

Borrowings In Youth Slang

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Abstract: This study investigates the phenomenon of lexical borrowings in contemporary Russian youth slang, emphasizing their origins, mechanisms of integration, and sociolinguistic functions within the contexts of globalization and digital communication. Special attention is accorded to Anglicisms, which predominate owing to the pervasive influence of internet culture, social media platforms, streaming services, online gaming, and global popular culture. The analysis encompasses semantic transformations, morphological adaptations, and the contributions of borrowings to subcultural identity formation. Drawing on data from online sources and trends observed through 2025, the findings underscore the enduring dominance of English-derived terms, alongside emergent influences from Korean and Japanese linguistic elements, amid ongoing societal discourses concerning linguistic purity.

Keywords: Youth slang, lexical borrowings, Anglicisms, sociolinguistics, globalization, digital communication, subcultural identity, language adaptation.

Introduction: As a dynamic social construct, language undergoes continual evolution influenced by sociocultural factors, with youth slang constituting a particularly responsive domain to such transformations. In the digital era, Russian youth slang has emerged as a prime site for lexical borrowings, predominantly from English, facilitated by global media consumption, online gaming, social networking platforms, and international entertainment industries. This phenomenon mirrors broader processes of globalization, wherein young Russians participate in transnational communicative ecosystems.

Borrowings serve not merely to address nominative deficiencies for novel concepts but also to convey cultural prestige and expressive nuance. Although Anglicisms maintain primacy, subsidiary inflows from Korean (e.g., via K-pop and dramas) and Japanese (e.g., via anime and manga) are increasingly evident. Contemporary trends as of 2025, including viral memes and terms such as "sigma" or "brain rot," exemplify this ongoing linguistic dynamism.

The present inquiry aims to delineate the typologies, sources, functions, and adaptive processes of

borrowings in Russian youth slang, evaluating their assimilation into the linguistic framework and their implications for identity construction. Key research questions address: the principal sources and conduits of borrowings; the morphological and semantic adaptations of borrowed lexemes; and the sociolinguistic roles they fulfill.

METHODS

This qualitative sociolinguistic inquiry is grounded in theoretical paradigms advanced by prominent Russian linguists (e.g., Krysin [2], Zemskaya [4]) and incorporates empirical evidence from digital corpora. Data sources comprise:

- Examination of youth discourse across social media dialogues, forums (Telegram channels), and slang lexicons updated through 2025.
- Aggregation of prevalent borrowings from internet platforms, streaming services (e.g., Twitch, YouTube), and gaming subcultures.
- Synthesis of secondary scholarly literature on borrowing dynamics and slang evolution.
- Integration of contemporaneous trends (2024–2025),

encompassing viral phenomena from TikTok challenges, memes, and popular culture milestones.

Lexical exemplars were curated based on frequency and representativeness, with scrutiny of adaptation mechanisms (e.g., derivational processes, suffixation). Societal perspectives were appraised through references to public deliberations and linguistic scholarship.

RESULTS

Sources and Types of Borrowings

English constitutes the predominant source, disseminated via social media, online games, music genres (e.g., hip-hop, K-pop hybrids), and cinematic productions. Subordinate borrowings from Korean ("oppa") and Japanese ("waifu"/вайфу, "otaku"/отаку) are discernible. Data from 2025 affirm the hegemony of Anglicisms, with terms propagating rapidly through memes and digital challenges.

Borrowings are categorized thus:

- Nominative: designating emergent realities (стрим 'stream', баг 'bug', вайб 'vibe', хайп 'hype', имба 'imba' from "imbalance," челлендж 'challenge,' камбек 'comeback').
- Expressive: articulating emotional states (крик 'cringe', лол 'LOL', краш 'crush', токсик 'toxic', слей 'slay', треш 'trash' denoting chaos).
- Modal: conveying attitudinal orientations (окей 'okay', флексить 'to flex', рофлить 'to ROFL', чиллить 'to chill', имхо 'IMHO', кек 'kek' as an adaptation of laughter expressions).

Emergent exemplars from 2024–2025 include сигма 'sigma' (denoting an independent persona), базд 'based' (indicating authenticity), and фан 'fan' (for enthusiast), often featured in meme-driven contexts.

Adaptation and Integration

Numerous terms preserve orthographic and phonetic fidelity to origins (e.g., крик, лол), whereas others exhibit morphological assimilation into Russian paradigms:

- краш → крашиться (to develop an infatuation).
- буст → забустить (to enhance).
- хайп → захайпить (to generate excitement).
- Contemporary instances: френдзона → зафрендзонить; сигма → сигма-мужчина; челлендж → челленджить; пати 'party' → запатить (to party); пруф 'proof' → пруфануть (to prove).

Such adaptations evince profound systemic incorporation, with borrowings adopting Russian affixes, prefixes, and inflectional patterns [3].

Functions and Sociolinguistic Role

Borrowings perform multifaceted roles:

- Communicative: enabling succinct conveyance within peer cohorts.
- Identificational: signifying affiliation with subcultures (e.g., gaming or fandom enclaves).
- Ludic: engendering humorous or ironic resonances (шипперить 'to ship', рофф 'ROFL').
- Prestige-oriented: aligning speakers with cosmopolitan trends.

These elements encapsulate sociocultural metamorphoses, functioning as emblems of the "digital cohort" and counterpose to normative conventions [4].

Frequently Used Examples

- кринж: evoking vicarious embarrassment.
- флексить: to ostentatiously display.
- шипперить: to envision romantic pairings among characters.
- Recent accretions: слей 'slay' (to excel impressively); треш 'trash' (denoting disorder); отаку 'otaku' (anime enthusiast); камбек 'comeback' (resurgence); бойфренд 'boyfriend'; пруф 'proof'.

Societal Attitudes

Scholarly and public opinions diverge, with some positing excessive borrowings as erosive to linguistic integrity (e.g., apprehensions regarding "over-Anglicization" in 2025 policy debates), while others construe them as organic enrichments fostering innovation [5].

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings corroborate antecedent scholarship (e.g., Krysin [2], Zemskaya [4]), positing borrowings as an inherent adaptation to globalizing forces. The ascendancy of Anglicisms reflects English's status as a digital lingua franca, with adaptive processes ensuring durability. Relative to prior investigations, 2025 patterns evince heightened viral dissemination via platforms such as TikTok, exemplified by the meme-propelled ascent of terms like "sigma."

While augmenting expressivity and communal cohesion, borrowings provoke contentions over cultural dilution. They signify linguistic receptivity, contingent upon preservation of systemic coherence (Bronskaya [5]). Within youth milieus, they expedite global assimilation whilst retaining indigenous expressive idiosyncrasies.

Study limitations pertain to the emphasis on digital datasets; prospective inquiries might encompass oral corpora or regional differentiations.

CONCLUSION

Predominantly comprising Anglicisms, lexical borrowings represent an indispensable facet of Russian youth slang, propelled by digital globalization. They discharge varied functions, integrate fluidly, and fortify subcultural identities. As digital infrastructures advance, borrowings are poised to persistently mold youth discourse, equilibrating innovation with endogenous traditions. This trajectory underscores the vitality of language in an interconnected milieu.

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