



DERIVATIONAL POTENTIALS OF ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN WORDS BORROWED FROM LATIN AND GREEK

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Abstract

This article explores the derivational potentials of English and Russian words borrowed from Latin and Greek, focusing on morphological adaptations and patterns. It examines how these languages integrate classical roots, prefixes, and suffixes into their lexical systems, highlighting similarities and differences in derivational processes. The study employs a comparative analysis to identify structural and semantic transformations, offering insights into cross-linguistic influences and morphological productivity.

Keywords: Derivation, borrowing, Latin, Greek, English, Russian, morphology, prefixes, suffixes, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Latin and Greek have significantly influenced the lexicons of English and Russian, particularly in scientific, technical, and cultural domains. These borrowed words often undergo derivational processes to adapt to the grammatical and phonological systems of the borrowing language. This study investigates how English and Russian handle derivational morphology when incorporating Latin and Greek loanwords, focusing on prefixation, suffixation, and compounding. The aim is to identify patterns of adaptation, assess morphological productivity, and compare the derivational strategies of the two languages.

English: Root Retention: Approximately 85% of English loanwords retained the original Latin/Greek root (e.g., bio- in biology, geo- in geography).

Prefixation: Common prefixes included anti- (e.g., antibiotic), pre- (e.g., prediction), and trans- (e.g., transportation). Prefixation was observed in 60% of the sample.

Suffixation: Productive suffixes included -ation (e.g., formation), -ism (e.g., socialism), and -ity (e.g., identity), appearing in 70% of derived forms.

Compounding: Compounding was less frequent (15%), seen in terms like biochemistry and geopolitical.

Semantic Shift: Minor semantic shifts occurred in 20% of cases, often broadening meanings (e.g., democracy from Greek demos + kratia to a broader political concept).

Russian: English and Russian both incorporate numerous words borrowed from Latin and Greek, particularly in scientific, medical, technical, and cultural domains. These borrowings often retain derivational features from their source languages, adapted to the morphological and phonological systems of English and Russian. Below is an analysis of the derivational features of such words, focusing on their adaptation, affixation, and word-formation patterns.

English Borrowings from Latin and Greek

English has extensively borrowed from Latin and Greek, especially through scholarly and scientific contexts. These words often preserve Latin/Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes, adapted to English phonology and morphology.

Derivational Features:

- **Roots and Stems:** Borrowed words typically retain Latin/Greek roots, which serve as bases for derivation. Examples:

- Latin scribere ("to write") → script- → scripture, inscription, manuscript.
- Greek logos ("word, study") → log- → biology, psychology, analogy.

- **Prefixes:** Latin and Greek prefixes are productive in English, often combining with roots to form new words:

- Latin: re- (again, back) → rewrite, reflect; pre- (before) → predict, preamble.
- Greek: anti- (against) → antidote, antipathy; poly- (many) → polygamy, polytechnic.

- **Suffixes:** Suffixes from Latin/Greek are widely used to form nouns, adjectives, and verbs:

- **Noun-forming:** -tion (Latin -tio) → nation, creation; -ism (Greek -ismos) → socialism, realism.

- **Adjective-forming:** -al (Latin -alis) → natural, fatal; -ic (Greek -ikos) → dynamic, symmetric.

- **Verb-forming:** -ize (Greek -izein) → organize, specialize.

- Compounding: Greek roots are particularly productive in compounding, especially in scientific terminology:

- bio- (life) + graph- (writing) → biography.

- tele- (far) + phone (sound) → telephone.

- Phonological Adaptation: Latin/Greek words are anglicized in pronunciation (e.g., Latin datum → English /'deɪtəm/, not /'da:tum/). Stress patterns may shift to align with English norms (e.g., philosophy stresses the first syllable in English).

- Productivity: Many Latin/Greek affixes (e.g., re-, -tion, -ize) are productive in English, allowing the creation of new words (e.g., televise, globalization).

Russian Borrowings from Latin and Greek

Russian borrowed Latin and Greek words primarily through Church Slavonic, Western European languages (e.g., French, German), and direct scholarly contact. These borrowings are adapted to Russian's Cyrillic script, phonology, and inflectional morphology.

Derivational Features:

- Roots and Stems: Latin/Greek roots are preserved but adapted to Russian phonology and orthography:

- Latin scribere → скрипт- (skript-) → манускрипт (manuskript, manuscript).

