

Modern Processes in the Lexical System of the Russian Language

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Abstract. *The article examines the main trends in the development of the lexical system of modern Russian. Special attention is paid to the processes of neologization, borrowing, word-formation activity, democratization, and digitalization of the lexicon. The analysis is based on modern media, Internet, and colloquial sources. The main types of lexical innovations, their causes, and consequences for the language system and communicative practice are identified.*

Key words: *Russian language, lexicon, neologisms, borrowings, word formation, digital communication, language democratization.*

Introduction

The modern Russian language is undergoing an intensive period of lexical transformation caused by rapid changes in social, cultural, and technological life. The lexical system, as the most dynamic subsystem of language, reflects social processes more quickly than phonetics or grammar. It is in the vocabulary that society's response to new realities—economic, political, informational, and cultural—is most clearly manifested.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, Russian entered an era in which globalization, internetization, and digitalization became key factors of linguistic change. The virtual environment, social networks, and new forms of communication create unique conditions for the emergence and spread of new words and expressions. The language has become not only a means of transmitting information but also a reflection of worldview shifts and human adaptation to the technological age.

Lexical innovations affect all levels of the language system—from the creation of new words and borrowings of foreign units to the rethinking of traditional meanings and the emergence of new stylistic shades. English loanwords such as *lifehack*, *update*, *stories*, *brandbook* actively penetrate Russian speech, along with semantic neologisms (*toxic*, *viral*, *bubble*) and hybrid words formed by mixed word-building models (*streamit'*, *apgreidit'*, *laiknut'*).

A distinctive feature of the current stage is the intensification of democratization and informalization of the lexical level. Speech becomes more expressive, dynamic, and concise, yet saturated with meaning and emotion. On the one hand, this contributes to the flexibility and adaptability of the language to new realities; on the other, it raises concerns about the preservation of linguistic norms and cultural tradition.

Thus, the relevance of this study lies in the need for a systematic analysis of ongoing lexical processes, identifying their causes, directions, and regularities. The research aims to contribute to the study of the current stage of Russian language development, to describe its lexical dynamics, and to show how external and internal factors shape the new linguistic reality of the 21st century.

According to the Vinogradov Institute of the Russian Language (2023), more than 40% of new words recorded in the Russian media corpus are associated with digital technologies, social networks, and

Internet communication. Vocabulary thus becomes not only a reflection but also a tool for understanding the digital reality.

The purpose of this research is to identify the main directions and characteristics of modern lexical processes, as well as their impact on the system and norm of the modern Russian language.

Methods

The study is based on the principles of systemic and functional linguistic analysis. **The following methods were employed:**

Lexico-semantic analysis – to identify new words and meanings in modern Russian.

Comparative-historical method – to compare new lexical units with their traditional counterparts.

Content analysis – used to study Internet, social media, and mass media vocabulary (2020–2024).

Corpus method – analysis of data from the Russian National Corpus and the Media Corpus of RGGU.

The empirical material includes news texts from TASS, RIA Novosti, Internet platforms (Telegram, VK, YouTube), as well as modern dictionaries of neologisms [Biryukov, 2022; Lopatin, 2023].

Results

The analysis identified five leading processes characterizing the current state of the Russian lexical system:

Neologization

Every year, hundreds of new words enter the Russian language, reflecting the realities of the digital society: stream, like, hater, blogger, fake, donate, content maker.

Many of them quickly adapt to Russian grammatical norms (laīkat', postit', zaguglit').

Active Borrowing

The main source of borrowings remains English, especially in IT, business, and online communication: startup, freelance, brand, update, marketing.

There is a noticeable trend of morphological integration and word-formation activity based on foreign roots (startuper, brendovyy, apgreidit').

Democratization of Language

The boundaries between formal and informal speech are blurring. Slang and colloquial expressions increasingly appear in media and even academic discourse: cringe, toxic, rofl, trash.

This process reflects the desire for expressiveness and informality.

Digitalization of Lexis

A special stratum of Internet vocabulary is forming, including terms, emoji-lexemes, hashtags, and abbreviations (lol, imho, rzhomba, zhiza).

Digital communication accelerates word formation and semantic shifts.

Semantic Reinterpretation

Old words acquire new meanings due to social changes:

- toxic — not chemical, but “a negative person”;
- bubble — not only a physical object but “informational isolation”;
- viral — not about disease, but about content.

Discussion

The analysis shows that modern lexical processes in Russian are complex and multidirectional.

On one hand, the language is enriched with new words, expanded expressive possibilities, and growing morphological flexibility. On the other hand, there is a threat of excessive Anglicization and a weakening of stylistic balance.

The problem of normative adaptation of new words is especially relevant today. Academic linguistics (Rozenthal, Lopatin, 2023) emphasizes the need to systematize neologisms and determine their normative status in dictionaries.

Particular attention should be given to the influence of the digital environment: the Internet has become the primary source of lexical innovations, forming a new linguistic norm of online communication—flexible, dynamic, and multimodal.

Modern processes also affect the axiological and cultural dimensions of the language: through vocabulary, the transformation of the modern worldview is reflected—marked by mobility, virtuality, speed, brevity, and emotionality.

Conclusion

The study confirms that the modern Russian lexical system develops through constant renewal, integration, and adaptation. The lexicon, as a living organism, instantly reacts to changes in society: every new phenomenon, technology, or cultural trend finds linguistic reflection.

The main trends of lexical development include:

- ✓ Active enrichment of the vocabulary with new words related to the Internet, business, digital technologies, and public life;
- ✓ Extensive borrowing, primarily from English, with subsequent morphological adaptation;
- ✓ Semantic reorientation of old words and emergence of new figurative meanings;
- ✓ Democratization of speech, reflected in the penetration of colloquial and Internet expressions into the literary and public sphere.

However, these processes are not unambiguously positive. They provoke linguistic and cultural debates about the boundaries of norm and acceptable change. Modern linguistics faces the task of balancing innovation and tradition, preserving the cultural identity of the language while maintaining openness to global trends.

Future research directions include:

Lexicographic description and systematization of 21st-century neologisms;

Study of new words functioning in different communication genres (scientific, media, colloquial);

Investigation of the role of social networks and Internet culture as drivers of lexical innovation;

Development of recommendations for including new words in normative dictionaries and educational materials.

Modern lexical processes do not indicate the degradation of the Russian language, but rather its high adaptability and vitality. The Russian language successfully assimilates new realities while remaining a powerful tool of cultural self-expression.

Thus, the Russian language of the 21st century does not lose its identity but demonstrates flexibility, dynamism, and capacity for self-renewal, confirming its status as one of the richest and most expressive languages in the modern world.

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