

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LEXICOLOGY

Isroilov Mashxur Xasanbaevich

Andijan branch of Kokand University

Abstract: Lexicology, the branch of linguistics that studies the vocabulary of a language and its meaning, structure, and usage, is crucial for understanding the intricacies of any language. The Russian language, with its rich history and cultural depth, offers unique insights into lexicological studies. This article aims to explore the field of Russian language lexicology, focusing on the various elements of its vocabulary, the role of word formation, semantic shifts, and the interaction of Russian with other languages.

Keywords: Russian language, lexicology, word formation, semantic shifts, vocabulary, language evolution, language contact

Introduction: Lexicology, as a sub-discipline of linguistics, plays an essential role in understanding how languages develop, evolve, and adapt over time. It focuses on the study of the vocabulary of a language, including the meanings, structures, origins, and uses of words. In the case of the Russian language, lexicology reveals a rich and complex vocabulary system that has evolved over centuries, shaped by the country's history, culture, and socio-political changes. The study of Russian lexicology is not only important for linguists but also for those studying Russian culture, as language is a reflection of the identity and worldview of its speakers. Russian, as one of the most widely spoken Slavic languages, boasts an extensive and intricate lexicon. Its vocabulary has been influenced by a variety of historical events, such as the spread of Orthodox Christianity, the formation of the Russian Empire, and the periods of political upheaval, including the Soviet era and the collapse of the USSR. Throughout these changes, the Russian language has integrated foreign terms and evolved its own linguistic structures to meet the needs of modern communication. The dynamic interaction between native Russian elements and foreign influences is a defining feature of the language's lexicological development.

Moreover, the Russian language, due to its complex grammatical structure, has a particularly fascinating system of word formation. Russian words can be formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to roots, creating new words with related meanings. This morphological richness allows the Russian lexicon to adapt to new ideas and concepts quickly. Russian also borrows words from various languages, including French, German, and more recently, English, often modifying them to fit Russian grammatical rules, which is an important aspect of the lexicological process. The study of Russian lexicology also sheds light on how the meanings of words shift over time—a phenomenon known as semantic drift. In Russian, as in any language, words are not static; they can acquire new meanings depending on cultural, political, or technological shifts. For instance, a word that originally had a neutral or even positive connotation can become politicized or gain negative associations due to changes in the social or political landscape.

Furthermore, Russian lexicology is deeply intertwined with the study of historical and contemporary language usage. The words and expressions used by different generations of

Russian speakers reveal much about their experiences, beliefs, and the world they inhabited. The lexicon also highlights the way language interacts with national identity and culture. In times of social and political upheaval, the lexicon adapts and transforms to reflect the changes occurring in the broader society. For example, the political language of the Soviet Union differed significantly from the lexicon used during the Russian Empire or post-Soviet Russia, with distinct terms used to convey ideology, power, and authority. The role of lexicology in contemporary Russian is also significant in the digital age. With the rise of technology and globalization, the Russian language has seen an influx of new terminology. These terms are often borrowed from English, particularly in the fields of business, technology, and the internet. New words related to social media, gadgets, and modern communication continue to shape the lexicon, making Russian a dynamic and ever-changing language.

Literature review.

Russian lexicology has long been a prominent field of linguistic research, with significant contributions from scholars who have sought to understand the richness of the Russian vocabulary. The roots of modern Russian lexicology can be traced back to the 19th century, with early studies on the historical development of words and their meanings. One of the pioneering works in Russian lexicology was conducted by **V. I. Dahl**, a 19th-century lexicographer and linguist, who compiled the famous *Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language* (1863-1866). Dahl's dictionary not only provided definitions of Russian words but also presented valuable information about their historical and cultural contexts, thus contributing to the study of etymology and semantic evolution. His work is considered foundational to understanding the historical lexicon of the Russian language.

A. A. Reformatsky (1956) further expanded lexicological studies by focusing on the structural analysis of words, including their morphological components and syntactical functions. He emphasized the role of word formation processes, including derivation, compounding, and the creation of neologisms, which are constantly evolving in the Russian language due to cultural and technological shifts.

