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Stanislava ŠPAČKOVÁ

## The Impact of Political Changes on the Use of Latin Script in Russian Texts<sup>1</sup>

Language is one of the most important parts of national culture and identity and therefore can be (ab)used as a powerful source of political power. Some forms of language exploitation (not necessarily meant in a negative way) can be found in an effort to express national interests and preferences by means of using/banning foreign words (which can either boost or prevent international relations). Nouns and proper names are the most commonly adopted foreign words. This paper focuses on the usage of foreign proper names in Russian texts during different periods of time (19th–21st centuries) and tries to answer the question as to why during some periods, proper names preserved the original Latin script in texts written in Russian, whereas in other times, Cyrillic transcription was preferred.

**Key words:** proper names; translation; transfer of proper names; translation studies; history of translation methods; transcription; direct graphic transfer; international communication

### Vliv politických změn na používání latinky v ruských textech

Jazyk je velmi důležitou součástí národní identity každého národa a jako takový může být využit či zneužit k podpoře politických zájmů. Určitou formou využití jazyka pro dosažení vlastních cílů může být i snaha vyjádřit národní zájmy prostřednictvím preference nebo zákazu cizích slov (což může mezinárodní vztahy buď podpořit, nebo jim zamezit). Protože nejčastěji přejímaná slova jsou podstatná a vlastní jména, zaměříme se v tomto článku na používání přejatých proprií (vlastních jmen) v ruských textech různých epoch (19.–21. století). Kromě toho se pokusíme podat odpověď na otázku, proč jsou v ruských textech v určitých obdobích některá vlastní jména přebírána v původní grafické podobě (v latince) a v jiných obdobích jsou přepisována do cyrilice.

**Klíčová slova:** vlastní jména; překlad; převod vlastních jmen; translologie; historie překladových metod; transkripce; přímý grafický přenos; mezinárodní komunikace

When exploring the origins, development and use of specific writing systems, it is necessary to refer to historical, political and social studies. The Russian language is written in Cyrillic, but just a glance at current Russian newspapers is enough to realize that the Latin script is also extensively used. In order to explain the phenomenon,

<sup>1</sup> Studie vznikla v rámci specifického výzkumu MUNI/A/1125/2014 „Stimulace a podpora interdisciplinárního slavistického výzkumu“.

it is indispensable to understand the circumstances of alphabet adoption and to learn about the connotations raised by the respective orthographic system. Mikhail Arapov's article *Latinita i Kirilita*<sup>2</sup> shows that for most Russians, Latin has always been connected with advanced Western civilisation, wealth, and a higher standard of living. This has caused a certain fascination with the script itself. Although individual letters of the alphabet do not serve any semantic function, as a whole, the appearance of the script raises a lot of extratextual connotations. Texts written in the Latin, Cyrillic or Glagolitic alphabets can usually be located geographically or historically, even though a foreign reader may not be able to understand their meaning. Such texts may have cultural connotations that evoke an attitude in the reader. In addition, a graphic design of the text is frequently tied to a certain ideological concept: in Russia under Peter the Great, the Latin script evoked images of European education, progress, wealth and high standards of living, which facilitated its penetration of the Russian language. On the other hand, the Cyrillic script acquired negative connotations in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s, as it was considered to be a tool of the corrupt and bourgeois Tsarist era. There were even plans to fully replace Cyrillic with the Latin alphabet. However, in 1937 the Cyrillic alphabet became an instrument of Russification and a medium of ideological unification of the USSR nations.

The ideological opposition of the Latin and Cyrillic scripts is closely related to the issue of adoption of proper names into different languages: preferences for one of the four adoption methods (transcription, transliteration and calque versus direct graphic transfer) tend to reflect the current political mood in Russia. «Перевод стремится „чужое“ максимально сделать „своим“; транскрипция стремится сохранить „чужое“ через средства „своего“».<sup>3</sup>

## 1 From the time of adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet to 1708

Russia implemented its writing system around the 10th century, at the same time as it adopted Christianity. As mentioned above, alphabets tend to create strong ideological concepts, and the primary choice of character set was thus influenced by the political direction of the country. At the time of Russia's implementation of its writing system, the Christian world was experiencing the East–West Schism (1054) following the division of the former Roman Empire into Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) halves. Russia opted for the original Greek tradition, rich Byzantine Empire and orthodoxy. To establish a connection between the Slavic language and the Greek tradition, a new Slavonic script was created: the Cyrillic alphabet.

