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THE LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LOANWORDS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: This article examines the lexical and semantic characteristics of loanwords in the Russian language. Borrowing is one of the most important processes of vocabulary development and reflects historical, political, economic, scientific, and cultural contacts between Russian-speaking society and other nations. The study focuses on the adaptation of borrowed words at the phonetic, grammatical, lexical, and semantic levels. Particular attention is paid to changes in meaning that occur after foreign words enter the Russian lexical system. Some loanwords preserve their original meanings, whereas others undergo semantic narrowing, semantic broadening, specialization, or stylistic transformation.

Key words: Russian language, loanwords, borrowed vocabulary, lexical semantics, semantic adaptation, language contact.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются лексические и семантические характеристики заимствованных слов в русском языке. Заимствование является одним из важнейших процессов развития лексики и отражает исторические, политические, экономические, научные и культурные контакты между русскоязычным обществом и другими народами. Исследование сосредоточено на адаптации заимствованных слов на фонетическом, грамматическом, лексическом и семантическом уровнях. Особое внимание уделяется изменениям значения, происходящим после вхождения иностранных слов в русскую лексическую систему. Некоторые заимствованные слова сохраняют свои первоначальные значения, в то время как другие претерпевают семантическое сужение, семантическое расширение, специализацию или стилистическую трансформацию.

Ключевые слова: русский язык, заимствованные слова, заимствованная лексика, лексическая семантика, семантическая адаптация, языковой контакт.

Introduction

The vocabulary of every living language develops continuously under the influence of social, political, economic, scientific, and cultural changes. One of the most important mechanisms of lexical development is borrowing, through which words and expressions from one language enter another language. The Russian language has interacted with numerous languages throughout its history and has consequently incorporated a considerable number of foreign lexical units. These borrowed words have become an integral part of Russian vocabulary and are used in everyday communication, literature, journalism, education, science, technology, politics, economics, and digital media.

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Loanwords enter the Russian language as a result of direct or indirect contact between Russian-speaking society and other linguistic communities. Such contact may occur through trade, migration, military relations, education, religious influence, scientific cooperation, political reforms, mass communication, and cultural exchange. Different historical periods have therefore introduced different layers of foreign vocabulary into Russian. Greek and Latin contributed many religious, philosophical, medical, and scientific terms. Turkic languages influenced vocabulary connected with everyday life, trade, clothing, food, and administration. German and Dutch became important sources of military, technical, industrial, and maritime terminology. French strongly influenced the language of social life, fashion, culture, cuisine, and diplomacy, while English has become the most productive source of recent borrowings related to technology, business, sport, entertainment, marketing, and internet communication.

The process of borrowing does not consist simply of transferring a word from one language into another. When a foreign lexical unit enters Russian, it usually undergoes various forms of adaptation. Its pronunciation may be adjusted to the Russian phonetic system, its spelling may be represented through the Cyrillic alphabet, and its grammatical behaviour may be reorganized according to Russian morphological patterns. In addition, the lexical meaning of a borrowed word may change significantly. For this reason, loanwords should be examined not only from the perspective of their origin but also in terms of their lexical and semantic development within the receiving language.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundations for the study of foreign vocabulary in Russian are presented in L. P. Krysin's work *Foreign Words in the Modern Russian Language*. Krysin examines borrowing as a complex linguistic process influenced by both internal language mechanisms and external social conditions. His approach demonstrates that the appearance of a foreign word is connected not only with linguistic contact but also with the communicative needs of society [1].

Krysin's research is important because it distinguishes between the initial appearance of a foreign lexical element and its complete integration into the receiving language. A word may be used by specialists, bilingual speakers, journalists, or representatives of a particular social group before it becomes part of general Russian vocabulary. Its gradual dissemination depends on the importance of the concept it represents, the frequency of its use, its relationship with existing Russian words, and the social authority of the source language.

From Krysin's perspective, lexical borrowing should be understood as a process rather than as a single event. A foreign word normally passes through several stages. At the initial stage, it may be used occasionally and retain noticeable features of the source language. At a later stage, it becomes more frequent, appears in different texts, and begins to acquire Russian phonetic and grammatical characteristics. Finally, it may become so well assimilated that ordinary speakers no longer recognize it as a foreign element.