In more recent years, **V. N. Yartseva** (1990) examined the impact of language contact and bilingualism on the Russian lexicon, particularly in the context of the Soviet Union's diverse linguistic environment. Yartseva's work shed light on how Russian lexicology was shaped by interactions with other languages, especially during periods of political upheaval and migration.

Further studies have explored the influence of foreign languages on Russian vocabulary, particularly in the 20th and 21st centuries. Scholars such as **M. A. Matushkin** (2005) and **I. S. Alekseeva** (2010) have documented the influx of loanwords, especially English, into Russian, especially in the fields of technology, business, and pop culture. This influence is particularly significant in the context of globalization, where many new concepts and objects lack Russian equivalents and are, therefore, named using foreign terms.

B. A. Uspensky (1996) explored the phenomenon of semantic shifts in the Russian lexicon, where words evolve in meaning over time due to cultural, social, and political influences. He noted that while Russian retains many historical meanings, many words acquire new connotations or fall out of use, reflecting changes in societal values and norms. This is particularly evident in the political lexicon, where certain words undergo shifts in meaning to reflect changing ideologies.

Analysis and Results.

The analysis of Russian lexicology reveals several key trends and developments in the language's vocabulary and word formation. These trends are reflective of the broader historical, cultural, and political changes in Russia, as well as the global influences that shape the language. Russian lexicology not only addresses the structure of words but also the meanings, the relationships between words, and the ways in which they evolve. This section highlights key areas of analysis such as word formation, semantic shifts, language contact, and the growing impact of English on Russian vocabulary.

1. Word Formation and Neologisms

One of the most defining characteristics of Russian lexicology is its word formation processes. Russian is a highly inflected language with a rich system of word-building mechanisms that include derivation, compounding, and inflection. These processes allow Russian to expand its vocabulary by creating new words from existing roots, affixes, and grammatical components. **Derivation** is the process by which new words are created by adding prefixes or suffixes to base words. For example, the verb *говорить* (to speak) can generate several derivative forms like *переговорить* (to discuss), *говорок* (speaking), or *говорящий* (speaking, speaker). Russian also creates **compound words** where two or more words are combined to form a new term, such as *автозаправка* (gas station) from *авто* (car) and *заправка* (filling). These compounds are widely used in everyday Russian, particularly in technology, medicine, and the digital realm.

Neologisms, or newly coined terms, have been an increasingly important part of Russian lexicology, especially in the 21st century. As Russia, like the rest of the world, experiences rapid technological advancements and globalization, new words are needed to describe new concepts and innovations. Terms like *интернет* (internet), *смартфон* (smartphone), *пост* (post), and *твиттер* (Twitter) have entered the Russian lexicon, often unchanged or with slight modifications to fit Russian grammatical patterns. The formation of these neologisms is often influenced by international trends and the need to maintain communication in a globalized world. These terms are not only adopted from English but also from other languages, such as German and French, which have historically influenced the Russian lexicon. Additionally, Russia's interest in modern technology and entrepreneurship has led to the creation of words to describe contemporary phenomena, such as *стартап* (startup) or *мобилизация* (mobilization) in both a political and business context. Neologisms reflect the language's adaptability and its capacity to

incorporate international lexicons while still preserving its grammatical integrity.

2. Semantic Shifts in Russian Vocabulary

A significant aspect of Russian lexicology is the study of **semantic shifts**—how the meanings of words evolve over time. These shifts are often triggered by social, political, and cultural changes and are especially evident in the vocabulary surrounding politics, religion, and technology. In Russian, like in other languages, words can acquire new meanings or lose old ones as societies change.

