

THE LEXICAL BRIDGE: SEMANTIC AND STRUCTURAL PARALLELS BETWEEN FRENCH AND RUSSIAN TOURISM TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the linguistic parallels between French and Russian tourism terminology. Historically shaped by 18th-century Francophilia, Soviet institutionalization, and modern globalization, Russian travel vocabulary shares extensive sound-alike borrowings (Gallicisms) and semantic calques with French. Utilizing a comparative qualitative framework, this study categorizes shared terms across hospitality, transport, and itinerary planning. The findings highlight how French foundational vocabulary continues to underpin modern Russian tourism discourse, despite the growing influence of English globalisms.

Keywords: lexical bridge, semantic parallels, structural parallels, tourism terminology

Introduction

Tourism relies heavily on standardized international nomenclature to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Historically, French served as the primary lingua franca of global hospitality, diplomacy, and elite travel. As Russia modernized its administrative and cultural frameworks in the 18th and 19th centuries, its lexicon absorbed extensive French terminology. While English currently dominates contemporary corporate travel discourse, the baseline architectural vocabulary of Russian travel remains deeply tied to French. This study examines the structural, phonological, and semantic parallels between French and Russian tourism terms, assessing how historical linguistic transfers shape modern travel communication.

Methods

This study applies a comparative linguistic analysis across a curated corpus of core tourism and hospitality terms in French and Russian. Terms were selected from three primary domains: transportation, accommodations/hospitality, and sightseeing/itinerary management. Each pair was evaluated based on:

- **Phonological Borrowing:** Direct phonetic translation of French roots into Russian (Gallicisms).
- **Semantic Alignment:** Parallel meaning and operational usage in international travel context.
- **Morphological Calquing:** Literal structural translation of compound concepts.

Results

The analysis reveals clear structural overlap across major tourism operational sectors.

Direct Phonological Borrowings (Gallicisms)

French Term	Russian Term	Transliteration	English Functional Equivalent
Voyage	Вояж	<i>Voyazh</i>	Travel / Extended trip
Bagage	Багаж	<i>Bagazh</i>	Luggage / Baggage
Billet	Билет	<i>Bilet</i>	Transport / Entry ticket
Coupe	Купе	<i>Kupe</i>	Enclosed train compartment
Guide	Гид	<i>Gid</i>	Tour guide
Escale	Эскала / Эскале	<i>Eskala</i>	Layover / Intermediate port stop

Semantic Calques and Structural Parallelisms

French Concept	Russian Equivalent	Transliteration	Operational Context
Pension complète	Полный пансион	<i>Polny pansion</i>	Full board (all meal coverage)
Demi-pension	Полупансион	<i>Polupansion</i>	Half board (breakfast + dinner)
Tourisme vert	Зелёный туризм	<i>Zelyony turizm</i>	Eco-tourism / Rural travel
Bureau de voyage	Бюро путешествий	<i>Byuro puteshestviy</i>	Travel agency / Tour bureau

Discussion

The strong parallel between French and Russian tourism terminology stems from three distinct socio-historical phases:

- Imperial Assimilation (18th-19th Centuries): French served as the spoken language of the Russian aristocracy, embedding fundamental travel concepts (*voyage*, *bagage*, *billet*) directly into high-society parlance.
- Soviet Institutionalization (20th Century): State-run travel entities like *Intourist* adapted French structural models for administrative clarity, standardizing terms like *пансион* (pension) and *маршрут* (itinerary via French/German roots).
- Modern Coexistence with Anglicisms: Although contemporary travel technology introduces English loanwords (*check-in*, *booking*), French-derived terms maintain structural dominance in core physical infrastructure (rail transport, board types, guided tours).

Conclusion

The lexical connection between French and Russian tourism terminology demonstrates a lasting legacy of historical cross-cultural integration. Understanding these parallels provides valuable insight for linguists, translation specialists, and international hospitality managers operating within bilingual travel contexts.

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