

Elena Berezovich

Russian Food as Reflected in Foreign Languages (Derivatives from the Words 'Russia' and 'Russian')¹

What can language tell us about what dishes and foodstuffs are produced or commonly consumed in Russia, favourites of the Russian people, and deserving of the name 'Russian food'? A whole range of facts may be analysed in an attempt to answer this question: names that contain a semantic element indicating that such-and-such a dish is typical of Russian cuisine; the results of psycho-linguistic experiments (reactions to the stimulus of 'Russian food', etc.); opinions expressed by representatives of different cultural and linguistic traditions on what dishes they consider to be Russian; names or recipes in cookery books, or sections within them devoted to Russian cuisine, and so on. It would require several monographs to do justice to this vast range of data. Our present remarks will confine themselves to a small part of it (but, one may imagine, its core material). If we are to consider systemic linguistic information (as being the most stable, having undergone the natural selection of usage), we should, therefore, turn in the first place to those linguistic units

Elena Berezovich

Urals Federal University,
Ekaterinburg,
Russia
berezovich@yandex.ru

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which *are formed from the ethnonym 'Russian' or the toponym 'Russia'*, be they individual words or collocations including an ethnonymic or toponymic adjective.¹ These may be encountered both in Russian and in foreign languages, thus constituting the *internal and external perspectives* of speakers regarding the object signified.

These two perspectives may coincide: for example, the stable collocations *Russian caviare*, *Russian vodka*, *Russian mustard* and *Russian pancakes* are to be found in Russian, and have equivalents in many other languages of the world. It is characteristic that they do not by any means include every type of food which is felt internally to be a symbol of Russian national cuisine. Absent, for example, are the undeniable *shchi*² and *kasha*³ (as in the proverb '*Shchi da kasha — pishcha nasha* [*Shchi* and *kasha* are our food]'): evidently their 'aboriginality' is too obvious to require any explicit designation. Besides, such foods are to be found in many culinary traditions — even the many varieties of Russian *kasha* are at times for all practical purposes indistinguishable from their German or Finnish equivalents. It is the national culinary 'brands' that are more likely to be internally marked as 'Russian', including those that are exported, such as the aforementioned vodka and caviare. As a result, internal marking is to a certain extent based upon external marking.

This situation is characteristic of the national language. As for particular linguistic idioms, such as dialects, the need for a marker of 'Russianness' may arise through the operation of somewhat different mechanisms. That which is 'Russian' may be understood as that which is easier to make, more common or more typical of a particular local tradition, for example, Ivanovo dialect *rusak*, 'a small rye loaf' [SRNG XXXV: 267], Kostroma dialect *Russian kasha*, '*kasha* made from flour and boiling water': 'They always ate *povalikha*,⁴ Russian *kasha*. The first *kasha* in our parts' [LKTÈ].

¹ They may be either common or proper nouns. The latter are for the most part the names of dishes and foodstuffs featuring in the menus of cafés and restaurants, or trademarks of food companies and such-like, such as the Russian *Russkij ponchik* ('Russian doughnut'), which is a type of doughnut, *Russkaya bulka* ('Russian bun'), the name of a cookery school, or the English *Russian Bear*, a cocktail containing vodka, chocolate liqueur and cream. Names like these will not be examined in the present article: they are created according to the rules of the artificial invention of names, and have a somewhat different purpose from common nouns denoting foodstuffs, which have developed as a result of 'natural selection'. (When a name is created artificially, the marker 'Russian' may be attached to virtually any product for advertising or image-making purposes.) At the same time, there are instances where it is impossible to make a firm distinction between common and proper nouns, and we shall note a number of intermediate phenomena falling within the sphere of our attention.

² *Shchi* — the name of a wide range of soups involving cabbage or occasionally some other green vegetable. [Transl.].

³ *Kasha* — meal or pudding made of any form of whole or coarsely milled grain, and not, as frequently imagined in the English-speaking world, exclusively buckwheat. [Transl.].

⁴ *Povalikha* — according to Dal's dictionary, 'a type of *kasha* made from rye, wheat or mostly barley flour, mixed with boiling water and sprinkled with rolled oats; it is eaten with milk and butter'. [Transl.].

Furthermore, that which is ‘Russian’ is sometimes marked in contradistinction to the name of some similar foodstuff (which is produced or used differently), the use of which is ascribed to a different people or locality. Compare, for example, the opposition between *Russian butter* and *Finnish butter*: ‘We don’t use a plunge churn, we use a paddle churn, and we heat the milk. Plunged or beaten butter is *Finnish*, and paddled butter from heated milk is *Russian*. All the Finnic tribes use plunge churns’ [Dal III: 23].

The overall conclusion must be that the internal point of view produces relatively few ‘Russian’ names for food.

In these notes we shall be primarily concerned with another object of study — names for foodstuffs that operate *outside the Russian language*, and which contain an immediate indication of its ‘Russianness’ (i.e. are formed from the relevant ethnonym) but either they have no Russian equivalent, or the motivation for the Russian parallels is different from that in the foreign languages.

