

## RUSSIAN LEXICON IN CROATIAN

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Despite the absence of large-scale direct linguistic contacts between Croa-  
tians and Russians in the course of their respective cultural development, the pen-  
etration of Russian words into Croatian has a long history. For the most part, the  
entry of russianisms took place across written channels and by means of various  
intermediary languages: Church Slavonic in its Eastern Slavic redaction, Serbian,  
Czech, and Polish. Thus it is often difficult, and in certain cases impossible, to de-  
termine precisely whether we are dealing with an "authentic" russianism, as  
opposed to a "pseudo" or "false" slavonicism. The closely-related Slavic languages  
share many words of Common Slavic origin which display complete semantic  
equivalency alongside minimal distinctions with respect to grammatical or word-  
formational properties.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a small but characteristic stratum of the Russian  
lexicon began to enter Croatian directly from Russian *belles lettres*, primarily from  
the works of such "classic" authors as Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, Do-  
stoevsky, and Tolstoy. This was a continuous process, despite the fact that, for  
various reasons, Russian books and other publications reached the Croa-  
tians on an irregular basis and in limited quantities.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and over the following decades, the new  
Russian lexicon appeared on an occasional basis in the Croatian press and in ar-  
tistic and publicistic works of Croatian writers (A. Matoš, M. Krleža, A. Cesarec,  
D. Cesarić and others). Over time, some of these words gained a firmer footing in  
the language with their appearance in Croatian dictionaries of various types.

The identification of lexical borrowings from Russian into Croatian and  
other Slavic literary languages has often drawn the attention of researchers. Begin-  
ning with the scholarly activity of J. Dobrovský, the "father of Slavic philology",  
various aspects of this topic have been addressed, such as the complications in-  
volved in identifying genuine russianisms in connection with individual Slavic  
languages. Attempts have also been made to differentiate etymologically Russian  
neologisms from the church slavonicisms which have functioned in the written  
forms of all the Slavic languages since ancient times. The list of researchers who  
have taken up the topic of Russian borrowings in Croatian includes several Croa-  
tian linguists, such as T. Maretić (*Ruske i češke riječi u književnom hrvatskom je-  
ziku*. In: *Rad JAZU*, knj. 108. Zagreb, 1892: 68–98; *Gramatika i stilistika hrvat-*

*skog ili srpskog književnog jezika*. Zagreb, 1899, I. izd., 1931, II. izd., 1971, III. izd.; *Hrvatski ili srpski savjetnik za sve koji žele dobro govoriti i pisati književnim jezikom našim*. Zagreb, 1924; Pregled srpskohrvatske gramatičke terminologije XVII., XVIII. i XIX. vijeka. In: *Rad JAZU*, knj. 243. Zagreb, 1932: 13–90), St. Ivšić (Slavenske tuđice u Petra Preradovića. In: *Hrvatska njiva*, br. 2. Zagreb, 1918), M. Hraste (Strani elementi u srpskohrvatskom narodnom i književnom jeziku. In: *Radovi slavenskog instituta*. Zagreb, 1958: 43–50), Lj. Jonke (*Književni jezik u teoriji i praksi*. Zagreb, 1964; *Hrvatski književni jezik 19. i 20. stoljeća*. Zagreb, 1971; Zasluge i slabosti hrvatskih vukovaca. In: *Jezik*, br. I. Zagreb, 1978/1979), and Z. Vince (*Putovima hrvatskoga književnog jezika*. Zagreb, 1978). Scholars of other nationalities who have dealt with the same topic include the historian of the Slovenian literary language A. Breznik (*Jezikoslovne rasprave*. Ljubljana, 1982; *Življenje besed*. Ljubljana, 1967), the distinguished Czech comparative linguists B. Havránek (*Studie o spisovném jazyce*. Praha, 1963) and A. Jedlička (*Josef Jungmann a obrozenská terminologie literarně vědná a lingvističká*. Praha, 1948), the Finnish Slavist and Russist V. Kiparsky (*Russische historische Grammatik*. Band III. Heidelberg, 1975), the English specialist in the history of the Slavic literary languages R. Auty (Uzajamni utjecaji u jezičkom preporodu Čeha, Slovaka i Južnih Slavena. In: *Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukove dane. MSC. Referati i saopštenja*. Sv. 1. Beograd, 1977), the Polish Slavist T. Orłóś (*Zapożyczenia słowiańskie w czeskiej terminologii botanicznej i zoologicznej*. Kraków, 1972), the Bohemianist V. Šmilauer (Jungmannův Slovník Česko-německý. In: *Slavica Pragensia XVII. Philologica* 3–4. Praha, 1974), the Canadian Slavist G. Thomas (*Linguistic Purism*. London – New York, 1991), the specialist in Russian historical lexicology L. L. Kutina (Jazykovye processy, vznikajuščie pri stanovlenii naučnyx terminologičeskix sistem. In: *Lingvističeskie problemy naučno-texničeskoj terminologii*. Moskva, 1970), the Ukrainian lexicologist E. V. Opel'baum (*Vostočno-slavjanskije leksičeskie elementy v nemeckom jazyke*. Kiev, 1971), the historian of Slavic literary languages and lexicologist G. A. Lilič (*Rol' russkogo jazyka v razvitii slovarnogo sostava češkogo literaturnogo jazyka: konec 18 – načalo 19 veka*. Leningrad, 1982).