Krysin's approach also explains that borrowing may be motivated by social and stylistic factors. Foreign words may be perceived as prestigious, professional, fashionable, or internationally accepted. Their use can indicate the speaker's education, occupation, age, social group, or familiarity with modern cultural practices. However, prestige-based borrowing may also create unnecessary lexical duplication when a foreign word does not contribute a new meaning.

A central aspect of Krysin's study is the linguistic assimilation of foreign words. He examines the way borrowed units are adapted to Russian phonetics, spelling, grammar, and lexical relations. Assimilation is not equally rapid in all parts of the language. A word may be graphically adapted while its pronunciation remains variable. It may receive a stable meaning but still have uncertain

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grammatical characteristics. Therefore, the degree of assimilation should be evaluated through several linguistic criteria rather than through a single feature.

Krysin's work provides an essential foundation for understanding the lexical-semantic behaviour of loanwords. It shows that borrowed vocabulary cannot be analysed only by identifying its source language. Researchers must also investigate its degree of assimilation, semantic transformation, stylistic status, communicative distribution, and relationship with native lexical units.

The functioning of recent loanwords is further examined by E. V. Marinova in her research *Foreign Words in Russian Speech at the End of the Twentieth and the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Problems of Assimilation and Functioning*. The study focuses on foreign vocabulary during a period of rapid political, economic, technological, and cultural transformation in Russian-speaking society [2].

Research Methodology

The present research applies a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the lexical and semantic characteristics of loanwords in the Russian language. This method was selected because borrowed vocabulary must be analysed not only according to its linguistic form but also according to its meaning, communicative function, stylistic colouring, and degree of assimilation into the Russian lexical system.

The research material consists of loanwords used in contemporary Russian speech, particularly in the spheres of technology, business, mass media, education, culture, sport, fashion, and everyday communication. The analysed examples include such words as *компьютер, интернет, блогер, менеджер, маркетинг, мониторинг, презентация, имидж, бренд, офис, спонсор, рейтинг,* and *тинейджер*. These lexical units were selected because they demonstrate different stages and forms of phonetic, graphic, grammatical, derivational, and semantic adaptation.

Several linguistic methods were employed in the study. First, the descriptive method was used to identify the principal formal and semantic characteristics of the selected loanwords. This method made it possible to describe their source languages, grammatical properties, lexical meanings, and spheres of use.

Second, lexical-semantic analysis was employed to compare the meanings of borrowed words in the source language and in Russian. Particular attention was paid to semantic narrowing, semantic broadening, specialization, metaphorical extension, and the development of new evaluative connotations.

Third, contextual analysis was used to examine how loanwords function in actual Russian sentences and communicative situations. A borrowed word may have different meanings or stylistic effects depending on whether it is used in professional, journalistic, advertising, academic, or informal speech. Therefore, context is essential for determining its precise lexical meaning.

Fourth, the comparative method was applied to analyse the relationships between borrowed words and their Russian equivalents. Examples such as *менеджер — управляющий, мониторинг — наблюдение, презентация — представление,* and *тинейджер — подросток* were examined to determine whether the words are complete synonyms or differ in semantic and stylistic characteristics.

Word-formation analysis was also used to determine the degree to which borrowed vocabulary has been integrated into Russian. A foreign lexical unit may be considered relatively assimilated when it becomes the basis for new words formed according to Russian derivational patterns. For example, the borrowed word *блог* has produced *блогер, блогерский,* and *блогосфера*, while *интернет* occurs in formations such as *интернет-магазин, интернет-пользователь,* and *интернет-зависимость*.

The classification of modern English borrowings and their adaptation was based on M. A. Breiter's analysis of the historical development and prospects of Anglicisms in Russian [3]. The social

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and linguistic reasons for intensive borrowing were interpreted with reference to A. I. Dyakov's study of contemporary Anglicisms [4]. N. S. Valgina's description of active processes in modern Russian provided the basis for examining lexical innovations as part of broader social and linguistic changes [5]. L. P. Krysin's sociolinguistic approach was used to analyse the connection between foreign words, communicative needs, social groups, and functional styles [6].

The research was conducted in three stages. At the first stage, the selected loanwords were grouped according to their spheres of use and their degree of adaptation. At the second stage, their lexical meanings were compared with the meanings of related Russian words and source-language units. At the final stage, the principal semantic transformations and communicative functions of the borrowed words were identified and interpreted.

