Faux Cyrillic

Faux Cyrillic, **pseudo-Cyrillic**, **pseudo-Russian**[1] or **faux Russian typography** is the use of Cyrillic letters in Latin text, usually to evoke the Soviet Union or Russia, though it may be used in other contexts as well. It is a common Western trope used in book covers, film titles, comic book lettering, artwork for computer games, or product packaging[2][3] which are set in or wish to evoke Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, or Russia. A typeface designed to emulate Cyrillic is classed as an ethnic typeface. The use of faux Cyrillic is sometimes considered offensive to Russian speakers.[4]

Letters are substituted regardless of phonetic matching. For example, *R* and *N* in *RUSSIAN* may be replaced with Cyrillic Я and И to form the faux-cyrillic "ЯUSSIAИ" ("RUSSIAN"). Other examples include the use of Ш for W, Ц for U, Я/Г for R/backwards and upside-down L, Ф for O, Д for A, Б, Ь, or Ъ for B/b, З, Э, or Ё for E, Ч or У for Y. Outside the Russian alphabet, Џ (from Serbian) can act as a substitute for U, Ғ (from Turkic languages) for F, Ә (from Turkic languages, Abkhaz, Dungan, Itelmen, Kalmyk and Kurdish) or Є (from Ukrainian) for E, Ө (from Turkic, Mongolic and Uralic languages) for O, һ (from Turkic and Mongolic languages and Kildin Sámi) for H, and Ћ (Serbian) for Th. A reversed ⱻ is also sometimes used for G.[5] A common substitution is $ for S. Further variants include an inverted K (Ʞ), which is not used in any language.

This effect is usually restricted to text set in all caps, because Cyrillic letter-forms do not match well with lower case Latin letters. In Cyrillic typography, most upright lower case letters resemble smaller upper case letters, unlike the more distinctive forms of Latin-alphabet type.

A faux Russian T-shirt print reads "Ш3́ДЯ" (WEAR). A Russian-speaker would read this as "*shzdja*", a word that does not exist in the language. Moreover, the accent over the letter 3 never occurs in Russian, although it is a Cyrillic letter.

Cursive Cyrillic upper and lower case letters are more differentiated. Most Cyrillic letter-forms were derived from the Greek alphabet in the 9th century, but the modern forms have more closely resembled those in the Latin alphabet since Peter the Great's civil script reform of 1708.

Contents

Characters

Cyrillic letter	Latin look-alike	Actual pronunciation
Б	B, G, S, numeral 5 and numeral 6	/b/ as in **b**oy
В	B	/w/ as in **w**ind (Ukrainian), /v/ as in **v**ault
Г	г, upside-down L, same as Ґ, Т	/g/ as in **g**oat, /h/ as in **h**ill (Belarusian, Ukrainian)
Д	A, O	/d/ as in **d**oor
Ж	X, backwards and forwards K	/ʒ/ similar to trea**s**ure
З	E, numeral 3	/z/ as in **z**oo
И	backwards N	/i/ as in tr**ee** or [ɪ] as in h**i**m
Й	N, Ñ, Ň	/j/ as in pa**y**
К	K	/k/ as in **c**ar
Л	N, JI, JП, same as uppercase Λ but in different fonts.	/l/ as in **l**ove or [ɫ] as in coa**l**
Н	H	/n/ as in **n**ose
П	N, H (lowercase **n**, **h**, same as П)	/p/ as in s**p**ot
Р	P	/r/ as in **r**ope; similar to stu**tt**er in some accents
С	C	/s/ as in **s**oup
У	Y in lowercase	/u/ as in r**u**le
Ф	I, O, Q, Ø, numeral 0, same as Φ	/f/ as in **f**awn
Х	X	/x/ as in Scottish English lo**ch**
Ц	U, backwards and mirror-flipped L connected	/ts/ as in ca**ts**
Ч	Y, U, numeral 4	/tɕ/ similar to **ch**eck
Ш	W, rotated E, upside down M	/ʂ/ similar to **sh**runk
Щ	W, rotated E, backwards and mirror-flipped L connected	/ɕː/ similar to wi**sh sh**eep (Russian), /ʃtʃ/ as in fre**sh ch**eese (Ukrainian and Rusyn), /ʃt/ as in **scht**ick (Bulgarian)
Ы	bI, backwards and upside-down P, letter L, numeral 61	/ɨ/ similar to ros**e**s in some dialects
Ь	b, backwards and upside-down P,	indicates the palatalization of the previous consonant, as in un**i**on as opposed to un**i**te
Э	E, backwards C , numeral 3 and Pan-Nigerian letter Ǝ.	/ɛ/ as in **e**cho
Ю	IO, numeral 10	/ju/ as in **you**
Я	backwards R	/ja/ as in **ya**rd

The letters A, B, E, S*, I*, J*, K, M, H, O, P, C, T, Y*, Y, F*, V*, and X are strongly homoglyphic or related to Latin letters, depending on intended sound values to the point that their substitution may not be noticed, unlike those listed above. If compatibility issues arise that limit mixing of scripts, these can be used with faux Cyrillic letters in lieu of their Latin counterparts.

See also

- Homoglyph

- IDN homograph attack
- Volapük encoding vice versa of *Faux Cyrillic*, i.e. encoding of Cyrillic letter with ASCII characters by using faux-Latin homoglyph characters
- Translit, Russian Chat Alphabet, Informal romanizations of Russian
- Foreign branding
- Heavy metal umlaut for a similar practice in the field of heavy metal
- Leet for a similar manner of replacing Latin letters with other glyphs that resemble them
- Mimicry/Ethnic Typefaces
- Samples of simulation typefaces
- Transformation of text
- UL Recognized Mark (left-italic ЯU)

References

1. Jen Chen, "Sweater Hip Check", *The Pitch* (Kansas City), February 15, 2007 online (https://archive.is/20120911161028/http://www.pitch.com/2007-02-15/music/sweater-hip-check/)
2. "American Perceptions of Vodka Shaken, Not Stirred: An Analysis of the Importance of Vodka's Foreign Branding Cues and Country-of-Origin Information", Jon Kurland, October 26, 2004 full text (http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/handouts/adverts/goodones/JKurland.html)
3. Englis, Basil G. (1994). *Global and Multinational Advertising*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. p. 123. ISBN 0-8058-1395-0.
4. "The trouble with Яussiaи The West's reprehensible misuse of Cyrillic continues" full text (https://meduza.io/en/shapito/2017/09/21/the-trouble-with-yaussiai)
5. A reversed hammer and sickle is used for the word-finishing Gs on the poster for *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*, as can be seen here.

External links

- The Backwards R (https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheBackwardsR) - Explains in greater detail with examples.
- ҒДКЄ ЯЦЅЅЇДИ GЄЙЭЯДЃФЯ (https://jkirchartz.com/demos/fake_russian_generator.html) - Make English look sort of like Russian, by using Cyrillic letter forms.

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