

RUSSIAN SLANG AND COLLOQUIALISM: A GUIDE TO INFORMAL RUSSIAN

Sultanmuradova Farangiz Akramovna

The Teacher, Finnish Pedagogical Institute of Uzbekistan

Department of Russian Language and Literature

Faculty of Exact and Applied Sciences The Direction of Mathematics

Samandarova Shahrizoda Valiyevna

Rustamova Malika Hamidovna

Students of Group 103

Abstract

This article provides an overview of Russian slang and colloquial language, highlighting its origins, characteristics, and usage in modern Russian society. Russian slang has diverse roots, including criminal jargon, youth subcultures, and Western influences, and serves as an important tool for expressing emotions, attitudes, and cultural identity. The article explores popular slang words, technological and youth slang, as well as regional variations. Understanding Russian slang offers insights into contemporary Russian culture and enhances conversational fluency for language learners.

Keywords: Russian slang, Russian colloquial language, informal Russian, youth slang in Russian, Russian criminal jargon, regional slang variations, technology slang, Russian pop culture expressions, conversational Russian.

Introduction

Russian, like any other language, has a rich layer of informal expressions, colloquialisms, and slang that add vibrancy and texture to everyday speech. This layer of language is constantly evolving, reflecting cultural shifts, generational differences, and regional diversity. In this article, we will explore the origins, characteristics, and examples of Russian slang and colloquial expressions, providing insight into how they shape casual Russian communication.

The Role of Slang and Colloquialisms in Russian: Slang and colloquial expressions are essential components of spoken language, allowing speakers to express emotions, strengthen social connections, and even show alignment with a particular subculture. In Russian, informal language serves as a bridge between formal speech and dialects, creating a shared way of communicating that is more flexible, playful, and sometimes more colorful than standard Russian.

Russian slang is often heavily influenced by historical events, politics, and popular culture. In particular, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to an influx of Western culture, technology, and new economic terms, which spurred a wave of new slang words. Today, many Russian slang words and colloquialisms continue to reflect Western influences, but they also draw from historical events and Russia's own rich cultural tapestry.



Origins of Russian Slang and Colloquialisms: Russian slang has diverse origins, with words and expressions stemming from various sources:

1. Criminal and Street Jargon (блатной жаргон): Some Russian slang originated in the criminal underworld, especially during the Soviet era when prison culture had a strong influence on language. This vocabulary, known as **феня** (fenya), includes words like **бабки** (babki) for "money" and **менты** (menty) for "cops." Today, some of these words are widely used in colloquial Russian.
2. Youth Subcultures: Russian youth are prolific creators of slang, particularly through online communities and social media. Youth slang includes words such as **зашквар** (zashkvar) meaning "uncool" or "embarrassing" and **топ** (top) for something that is "the best" or "cool."
3. English Loanwords: Since the 1990s, Russian slang has incorporated numerous English words, often adapted to Russian pronunciation and grammar. Common examples include **лайкать** (laykat) meaning "to like" (on social media) and **фейк** (feyk) for "fake."
4. Technology and Internet Culture: The rapid growth of the internet and gaming culture has contributed to a new wave of slang, such as **геймить** (geymit) meaning "to game" and **хайп** (khayp) for "hype."

Characteristics of Russian Slang and Colloquial Language: Russian slang and colloquial expressions often display several characteristics that make them distinct:

1. Shortened Forms: Colloquial Russian frequently uses abbreviations or truncated words, such as **тусовка** (tusovka) for "party" or **комп** (komp) for "computer."
2. Phonetic Adaptations: Many slang words adopt phonetic spellings that reflect how they are spoken, which is often less formal. For example, **спасибки** (spasibki) is a playful version of **спасибо** (spasibo), meaning "thank you."
3. Emotional Intensity: Russian slang often conveys emotions in a more exaggerated way than standard Russian. Words like **круто** (kruto, "cool") and **ужас** (uzhas, "terrible") express strong opinions or reactions.
4. Regional Variation: Russia's vast geography means that slang can vary significantly by region. For instance, residents of Moscow and Saint Petersburg may have entirely different slang terms for the same concept, such as **поребрик** (porebrik) in Saint Petersburg and **бордюр** (bordyr) in Moscow for "curb."
5. Frequent Use of Diminutives: Colloquial Russian often uses diminutive suffixes to express familiarity or affection, even when discussing mundane topics. For example, **мамочка** (mamochka) is a casual and affectionate way of saying "mom."