<sup>2</sup> АРАПОВ, М.: *Latinita i kirilica*. Polit.ru (23 September 2013). Available online from <<http://polit.ru/article/2003/09/23/625530/>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>3</sup> РЕФОРМАТСКИЈ, А. А.: *Perevod ili transkripcija*. In: Vostočno-slavjanskaja onomastika. Moskva, Nauka, 1972.

Graphically, Cyrillic is very similar to the Greek script but it is better suited for recording the phonetics of the Slavic language.

Until the beginning of the 18th century, the Cyrillic script had not undergone any major changes, as it was used almost exclusively for religious purposes. It was a relatively difficult orthographical system, and therefore only available to a limited group of people. Latin had no significant influence on the Cyrillic script, as there was only minimal contact between the two. Russian texts were written almost exclusively in Cyrillic.

## 2 The role of Peter the Great (Latin script in Russian texts from 1708 to 1917)

At the beginning of 18th century, policy of Peter the Great enhanced Russian international relations. Among other things, he signed a decree that established the first Russian printed newspaper. It was called *Vedomosti* (*Ведомости*) and the first copy was issued on the 16th December 1702 (the oldest preserved printed copy, though, dates back to the 2nd January 1703, as only handwritten copies of the very first issue have been preserved).

As can be seen from the example above, the Church Cyrillic script is rather difficult to read, and thus only a few people were able to access education and information. Therefore, the first and most significant reform of the Russian writing system was carried out in 1708. Peter the Great was the first ruler who, more than 800 years after the implementation of the Cyrillic alphabet, dared to point out some of its shortcomings and sought to remedy them. The Reforming Tsar, as he was called, caused a small linguistic schism in his own country: he introduced the so-called *Grazhdanka* (literally meaning “citizens’ alphabet or Civil Cyrillic”), which separated the language of the Church from the language of the society, science and public discourse. Peter’s *Grazhdanka* was mainly a symbolic reform, as it was based on the graphic simplification of the letters (they were redesigned according to the model of the humanistic font, *Antiqua*) but it became the impetus behind larger-scale reforms that were to follow later. More practically-minded reforms were carried out by Catherine the Great, whose aim was to adjust the *Grazhdanka* alphabet



Example of *Vedomosti* front page from 1704. NB – the paper was written in Church Cyrillic<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The picture copied from ROCHLENKO, D.: *Pervaja russkaja pečatnaja gazeta*. Nauka i žizn', 2007, № 3. Available online from <<http://www.nkj.ru/archive/articles/9324/>> [accessed 5 January 2015].

САНКТЪ ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.



ВЪДОМОСТИ

ИЗЪ РІМА 29 Іюля.

Папа намбрень въсплаци бхашъ,  
 еже онъ обыкъ чинитъ въ Месѣцѣ  
 Августѣ. Врачи его всячески ста-  
 ратся чтобъ его отъ того оштрапитъ,  
 а онъ выслушавъ ихъ многожды отомъ  
 съ особливою пріѣзжностію, сказаъ  
 имъ, что искусство и обыкновенне  
 18 имбуютъ

for use in secular texts, rather than just religious ones. She removed superfluous letters from the Russian alphabet and added new ones.

The first issue of *Vedomosti* printed in the Civil Cyrillic (*Grazhdanka*) was published on the 1st February 1710.

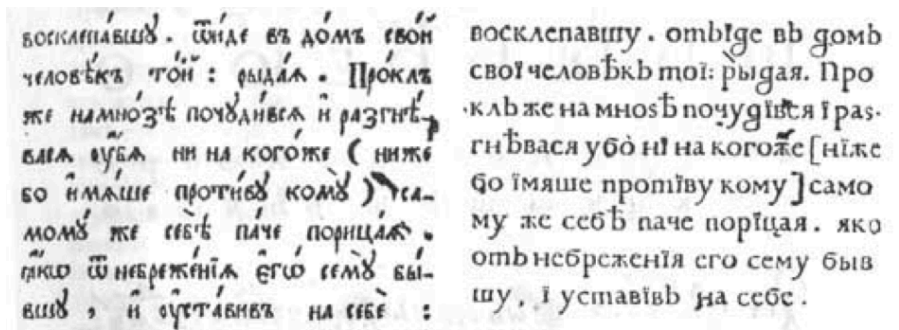
Even after the *Grazhdanka* had been introduced, some important issues of *Vedomosti* were still being printed both in Church and Civil Cyrillic, as some people were able to read only the Church Cyrillic.