Analysis and Results

The analysis demonstrates that borrowed vocabulary in Russian originates from different languages and historical periods. Greek and Latin have contributed significantly to scientific, religious, medical, educational, and philosophical terminology. Words such as *философия, грамматика, система, университет,* and *аудитория* have become fully integrated into the Russian lexical system.

German and Dutch influenced Russian military, industrial, technical, and maritime vocabulary. French provided numerous words associated with social life, fashion, art, cuisine, and diplomacy. Turkic languages contributed vocabulary related to trade, clothing, food, household life, and administration.

In contemporary Russian, however, English is the most productive source of new borrowings. English-derived words are particularly frequent in information technology, economics, advertising, popular culture, sport, and internet communication. Examples include *компьютер, файл, сайт, браузер, менеджер, маркетинг, бренд, спонсор, рейтинг, блогер,* and *стартап*.

The expansion of English vocabulary is connected with the international influence of English-speaking technology, business, science, and mass culture. Breiter notes that Anglicisms enter Russian not only to name new objects but also to express concepts associated with modern professional and social practices [3].

The analysed words were divided into several thematic groups. Technological loanwords include *компьютер, интернет, файл, сайт,* and *сканер*. Business and economic vocabulary includes *менеджер, маркетинг, бренд, офис, спонсор,* and *стартап*. Media and communication vocabulary includes *блогер, интервью, рейтинг,* and *контент*. Words such as *фитнес, дизайн, имидж,* and *шоу* are associated with lifestyle, culture, fashion, and entertainment.

These groups show that lexical borrowing is closely connected with social development. When a new technology, profession, product, institution, or cultural practice enters Russian-speaking society, its foreign name may enter the language together with it.

Most loanwords undergo phonetic and graphic adaptation when they enter Russian. Foreign sounds and letter combinations are represented through the Cyrillic alphabet and adjusted to Russian pronunciation. English *manager, marketing, computer,* and *blogger* have entered Russian as *менеджер, маркетинг, компьютер,* and *блогер*.

After graphic adaptation, borrowed words normally acquire grammatical characteristics. The noun *менеджер* is treated as a masculine noun and changes according to Russian cases: *менеджер, менеджера, менеджеру, менеджером*. Similarly, *презентация* follows the declension pattern of feminine nouns: *презентация, презентации, презентацию*.

Some borrowed words remain indeclinable, including *метро, такси, кафе,* and *интервью*. However, they still participate in grammatical agreement. Russian speakers say *новое метро,*

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удобное такси, and *интересное интервью*. This demonstrates that even indeclinable words acquire a particular grammatical position within the Russian system.

Derivational productivity is another important indicator of assimilation. The word *компьютер* has produced *компьютерный, компьютеризация,* and *компьютерщик*. The word *спонсор* is connected with *спонсорский* and *спонсировать*. From *блог*, Russian has developed *блогер, блогерский,* and *блогосфера*.

Valgina observes that active lexical processes are frequently accompanied by word-formation changes because new lexical bases begin to function according to productive Russian models [5]. Therefore, a borrowed word becomes more deeply integrated when speakers use it to produce new nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

One of the most common lexical-semantic processes is semantic narrowing. A word that has several meanings in the source language may enter Russian with only one specialized meaning.

For example, the English word *manager* can refer generally to a person responsible for controlling or organizing an activity. In Russian, *менеджер* is frequently associated with a professional position in business, sales, administration, or customer service. Its meaning is therefore determined by Russian employment and organizational practices.

The English word *monitoring* refers broadly to continuous observation or checking. In Russian, *мониторинг* usually means systematic observation, data collection, and evaluation over a particular period. It is commonly used in professional combinations such as *мониторинг цен, мониторинг качества,* and *экологический мониторинг*.

The word *маркетинг* has also acquired a specialized professional meaning in Russian. It refers not simply to selling a product but to a system of studying consumer demand, planning promotion, developing market strategies, and managing relationships with customers.

Dyakov explains that one of the main reasons for borrowing is the need to name a new concept or to distinguish between closely related concepts more precisely [4]. The use of *мониторинг* instead of *наблюдение*, for instance, may indicate that the activity is systematic, organized, and based on regular data analysis.