Examples of Russian Slang and Colloquialisms: Let's take a look at some popular slang and colloquial expressions in Russian, organized by category:

Everyday Slang:

- Бабки (babki) - "Money"; an informal way of referring to cash.
- Круто (kruto) - "Cool" or "awesome"; often used to describe something impressive.
- Туса (tusa) - "Party"; a casual term for a social gathering.
- Хавка (havka) - "Food"; informal and often used by younger people.



Modern Tech and Internet Slang:

- Чатиться (chatit'sya) - "To chat" online; a term derived from the English "chat."
- Лайкать (laykat') - "To like" a post or photo on social media.
- Фейк (feyk) - "Fake"; used to describe something false or counterfeit.
- Залипать (zalipat') - To "zone out" or become absorbed in something, usually digital content.

Youth Slang and Pop Culture Terms:

- Вписка (vpyaska) - A gathering or party at someone's place.
- Топ (top) - "The best" or "cool"; derived from English.
- Хайп (khaup) - "Hype" or excitement; often used for trends or events.
- Заценить (zatsenit') - To "check out" or "appreciate" something; often used by younger people.

Expressions of Displeasure or Surprise:

- Жесть (zhest) - "Harsh" or "intense"; often used to describe surprising or shocking situations.
- Фигня (fignya) - "Nonsense" or "garbage"; a way to dismiss something.
- Пипец (pipets) - A mild curse word used to express frustration or surprise.

Regional Slang Variations:

- Порербрик (porebrik) vs. бордюр (bordyr) - Both mean "curb"; porebrik is common in Saint Petersburg, while bordyr is used in Moscow.
- Шаверма (shaverma) vs. шаурма (shaurma) - Both refer to shawarma; shaverma is common in the northern regions, especially in Saint Petersburg, whereas shaurma is more commonly used elsewhere in Russia.

The Evolution and Adaptation of Russian Slang: Russian slang is constantly evolving, and new words are often born out of trends, technology, and cultural influences. Social media has accelerated this process, as expressions and memes spread quickly across online platforms. Additionally, the Russian-speaking diaspora in countries like the United States, Germany, and Israel also contributes new slang, often creating a blend of Russian and other languages. Despite its informal nature, slang plays a crucial role in modern Russian, as it allows speakers to express identity, connect with others, and keep pace with contemporary culture. Although it can be challenging for non-native speakers to master, understanding slang and colloquialisms is essential for anyone looking to engage in authentic Russian conversation.

Conclusion:

Russian slang and colloquialisms are an exciting and dynamic aspect of the language, providing insight into contemporary Russian society, culture, and humor. From youth slang to regional differences, the informal side of Russian offers a fresh perspective on the language and can help learners sound more natural and relatable in casual settings. While slang might not always appear in formal language learning resources, it is essential for achieving fluency and connecting with native speakers on a deeper, more personal level.



References:

1. Stern, L. R. (2013). *Colloquial Russian: The Complete Course for Beginners*. Routledge.
2. Proshina, Z. G. (2012). *Russian English: History, Functions, and Features*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Goncharov, I. N., & Likhachev, D. S. (2006). *Жаргон и сленг русского языка [Jargon and Slang of the Russian Language]*. М.: Лань.
4. Khristenko, L. (2014). *Русский сленг: Проблемы, происхождение и развитие [Russian Slang: Issues, Origins, and Development]*. М.: Академия.
5. Gladkova, A., & Larina, T. (2018). "Language and cultural variations in expressing emotions: A comparison of English and Russian," *Pragmatics & Cognition*, 25(2), 337-357.
6. Vasilyeva, T. (2019). "Influence of the internet and youth subcultures on the Russian language," *Journal of Russian Language Studies*, 12(3), 215-230.
7. Arutiunova, N. D. (2007). *Язык и реальность [Language and Reality]*. М.: Прогресс.
8. Verbitskaya, L. A. (2011). *Русская разговорная речь и язык интернет-коммуникации [Russian Colloquial Speech and Internet Communication]*. СПб.: Издательство СПбГУ.
9. Boyer, G. R. (2005). *Street Russian 2: The Best of Russian Slang*. McGraw-Hill Education.
10. Knyazev, S. V. (2010). *Фонетика и фонология русского разговорного языка [Phonetics and Phonology of Russian Colloquial Language]*. М.: Флинта.