Until the Revolution of 1917, the Latin script had been acceptable in Russian texts. Afterwards, in the 1920s, its status grew even stronger to the extent that it almost replaced Cyrillic.

Regarding the use of foreign proper names, the official state press of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries shows many examples of direct graphic transfer (i.e. the process of adopting the source

Front page of *Vedomosti* printed in Saint-Petersbourg<sup>5</sup>

name exactly as it is written in the source language; this is usually used if the source and target languages share a common writing system or if the writing system of the source language is well known in the target culture). Direct graphic transfers can be frequently found in the area of advertising, as connotations with the rich and developed Western civilisation are especially important in such texts. Direct transfer is further used in the names of foreign newspapers and anthroponyms, toponyms are



Example of *Vedomosti* printed in both Church and Civil Cyrillic<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The picture copied from ROCHLENKO, D. (see above).

<sup>6</sup> The picture copied from ROCHLENKO, D. (see above).

always transcribed. Generally speaking, transcription is more common than direct graphic transfer, as can be seen in the following examples:

Кореспондентъ «Times» совершилъ полетъ на аэропланѣ надъ полемъ сраженія въ районѣ Соммы во время артилерійскаго боя и описываетъ свои впечатлѣнія: день былъ свѣтлый, солнечный, съ легкой дымкой; рѣдкія бѣлыя облака бросали тѣни на поверхности земли. [...] Между Морепя и Соммой мы расширили свои позиціи къ востоку отъ дороги Морепя-Клери. На правомъ берегу рѣки Мааса мы продолжали свое наступленіе, вытѣснивъ непріятеля изъ двухъ укрѣпленныхъ редутовъ къ сѣверо-западу отъ Тюмонскаго укрѣпленія. [...] Въ лѣсу Во Шапитрѣ мы замѣтно продвинулись впередъ вдоль дороги, ведущей къ форту Во.<sup>7</sup>

The image shows a collage of historical advertisements from the magazine *Niva* (1886). On the left, there is an advertisement for a pocket watch by 'Г. Вальтеръ' (G. Walter), featuring a pocket watch illustration. In the center, a large advertisement for 'LUI VELVETINЪ' (Louis Velveteen) is prominent, with the headline 'КАЖЕБАВІИ ЯРЯБЪ ЭТОГО НАСТОЯЩАГО БАРХАТА ПОДЪ ИМЕНЕМЪ ЛУИ ГАРАНТИРОВАНЫ' and an illustration of a man in a suit. To the right, there is an advertisement for 'БУРКГАРТЪ УМКАУБЪ' (Burkart Umkaub) with a list of items and prices. The background of the collage includes text from the 'LUI VELVETINЪ' advertisement, such as 'Въ виду поразительнаго сходства съ самымъ дорогимъ шелковымъ бархатомъ'.

Example of direct graphic transfer in *Niva*, 1886<sup>8</sup>

In private correspondence, Latin-script loanwords and proper names were used even more liberally than in the mass media. The following example is an excerpt from L. N. Tolstoy’s letters. It illustrates that Tolstoy never transcribed foreign names that were originally written in Roman characters. He also used an abundance of French words wherever he felt that they could convey his thoughts better than Russian words. Another interesting phenomenon is the adaptation of Latin-written words to fit the syntactic relations of Russian sentences. Russian is an inflected lan-

<sup>7</sup> KLERŽE, G.: *Na zapadnom fronte*. Russkij invalid, 1916, № 211 (21 August 1916). Available online from <<http://oldgazette.ru/ri/08081916/text3.html>> discretionary#1> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>8</sup> The picture copied from NIVA: *Lui Velvetin*. Niva, 1886, № 14, p. 24. Available online from <[http://m.chevo.su/?page\\_id=1513](http://m.chevo.su/?page_id=1513)> [accessed 3 January 2015].