Several russianisms can be found in the first Croatian lexicographical publications (F. Vrančić, B. Kašić, J. Habelić, I. Belostenec, A. Jambrešić, I. Mažuranić – who studied in Szombathely and was governor of Croatia – and others) and in the works of such Croatian writers as M. Bogović, K. S. Đalski, M. Krleža, and A. Matoš.

Many Russian words are recorded with commentaries in contemporary lexicographical publications, such as the 23-volume historical dictionary published in Zagreb by the Yugoslavian Academy of Science and Arts (*Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, knj. I–XXIII, sv. 1–97. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija zna-

nosti i umjetnosti, 1881–1973), the dictionary of Church Slavonic in its Croatian redaction (*Rječnik crkvenoslavenskog jezika hrvatske redakcije. Lexicon linguae slavonicae redactionis croaticaе*, sv. 1–3. Zagreb, 1991–1993), the etymological dictionaries of P. Skok (*Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, knj. I–IV. Zagreb, 1971–1974, I. izd., 1988, II. izd.) and A. Gluhak (*Hrvatski etimološki rječnik*. Zagreb, 1993), and B. Klaić's dictionary of foreign words and borrowings (*Rječnik stranih riječi: Tuđice i posuđenice*. Zagreb, 1978, I. izd.) and others.

The larger part of the Russian lexicon borrowed into Croatian reflects prominent events and names connected with various periods of Russian history. The lexically diverse material collected by the present author and his colleague Viktor Moiseenko includes important geographical terms (such as the names of historical and ethnic territories), Christian names and surnames, and other notions and terms which are linked to the history of Russia from antiquity through the post-Soviet period. Our listings also included the names of personages represented in Russian folklore and in Russian *belles lettres* from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Elements of Russian popular speech (*prostorečie*) and urban slang, as well as the most common abbreviated and compound forms, are also listed. We have also included a number of words which reflect cultural traditions and folkways characteristic of the Russian people and of the numerous non-Slavic peoples who have inhabited Russia in the past or continue to do so in our own day.

With respect to some of these words, their designation as "russianisms" is hypothetical to a certain degree. However, for all of the items in the collection, the Russian language served as the intermediary for their borrowing into Croatian, and borrowing took place only after the items had been grammatically and semantically incorporated into Russian.

In the recent past, the Croatian literary language has witnessed the appearance of certain new words and expressions which reflect the realities of Russia in the *perestrojka* and post-*perestrojka* periods. As *sui generis* and sporadic "lexical meteorites", they occupy the periphery of Croatian literary usage and must undergo the test of time before they are fully established in the language.

Our list includes a certain number of recent Russian lexical and semantic neologisms which rarely appear in the Croatian press and other publications. Such items have their source in Russian political jargon and contemporary urban vernacular; most of them have not found their way into bilingual Croatian–Russian and Russian–Croatian lexicographic publications.

Below are some items from our collection: *aršin* ('ancient unit of measurement, 72.12 cm'; found in the expression *mjeriti koga na svoj aršin* 'according to one's material circumstances'), *ataman*, *avgustejši* (epithet applied to members of the tsar's family), *baba* (Croatian meaning: 'married village woman'; 'simple, uneducated woman'; 'wife' (ironic), [of men] 'henpecked husband, timorous man' –

(three-day observation period) *zašto gladiš tuđe babe?*), *banja* ('ruskoparno kupalište' (recently) 'girl'), *barišnja*, *bogatir* ('hero in works of ancient Croatian writers'), *boljarin* ('wealthy person'), *boljševik*, *boljševikinja*, *boljševizacija*, *Car Puška* (found in writings of Krleža), *celina*, *crnorizac* ((Church Slavonic) 'monk'), *čaj*, *čarodej* ('magician, sorcerer'), *častuška*, *čeka*, *čin*, *dača*, *dnevnik*, *dobrovoljac*, *duhovenstvo*, *durakdvornik*, *golovomojka*, *graždanka*, *jamščik*, *jantar*, *ježemjesičnik* ('periodical'), *knjaz*, *komsomolac*, *kozmodrom*, *kurgan*, *lunohod*, *ljubaznost*, *rubaska*, *samovar*, *šči*, *točka*, *tovarišč*, *udarnik*, *volokita*, *vražda*, *žemčug*, *žulik*.