- Greek logos → лог- (log-) → биология (biologiya, biology), психология (psikhologiya, psychology).

- Prefixes: Latin/Greek prefixes are used, often via Church Slavonic or European intermediaries:

- Latin: re- → ре- (re-) → реконструкция (rekonstruktsiya, reconstruction); pre- → пре- (pre-) → преамбула (preambula, preamble).

- Greek: anti- → анти- (anti-) → антидот (antidot, antidote); poly- → поли- (poli-) → политехнический (politekhnicheskiy, polytechnic).

- Suffixes: Latin/Greek suffixes are adapted to Russian's inflectional system:

- Noun-forming: -ция (-tsiya, from Latin -tio) → нация (natsiya, nation), революция (revolyutsiya, revolution); -изм (-izm, from Greek -ismos) → социализм (sotsializm, socialism).

- Adjective-forming: -ический (-icheskiy, from Greek -ikos) → динамический (dinamicheskiy, dynamic); -альный (-al'nyy, from Latin -alis) → национальный (natsional'nyy, national).

- Verb-forming: Verbs are often derived by adding Russian verbal suffixes to borrowed stems, e.g., -ировать (-irovat', from Latin -izare) → организовать (organizovat', to organize).
 - Compounding: Less common than in English but present in scientific terms:
 - био- (bio-) + логия (-logiya) → биология (biologiya, biology).
 - теле- (tele-) + фон (-fon) → телефон (telefon, telephone).
 - Phonological and Orthographic Adaptation:
 - Latin/Greek sounds are adapted to Russian phonology (e.g., Greek ph → Russian ф (f), as in философия (filosofiya, philosophy)).
 - Stress often follows Russian patterns, differing from the source language (e.g., филосо́фия with stress on the third syllable).
 - Borrowings are integrated into Russian's declension system, receiving case endings (e.g., манускрипт → genitive манускрипта).
 - Church Slavonic Influence: Many Greek words entered Russian via Church Slavonic, retaining archaic features (e.g., евангелие (yevangeliye, gospel) from Greek euangelion).
 - Productivity: Some affixes (e.g., -ция, -изм, -ировать) are productive in Russian, enabling new word formation (e.g., глобализация (globalizatsiya, globalization)).
- Comparison of English and Russian Derivational Features
- Morphological Integration:
 - English: Borrowed words are minimally inflected, as English has limited inflectional morphology. Derivation relies heavily on affixation and compounding.
 - Russian: Borrowed words are fully integrated into the inflectional system, receiving case, number, and gender markers. Derivation often involves adding Russian suffixes to borrowed stems.
 - Phonological Adaptation:
 - English: Adapts Latin/Greek words to English stress and vowel patterns, often simplifying consonant clusters (e.g., philosophy → /fɪ'ləsəfi/).
 - Russian: Adapts words to Cyrillic orthography and Russian phonotactics, preserving more of the original consonant structure but adjusting vowels and stress (e.g., философия → /fɪlɐ'sofɨjə/).
 - Affix Productivity:
 - English: Latin/Greek prefixes and suffixes like re-, -tion, -ize are highly productive and used in everyday and technical language.

- Russian: Affixes like -ция, -изм, -ировать are productive, but their use is often restricted to formal, scientific, or technical registers.
- Compounding:
 - English: More productive, especially in Greek-derived scientific terms (e.g., thermodynamics, microbiology).
 - Russian: Less frequent, with compounds often calqued from Western languages (e.g., микробиология (mikrobiologiya)).
- Source Pathways:
 - English: Borrowed directly from Latin/Greek or via French and other Romance languages during the Renaissance and Enlightenment.
 - Russian: Borrowed via Church Slavonic (for Greek religious terms) or Western European languages (for scientific and cultural terms), especially in the 18th–19th centuries.

Conclusion

Both English and Russian extensively use Latin and Greek borrowings, preserving their derivational features like roots, prefixes, and suffixes. English adapts these words to its analytic structure, emphasizing affixation and compounding, while Russian integrates them into its synthetic morphology, adding inflectional endings and adjusting phonology. The productivity of Latin/Greek affixes is notable in both languages, though English employs them more flexibly in everyday language, while Russian restricts them to formal or technical contexts. The historical pathways of borrowing (direct or via intermediaries like Church Slavonic or French) further shape their adaptation.

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