guage, in which relations between words are expressed by means of word endings. In the 18th century, it was common to add these endings to foreign words written in the Latin script and separate them by an apostrophe:

Я читал **Michel Teissier**. Как бездарно! Как всё выдуманно. [...] Какая разница. Бодро, весело, умно и талантливо, и **sobre** и без претензии. [...] Кроме пересланных тобою писем, я получил в Ясенках два интересных письма: одно от **Battersby** с статьями, написанными разными **Reverend'**ами по случаю выдержек из Ц[арства] Б[ожия].<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the 18th century, the Russian elite were bilingual and any text whose purpose was to enhance the human spirit was written in French, and therefore in the Latin script. Anything related to the government and religion was closely connected with the Cyrillic alphabet. Pious respect for Cyrillic had gradually declined, only to return in the 21st century with law proposals banning the use of foreign words in Russian texts (see e.g. the article *В Госдуму внесли закон о запрете иностранных слов*<sup>10</sup>).

### 3 The revolutionary year of 1917

#### (Latin script in Russian texts from 1917 to the 1930s)

The reforms of 1917, that aimed to fundamentally change bourgeois Tsarist Russia from the core, did not stop at the language. As early as the revolutionary year, the Russian Provisional Government decided that Cyrillic, the alphabet of the Tsarist regime, was a symbol of the anachronistic autocracy. The government began developing plans to replace it completely with the Latin alphabet: «Русский гражданский алфавит в его истории является алфавитом самодержавного гнета, миссионерской пропаганды, великорусского национал-шовинизма, что в особенности проявляется в руссификаторской роли этого алфавита по отношению к нац. меньшинствам бывшей Российской Империи (записка генерала Кауфмана и др. документы). В то же время этот алфавит является орудием пропаганды русского империализма за рубежом (славянофильство, борьба за проливы)».<sup>11</sup>

In 1929 the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment of the RSFSR created a committee whose task was to create a version of the Latin alphabet suitable for the Russian language: «По инициативе Главнауки НКП РСФСР в составе комиссии

<sup>9</sup> TOLSTOJ, L. N.: *Pis'mo 592. Pis'ma k žene S. A. Tolstoj 1887–1910, Polnoje sobranije sočinenij*, tom 84. Available online from <[http://az.lib.ru/t/tolstoj\\_lew\\_nikolaewich/text\\_1330.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/t/tolstoj_lew_nikolaewich/text_1330.shtml)> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>10</sup> Lenta.ru: *V Gosdumu vnesli zakon o zaprete inostrannyh slov* (21 February 2013). Available online from <<http://lenta.ru/news/2013/02/21/fine1/>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>11</sup> JAKOVLEV, N. F.: *O neobchodimosti latinizacii russkogo alfavita*. In: *Kul'tura i pis'mennost' Vostoka*. Baku 1930, № 6. Available online from <<http://tapemark.narod.ru/rus-latinica-1930.html#02>> [accessed 3 January 2015].

по реформе орфографии была организована в ноябре 1929 года подкомиссия по разработке вопроса о латинизации русского алфавита. [...] Решительным сторонником такого перехода был один из самых талантливых и образованных людей среди большевистской верхушки А. В. Луначарский. По словам Луначарского, сторонником латиницы был и В. И. Ленин, который в беседе с ним говорил: „Я не сомневаюсь, что придет время для латинизации русского шрифта, но сейчас наспех действовать будет неосмотрительно“». <sup>12</sup>

Although the Latin script was never fully introduced into the Russian territory, the 66 non-Slavic nations dominated by Russians switched to the Latin alphabet. A wave of Romanisation swept across the conquered nations as a result of the somewhat opaque policy of decentralisation, autonomy and support of local cultures that was supported by Russian politicians mainly in the 1920s.

Even today, there are people who promote the use of the Latin script for the Russian language (e.g. Society of Russian Latin Lovers – Клуб любителей русской латиницы) and make use of the work of the above mentioned committee.

