

Analysis of the Russian Language

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- Indo-European Language
 - One of four living East Slavic languages.
 - Cyrillic Script
- 160 million native speakers

Introduction and Language Family

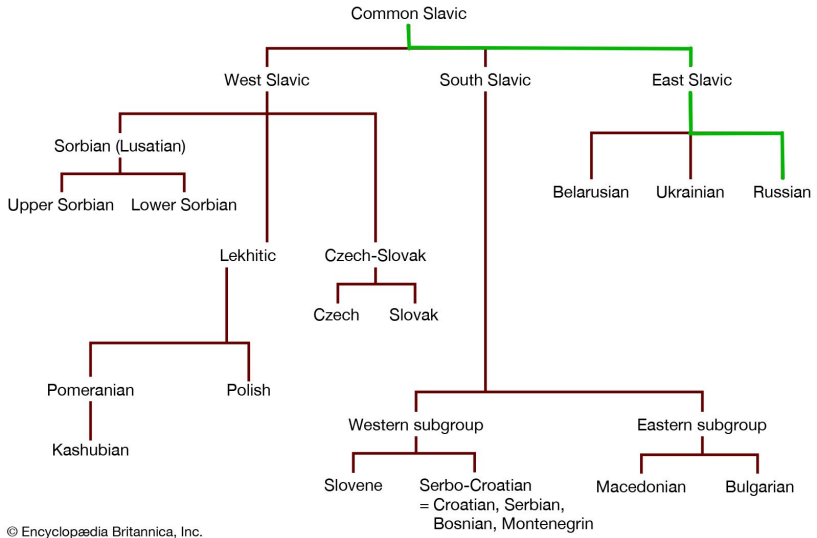


Figure 1: Family tree of the Slavic Languages

Important Features of the Language

- Widespread palatalization of consonants (Also in other Slavic Languages)
- Extensive nominal morphology
- Simple verb system

- Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet (русский - ['ruskʲɪj jɪ'zɪk])
- There are 32 letters, and an *additional sign for palatalization*
 - ъ indicates palatalization of the previous consonant.
 - Ъ is silent; it prevents palatalization of the preceding consonant.

А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ё ё	Ж ж	З з	И и	Й й	К к
a	b	v	g	d	e	ë	ž	z	i	j	k
[a]	[b]	[v]	[g]	[d]	[je]	[jo]	[ʒ]	[z]	[i]	[j]	[k]
Л л	М м	Н н	О о	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у	Ф ф	Х х	Ц ц
l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u	f	x	c
[l]	[m]	[n]	[o]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[t]	[u]	[f]	[x]	[ts]
Ч ч	Ш ш	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ы ы	Ь ь	Э э	Ю ю	Я я			
č	š	šč	"	y	'	è	ju	ja			
[tɕ]	[ʃ]	[ɕ/ʃɕ]	[-]	[ɨ]	[-]	[ɛ]	[ju]	[ja]			

Figure 2: The Cyrillic Script, transliteration, and IPA transcription

- 5 vowels or 6?
- Phonemic status of the i/i alternation:
 - i occurs only after non-palatalized consonants
 - i only after palatalized ones and word-initially
 - They could be considered complementary sounds and not separate phonemes.
- The reduced i and u vowels of the ancestral Slavic language were lost in Russian.

Table 1: Vowel Chart in Russian

	Front	Central	Back
Mid	i	(ɨ)	u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

- There are 36 consonants.
- Consonant palatalization is widespread
 - [ts], [ʃ], [ʒ] lack palatalized counterparts.
 - [tɕ], [ɕ], [j], are always palatalized, lacking counterparts.
- Palatalization is represented by an accent mark over the letter.

Table 2: Consonant chart

		Labial	Dental	Alveopalatal	Palatal	Velar
Stop	Voiceless	p p̥	t t'			k k̥
	Voiced	b b'	d d'			g ġ
Affricate	<i>Voiceless</i>		ts		tʃ	
Fricative	<i>Voiceless</i>	f f'	s ś	ʃ	ç	x x'
	<i>Voiced</i>	v v'	z ź	ʒ		
Nasal		m m̃	n ñ			
Liquid			r r̃ l̃ l̃'			
Glide					j	

Stress can fall on any syllable and it may serve to differentiate lexical or morphological forms. For instance, muká ('flour') versus múka ('torment'), rukí (genitive singular) versus rúki (nominative plural).

