

BORROWINGS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND PROBLEMS OF THEIR CLASSIFICATION

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Abstract

The article examines the current problems of classifying borrowed vocabulary in the modern Russian language. Various approaches to systematizing foreign words developed in domestic and foreign linguistics are analyzed. Special attention is paid to classification criteria: by source language, by degree of assimilation, by method of borrowing, by sphere of usage, and other grounds. Based on the generalization of existing classifications, the main theoretical and practical problems of systematizing borrowed vocabulary are identified, related to the absence of a single generally accepted approach, the blurring of boundaries between types of borrowings, and the complexity of their identification in modern conditions of active interlingual interaction. The author concludes that a comprehensive approach to the classification of borrowings is necessary, taking into account both linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

Keywords: borrowing, foreign vocabulary, classification of borrowings, assimilation, Anglicisms, lexicology, Russian language.

Introduction

Borrowing is one of the most important and most productive ways of replenishing the vocabulary of any language [1]. As T.V. Baranova rightly notes, "the borrowing of words from one language into another is a natural consequence of language contacts in the fields of science, culture, economics, politics, and sports" [2]. In the context of modern integration processes, globalization, and active intercultural interaction, the number of borrowings in the Russian language is steadily increasing, which makes their study particularly relevant. The process of borrowing is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon affecting various levels of the linguistic system. As N.V. Semyonova notes, "one of the characteristic features of the Russian language norm is its tolerance towards speech innovations, for example, towards the borrowing of foreign vocabulary" [3]. This tolerance manifests itself in the possibility of simultaneous existence in speech of several variants of one linguistic unit.

Despite numerous studies in the field of borrowings, the problem of their classification still remains one of the most debatable in modern linguistics [4]. The absence of a single generally accepted approach to the systematization of borrowed vocabulary creates significant difficulties in both theoretical and practical aspects [5]. Various classifications proposed by researchers are based on different criteria, which leads to ambiguity in the identification and interpretation of borrowed units [6]. The purpose of this article is to systematize existing approaches to the classification of borrowings in the Russian language, to identify the main problems associated with their systematization, and to determine promising directions for further research in this area.

The Concept of Borrowing and Its Theoretical Understanding

In linguistics, borrowing is understood as “the process of assimilation by one language of a word, expression, or meaning from another language as it is (that is, without translation), as well as the result of this process — the borrowed word itself in the vocabulary of the language” [7]. As E.V. Bondareva emphasizes, “borrowings are an inevitable result of the development of humanity and its languages, since a people cannot live in isolation throughout its history” [8]. In the works of domestic and foreign linguists, the problem of borrowing is considered from various positions [9]. In the dissertation research of T.V. Baranova, the key aspects of studying this problem are highlighted: analysis of the reasons for borrowing lexical units, construction of a classification of foreign lexical units, study of borrowings in the Russian and German languages [10].

The reasons for borrowing can be divided into two main groups: extralinguistic (external) and intralinguistic (internal) [11]. The former include economic, political, cultural, and scientific contacts between peoples [12]. The latter include the absence in the recipient language of an adequate name for new realities, the striving for linguistic economy, and the need for terminological precision [13]. In studies on borrowed vocabulary, the internal structure of the borrowed word is more often studied, while the phonetic side of borrowing, in particular the accentual aspect, is either not considered at all or is studied fragmentarily [14].

Basic Principles of Classification of Borrowings

In the scientific literature, “the issue of classification of borrowings from the standpoint of different approaches has been covered quite widely” [15]. Analysis of existing works allows us to identify several main classification criteria.

Classification by Source Language: The most widespread and intuitively understandable is the principle of classification by donor language [16]. Depending on the source language, borrowings in Russian are called “Anglicisms, Arabisms, Germanisms, and the like” [17]. This approach makes it possible to trace historical and cultural ties between peoples and to identify dominant donor languages in different historical periods [18].

According to the genetic principle, the borrowed vocabulary of the Russian language is divided into two large categories: “units that came into the Russian language from closely related languages, and words and expressions borrowed from non-closely related languages” [19]. This distinction is important for understanding the degree of adaptation of borrowings: words from closely related languages (for example, from Ukrainian or Belarusian) are assimilated faster and more easily than from languages of another family [20]. However, this criterion is not without shortcomings. Firstly, many borrowings have passed through several intermediary languages, which makes it difficult to determine the primary source [21]. Secondly, the same source language can influence Russian differently in different historical periods [22].

Classification by Degree of Assimilation: This approach is based on the extent to which a borrowed word has adapted to the phonetic, grammatical, and semantic system of the recipient language [23]. L.P. Krysin identifies “assimilated” borrowings, “the assimilation of which has been fully completed, so that speakers of Russian freely use them in the process of not only everyday but also professional communication” [24].

According to the degree of assimilation of foreign vocabulary by the Russian language, several groups are distinguished [25]:

1. Fully assimilated borrowings, which are not perceived by native speakers as foreign (for example, школа, тетрадь, кровать) [26]. Their foreign origin is not felt, “and they easily form derived words” [27].

2. Partially assimilated borrowings, preserving some features of the source language (for example, indeclinable nouns like пальто, какао or words with stress atypical for Russian) [28].

3. Unassimilated (exoticisms), preserving a foreign appearance and denoting realities of other cultures (for example, джип, сомbrero) [29].

4. Barbarisms — foreign words used in speech to create local color or stylization [30].

It should be noted that the boundaries between these groups are quite blurred, and the process of assimilation is dynamic, which creates additional difficulties for classification [31].

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