Despite the good position the Latin alphabet enjoyed in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s, there is no evidence for the use of the direct graphic transfer technique for proper names in official newspapers. As can be seen in the following examples, it seems that all the nouns were transferred by means of transcription:

Независимая Манчжурия, — справедливо указывает немецкий ежедневник «Вельт ам Абенд».<sup>13</sup>

Нью-Йорк, 2/IV. По сообщению «Дэйли Уоркер» (орган Уоркер Парти), на конференции в Питсбурге, созванной «Комитетом спасения профсоюза» горняков, присутствует более 1.100 делегатов.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4 Revival of the Cyrillic script (Latin script in Russian texts from 1937 to 1991)

In 1937, Russia's foreign policy took a 180-degree turn under Stalin. Autonomy of small nations was no longer desirable, and the Latin alphabet was considered a means of supporting such autonomy. Stalin thought it necessary to unite the country and protect its subjugated nations from possible interventions by hostile neighbouring states. Above all, Stalin was concerned about the potential influence of Turkey on the Turkic nations that were ruled by the USSR and using the Latin script. In 1928, Atatürk's reforms led to Turkey's adoption of the Latin alphabet. Pan-Turkism was flourishing and threatened to lure the USSR Turkic nations closer to Turkey. Those USSR nations that had initially been romanised were gradually

<sup>12</sup> АРАПОВ, М.: *Latinica i kirilica*. Polit.ru (23 September 2013). Available online from <<http://polit.ru/article/2003/09/23/625530/>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

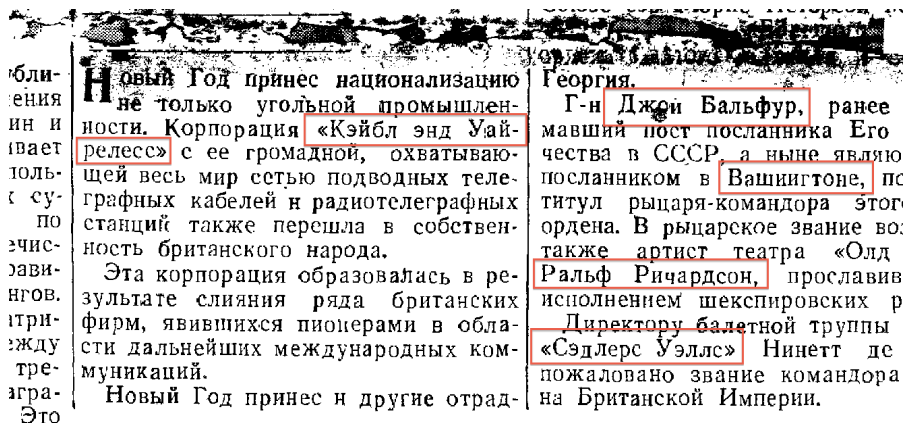
<sup>13</sup> KAZACHSTANSKAJA PRAVDA: *Сеп' provokacii i obmana* (21 April 1932), p. 1. Available online from <<http://oldgazette.ru/kpravda/21041932/text1.html#1>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>14</sup> TRUD: *Konferencija gornjakov v Pitsburge* (3 April 1928), p. 1. Available online from <<http://oldgazette.ru/trud/03041928/03041928-1.djvu>> [accessed 18 June 2014].



being converted to Cyrillic, and any projects aiming for a Russian Latin script were stopped (however, these efforts had not been in vain and they were later used to develop transliteration and transcription rules): «Сталинская „контрреформа“ в основном закончилась к 1940 г., в результате ее в СССР за два десятилетия 21 язык сменил алфавит дважды, а 13 в трижды, 7 языков вообще стали бесписьменными. Все делалось в спешке (перевод на кириллицу осуществлялся за несколько месяцев), надвигалась война, поэтому о нескольких языках вообще забыли и алфавита им не поменяли».<sup>15</sup>

In the 1930s, Russia used the Cyrillic script as an ideological weapon even more intensely. This was the beginning of a powerful wave of Russification, during which the diversity of non-Russian nations was being wiped out in order to create a large, unified and indivisible Russia. Only shortly after being forced to use the Latin alphabet, these nations were now ordered to start using Cyrillic instead and to abandon all unique aspects of their native culture. Besides, Russia was isolated from the rest of Europe by the Iron Curtain at the time, and the complete lack of information about the Western world facilitated the absence of the Latin script in the Russian media even further. Therefore, it is no surprise that during the entire existence of the Soviet Union, there are no traces of the Latin script to be found in the Russian press.