Some loanwords undergo semantic broadening after entering Russian. They begin to be used in a wider range of situations than during the initial stage of borrowing.

The word *формат* originally functioned mainly as a technical term indicating the size, structure, or arrangement of an object. In contemporary Russian, it is frequently used to describe the form or organization of an event, communication, or activity: *формат встречи, формат обучения,* and *новый формат сотрудничества*.

The noun *проект* was traditionally associated with a prepared plan or technical proposal. Its modern use has expanded considerably. It may refer to a business initiative, an educational activity, a television programme, a cultural event, or an individual creative task.

The word *старт* is another example of semantic expansion. In addition to its direct association with the beginning of a race, it is now commonly used to describe the beginning of a programme, campaign, business, or educational activity: *старт проекта, старт продаж,* and *старт курса*.

Such examples demonstrate that borrowed words are not passive elements. Once they become part of Russian communication, they participate in metaphorical and semantic development in the same way as native vocabulary.

The analysis revealed that many borrowed words coexist with Russian lexical units that have similar meanings. However, these pairs are rarely complete synonyms.

The words *менеджер* and *управляющий* are both associated with organization and administration. Nevertheless, *менеджер* is strongly connected with modern business structures and

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may refer to numerous professional roles, while *управляющий* emphasizes the function of direct control.

Similarly, *презентация* and *представление* may both refer to introducing something to an audience. However, *презентация* often describes an organized public event or visual demonstration intended to promote a product, idea, or project.

The word *имидж* is related to the Russian word *образ*, but the two are not identical. *Образ* has a wide range of literary, artistic, psychological, and everyday meanings. *Имидж* usually refers to a deliberately created public impression of a person, company, institution, or product.

The relationship between *тинейджер* and *подросток* is also stylistically significant. *Подросток* is the neutral and widely accepted Russian term, whereas *тинейджер* may be associated with youth culture, fashion, advertising, or Western cultural influence.

Krysin emphasizes that the meaning and acceptance of a foreign word depend on its social and communicative context [6]. Borrowed units may become necessary when they express a new distinction, but they may also function as fashionable substitutes for existing Russian words.

Loanwords possess different stylistic functions. In scientific and professional communication, they may ensure terminological accuracy. Words such as *аудит, маркетинг, инвестиция,* and *мониторинг* are used because they represent specialized concepts.

In advertising, English-derived vocabulary may create associations with modernity, prestige, international quality, or technological innovation. Words such as *премиум, бренд, фитнес,* and *дизайн* are frequently selected for their positive social connotations.

In informal and youth communication, loanwords can signal membership in a particular social group. Words such as *лайк, пост, блогер, фейк,* and *чат* have become common in internet-based speech. They are concise and directly connected with digital practices.

However, borrowed vocabulary may also create stylistic problems. Excessive use of unfamiliar foreign words can reduce clarity, particularly when the audience does not understand professional or internet terminology. A foreign word is communicatively justified when it names a new concept or expresses a necessary distinction. Its use is less justified when it merely replaces a clear and commonly understood Russian word.

Main Results

The analysis produced several principal results. First, borrowing is a natural mechanism of Russian vocabulary development and reflects historical and contemporary contact with other linguistic communities.

Second, contemporary Russian borrowing is dominated by English vocabulary, especially in technology, business, media, advertising, and popular culture. This process is connected with social changes and the need to name new realities [3; 4].

Third, loanwords undergo several forms of assimilation. They are adapted to Russian spelling and pronunciation, acquire grammatical categories, and may become bases for new derivatives. This confirms that their integration affects several levels of the language [5].

Fourth, semantic adaptation is not uniform. Some words preserve meanings close to those of the source language, while others undergo narrowing, specialization, broadening, metaphorical extension, or evaluative transformation.

Fifth, borrowed words and Russian equivalents are usually partial rather than complete synonyms. Their meanings may differ according to professional specialization, stylistic register, emotional colouring, or communicative context.

Finally, the study demonstrates that loanwords enrich Russian vocabulary when they name new objects, express precise concepts, or create useful semantic distinctions. At the same time, their

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effectiveness depends on contextual appropriateness and comprehensibility. The integration of foreign vocabulary should therefore be viewed as a dynamic lexical-semantic process rather than as the simple replacement of Russian words.

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