enrichment.

The history of the Russian language shows that the borrowing process occurred over many centuries and was connected with various historical events. It became particularly intensive during the reforms of Peter the Great, when Russia actively adopted European achievements in science, technology, and culture. During this period, many words from German, Dutch, and English entered the Russian language. In subsequent centuries, the influence of European languages continued (2, pp. 130–148).

The French language significantly influenced the vocabulary of secular culture and art, German influenced scientific and technical terminology, and Italian influenced musical vocabulary. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, English became the

leading source of new borrowings due to globalization and the development of information technologies.

It should be noted that borrowings do not destroy the national language; on the contrary, they enrich it. They allow languages to designate new concepts, phenomena, and objects that arise in the process of social development. At the same time, most borrowed words eventually become fully adapted in the language and are perceived by speakers as a natural part of the vocabulary.

Thus, borrowings from European languages are an important factor in the development of the Russian language. Their study allows a better understanding of the processes of lexical formation, the history of cultural contacts, and the dynamics of linguistic change. Further research on borrowed vocabulary can contribute to a deeper understanding of the interaction of languages and cultures in the modern world.

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