Example of transcription in Russian press of the 1940s<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> АРАПОВ, М.: *Latinica i kirilica*. Polit.ru (23 September 2013). Available online from <<http://polit.ru/article/2003/09/23/625530/>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>16</sup> The picture copied from BRITANSKIJ SOJUZNIK: *OBZOR SOBYTIJ ZA NEDELJU* (12 January 1947), p. 1. Available online from <<http://oldgazette.ru/britsouz/12011947/12011947-1.djvu>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

## 5 Dissolution of the Soviet Union (Latin script in Russian texts from 1991 to 2010)

Unsurprisingly, seven decades of the Soviet rule resulted in a large-scale shift of attitude towards the Cyrillic script, which became a symbol of the repressive Soviet state. (A striking similarity to the antipathy towards Cyrillic in 1917.) After the collapse of the USSR, many forcibly Russianised nations demonstratively switched back to the Latin alphabet or their original graphical systems. In Russia, large numbers of English loanwords flooded into the language. The Latin script was present on every newspaper page, mainly in advertising, on banners, billboards, in the media, professional communication and the communication of the young generations. This wave of Romanisation was not only caused by a simple fascination with the formerly forbidden fruit, but also by the necessity to name new concepts, goods and technologies, which were completely novel in Russia due to the isolationist policy of the former USSR. In addition, young people began to communicate through modern communication technologies which, at least initially, did not support Cyrillic. This became the impetus for the Romanization projects of the 1920s and 1930s, in the course of which a new system called *translit* was developed to record Russian words through Latin characters. This system is now mainly used in the systems of electronic communication that have problems with processing Cyrillic. As translit is not an official system, it has a large amount of rules that differ from the official transliteration and transcription rules. For example, the letter *u* can be represented in Russian translit by six different characters or character sequences: *sch, sh, š, w, Ψ, 6*. The letter *u* can be represented by *ch, č, Ψ, 4*, while *я* is written as *ya, ja, ia, ea, a, q* or *9*. The following examples illustrate the different ways of using translit in private communication. The first was produced by a native Russian living in London, the second one by an ethnic Russian living in Tallinn.

*net! chitay ran'she! [...] ty ne pokupaesh', eto prosto marshrut. [...] plus, eto je po gorizontali (primerno). [...] Moskva I letniy zapah [...] ya tut. Vseh s nastupayuschim! Ya lojus' spat'. Zvonite i pishite na vyhodnye!*

*teper v Tallinne budet spokojno do Fevralja [...] Tebe, dorogaja! [...] ja promahnulas)) samolaika — eto kto lait sam na sebja [...] da-da, ja segodnja utrom uzhe porzhala)) [...] lapshu na ushi ne veshaj.<sup>17</sup>*

There has never been a complex set of rules for the adaptation of foreign proper names. Even now, translators only follow customary rules that are dependent on a large variety of circumstances such as the situational context, the type of proper name, habits of a particular medium or publisher, etc. Depending on these circumstances, one of five basic models of transfer is normally employed: direct graphic transfer, transcription, transliteration, calque, and semantic explication. Firstly, the type of transfer used firstly depends on the text type: in academic, scientific, and

<sup>17</sup> Private correspondence through social networks (April 2013).

legal texts, proper names are never translated. Direct graphic transfer is optimal for such contexts. If this is not possible, the noun should be transferred using the scientific transliteration set of rules. On the other hand, almost anything is allowed in fiction and we can also translate the proper names literally or use a calque, which is more suitable. In the media, transcription and direct graphic transfer are the most popular methods.