For instance, the word *партия* (party) originally referred to a political faction or group in the 19th century. However, during the Soviet era, the term became strongly associated with the Communist Party, symbolizing a singular, state-controlled political entity. Post-Soviet Russia has seen *партия* return to a more general meaning, referring to any political party, yet the historical weight of the Soviet connotation still lingers in public discourse. Another example of semantic shift can be seen in the word *демократия* (democracy), which in Soviet Russia was often viewed negatively and linked to Western political systems. After the collapse of the USSR, however, the term underwent a significant shift, acquiring a more positive connotation in contemporary Russian discourse, symbolizing the ideal of political freedom and civil liberties, even though there are still debates over its practical application.

Technological words have also undergone semantic shifts. For example, *сеть* (network) historically referred to physical networks or webs, such as a fishing net or a social network. In the digital age, *сеть* has come to represent the "internet," highlighting how technology reshapes traditional terms into new, more abstract meanings. Semantic shifts also play a role in how certain words are used in a political context. For example, words like *победа* (victory), *перестройка* (restructuring), or *глобализация* (globalization) have not only changed in meaning but also in the ideologies they represent. The word *перестройка* was initially associated with a political reform movement during the late Soviet period and has since taken on new connotations in discussions of economic change and political transition in post-Soviet Russia.

3. Language Contact and Borrowing

Language contact has been an important factor in shaping Russian vocabulary, particularly in recent decades. Russian has long been influenced by languages such as French, German, and Latin, but the influence of English has been particularly significant since the 1990s. The process of borrowing, where words from one language are adopted into another, has been an essential aspect of Russian lexicology.

English loanwords have become especially prevalent in fields such as business, technology, and popular culture. Words like *менеджер* (manager), *пресс-конференция* (press conference), *финанс* (finance), and *имидж* (image) have entered Russian without significant changes. English's dominance in global technological, business, and cultural spheres has pushed

Russian to adopt new terms that often lack direct equivalents in the language. Some of these loanwords are borrowed in their original forms, while others undergo modification. For instance, *компьютер* (computer) and *интернет* (internet) are adapted from English, while maintaining a clear link to their English roots. However, some borrowed terms are altered to fit the Russian morphological and phonetic system, such as *шоппинг* (shopping) or *кредит* (credit), which have been integrated into colloquial speech.

The prevalence of English in Russian, particularly in the media and business world, has sparked a debate about **linguistic purity**. Some linguists and cultural critics argue that excessive borrowing weakens the Russian language, making it more difficult to maintain its cultural identity. On the other hand, others contend that borrowing is a natural process in the evolution of language and reflects Russia's integration into the global community.

4. Digitalization and New Lexical Trends

The rise of the internet and social media has had a profound impact on Russian lexicology. As more people engage with digital technologies, Russian has developed new words and expressions to describe online activities, virtual environments, and new forms of social interaction. Terms such as *хештег* (hashtag), *мем* (meme), and *вирусный* (viral) have emerged from the digital landscape, reflecting the influence of global internet culture on the Russian lexicon. Furthermore, **cyberculture** and online platforms have introduced new forms of communication. For example, *твитить* (to tweet), *лайкать* (to like), and *репостить* (to repost) have become common verbs in everyday Russian speech, representing specific actions within the context of social media. The growing use of internet slang and informal language in social media has also led to the creation of **neologisms** that are often not found in formal dictionaries. These words reflect the evolving nature of communication and the role of technology in shaping modern Russian discourse.

Conclusion

The study of Russian lexicology is fundamental to understanding how the Russian language adapts and evolves in response to social, cultural, and technological changes. Over the centuries, Russian has developed a rich and complex vocabulary system, shaped by a variety of historical influences, including interactions with other languages and cultures. The processes of word formation, such as derivation and compounding, as well as the constant flow of loanwords, particularly from English, have made Russian a dynamic and adaptive language. One of the most remarkable aspects of Russian lexicology is its ability to incorporate foreign terms while preserving its unique grammatical structure. This adaptability allows Russian to maintain its linguistic integrity while responding to the needs of modern communication, especially in the fields of business, technology, and popular culture. Additionally, the semantic shifts that words undergo over time reveal how language reflects the political, social, and ideological changes within society. The Russian lexicon has undergone significant transformations, especially following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which has altered the meanings and usages of many

words, particularly those associated with politics and identity.

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