Apart from the type of the text, the type of the proper noun itself must be taken into consideration. For example, anthroponyms in the media are usually transmitted by means of phonetic transcription, while the names of different mass media are adopted in their original form. Toponyms should never be transferred in their original graphics: «Абсолютно неприемлемым для передачи топонимов следует признать метод прямого графического переноса. Недопустимо включение топонимов в текст русского перевода в исходной (латинской) графике. Это относится и к микропонимам (названиям объектов городской среды или ландшафта)».<sup>18</sup>

Names of companies, products and organisations are specific issues, and their intercultural use is very diverse. The graphics of corporate names are usually preserved: К платью мы предложили кольше Accessorize и элегантные черные туфли Monsoon.<sup>19</sup> Names of organisations, by contrast, are usually translated: the Securities and Exchange Commission = Комиссия по ценным бумагам и биржам.

A large amount of these categories exists, and it would take a separate paper to describe all of them. Most of the rules are well described in Ermolovich's monograph, which was referenced above.

*Example of different transfer methods used within one contemporary Russian text:*

«**Даурия Аэропейс**» будет использовать технологии смартфонов для запуска российских спутников, сообщает **The Wall Street Journal**. Запуск **DX-1**, который создается в сотрудничестве с **Samsung Electronics** и корпорацией «Роскосмос» является новым этапом в развитии частной космической индустрии. [...], поясняет автор статьи **Лизетт Чапман**. Вложивший 20 млн долларов в «**Даурию**» сооснователь **IzBF Global Ventures** **Илья Голубович** утверждает, что она уже приносит 99 % доходов. [...] Основанная в 2011 году, «**Даурия**» базируется в технопарке **NASA** в **Калифорнии** и имеет контракты с **NASA**, **Boeing** и **Airbus SAS**, а также входит в состав космического кластера «**Сколково**», отмечает автор статьи.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> JERMOLOVIČ, D. I.: *Imena sobstvennyje: teorija i praktika mežjazykovoju peredači*. Moskva, Valent, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> VEČERNJAJA MOSKVA: *Preobraženije* (18 September 2013). Available online from <<http://vm.ru/news/2013/09/18/preobrazhenie-214415.html>> [accessed 18 June 2014].

<sup>20</sup> ШАПМАНН, Лизетт. *Daurija Aërospejs budet ispol'zovat' tehnologii smartfonov dlja zapuska rossijskich sputnikov*. InoPressa (22. 8. 2013). Available online from <<http://www.inopressa.ru/article/22oct2013/wsj/dauria.html>> [accessed 3 January 2015].

## 6 The present (Latin script in Russian texts in the last decade)

The fascination with the Latin script and its constant presence in all types of contemporary texts stands in stark contrast to the antipathy towards the Latin alphabet that has been growing in Russia over the last decade. Although the use of Latin in Russian texts is now commonplace, it has recently been roundly criticized by some members of the Russian public and government who refer to the influence of the Latin script as a threat to the purity of the Russian language. In 2013, this movement went as far as proposing a law that would ban all foreign words from Russian texts (see the article in *Lentra.ru* mentioned above).

The following quotation shows that this antipathy towards the Latin script has already been recorded by Russian linguists who point out how senseless it is and the harm which it inflicts upon the Russian language: «В настоящее время в России проводится языковая политика запрета иноязычных вывесок. Латиница сохраняется пока лишь в наименовании известных торговых марок, хотя вполне допустимы дублеты, ср.: Yves Rocher — Ив Роше. Надпись Макдоналдс по-русски (20 лет спустя!) выглядит непривычно. Кириллическое написание Айсберри не превращает его в „ледяную ягоду“, этот текст воспринимается только благодаря дискурсу (как надпись на киоске с мороженым). Автоматическая транслитерация без адекватного перевода на русский язык не делает иностранный текст более понятным, имеет лишь формальный характер: IN VINO — ИН ВИНО (Барнаул). Форсированная русификация нарушает естественный процесс освоения иноязычного слова и, на наш взгляд, представляет бóльшую опасность для языковой экологии, чем креативное использование „чужих“ символов в рекламе».<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion, it can be said that Russian language policies heavily depend on the country's political climate, and that they can change quite frequently. The current negative attitude towards the Latin script in Russian texts is likely to be based on a somewhat negative general view of Western civilisation in the present-day Russian mass media. Judging from the historical development, the chances that the Latin script will be banned from Russian texts altogether (as inconceivable as it may sound) are equal to chances that the status quo will be preserved.

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