We make no claim to any complete, systematic or balanced survey of languages or linguistic data. The linguistic material used in the study is very uneven: data from dictionaries (literary, dialect, etc.), which contain information crystallised by usage and filtered by lexicographical selection, appears alongside facts which have not entered the dictionary (and have been noted down by the author during her trips abroad, supplied by colleagues from different countries, or retrieved from the Internet). The data belongs to different periods of time, and reflects different stages in the history of the interaction between Russia and other countries. Bearing this in mind, we have tried to supply some sort of historical, linguistic and culturological commentary to the linguistic units discussed, while being well aware of the incompleteness of this commentary. A proper analysis would have required the examination of each national culturo-linguistic tradition in the totality of its concrete linguistic responses to Russian food and in the light of their historical evolution.

Can these shortcomings in the selection, presentation and analysis of the material be justified? There are in fact several justifications. In the first place, in every language the facts studied belong, as a rule, to the popular conversational element, are on the cusp between dialect, popular usage, jargon and the conversational register of the standard language, and therefore cannot be ‘tied down’ to a particular sociolect, and this is the sort of ‘slippery’ material that dictionaries are particularly bad at registering. These features of the material may be an impediment to its verification via the linguistic consciousness of native speakers: on several occasions we have found that a fact provided by one informant was by no means familiar to all the other speakers of the same language questioned (because of sociolectal differences in their age, the places where they lived, the people they

associated with, and so on). Provided one trusts one's sources, one has to put up with such difficulties in verification. Secondly, the lexemes and collocations under consideration are derived from an ethnonym; such expressions frequently embody the character and judgement passed upon the people in question by their neighbours, which makes them 'politically incorrect'. For this reason many dictionaries, particularly those published in socialist countries during the Soviet period, do not include them. We have already encountered this characteristic of the material when writing previous works about ethnonymic derivatives, forcing us to dig out a motley array of facts from the most diverse sources, and to explain the reasons for it (for more detail see [Berezovich 2007: 117, 415]).

Thirdly, sometimes the linguistic units under consideration represent a sort of transition from proper nouns to common nouns (as mentioned above), which also prevents them from appearing in dictionaries. Thus we believe that one excuse for the heterogeneity of the data being studied may be the need to draw attention to this fugitive material and to assemble it (albeit selectively) for the first time. Finally we contend that the nature of the selection and analysis of the material is justified by the fact that the aim of the article is to analyse the *general mechanisms whereby the quality of 'Russianness' is ascribed externally to the objects so denominated*, and not merely ascribed, but *made explicit by the use of derivatives of the ethnonym 'Russian' or the toponym 'Russia'*, and also to compare the internal and external understanding of 'Russianness'. The cultural and linguistic phenomena which possess this property have different motivations, and different correlations of the objective and subjective factors at the point where the sign is created; moreover, the degree of subjectivity is highest when the external viewpoint marks as 'national' (i.e. Russian) things which are not so regarded internally (or are even regarded in quite the contrary manner, as being typical of some foreign culture).

Let us then define the groups of foreign-language denominations of 'Russian food' that reflect the gradation of objective versus subjective information about it. The most *objective* are the *names of dishes and foodstuffs* that really are *widely found in Russia* and typical of it, but *do not have a Russian name marking them as 'Russian'*. Among them are names of traditional country foods, which are to be expected most of all in the languages of peoples who have everyday contact with Russians living nearby, including on the territory of the Russian state, for example Mari *ruš torək* (Russian curd cheese), 'curd cheese with milk' [SMYa 6: 81]. There are also 'urban' foods which foreigners have come to know through trade contacts (export), such as the Czech *ruská zmrzlina* (Russian ice-cream), 'a block of full-cream ice-cream between two wafers' [recorded by the author in the Czech Republic]. There are also names of foodstuffs which foreigners

may have encountered in Russian restaurants or when visiting Russian friends and relations at home: the German *russisches Quark-käulchen*, ‘Russian curd cheese pancake’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3].¹ In any case, in these cases the Russian speaker can easily recognise an item from the national menu and acknowledge its ‘Russianness’, though considering it superfluous to make it explicit in the name of the product. Externally, however, it is precisely this specific feature of these dishes that is relevant to its name, either as an ethnographic speciality, or as a sort of trademark.

There is another group of foodstuffs that do form part of the national diet. The names in this group include both an *objective indication of the product and a subjective (usually ironic) evaluation of it*, resulting from a comparison of it with another product, not so typical of Russia, not so widespread there (and at the same time often more valuable and nourishing). Examples of this are Polish slang *ruska cytryna* (Russian lemon) ‘onion’, *ruskie sadlo*² ‘sausage’ and *ruskie maslo* (Russian butter) ‘margarine’³ [Stępniać 1993: 424]. If calling sausage ‘Russian *sadlo*’ could be seen as a humorous comparison of two national cuisines, given that the ‘rank’ of the two foodstuffs is more or less the same, the identification of onion with lemon or of margarine with butter reveals that the first member of the pair is less highly thought of than the second. In effect, it is an evaluation not only of the product, but of a whole national cuisine that is full of exceedingly ‘primitive’ foodstuffs (or in the case of margarine and sausage, artificial ones).

This is for the most part an external model of naming, but ‘internal’ linguistic units of this type are occasionally encountered, e.g. colloquial Russian *Russian rolls* ‘cucumbers with *Speck*’ [contributed by T. A. Agapkina] or *Russian yoghurt* ‘a glass with an individual portion of vodka’ <<http://forum.ixbt.com/post.cgi?id=print:15:64950>>⁴ and so forth.

The next group of names displays another type of subjectivity, *the subjectivity of the formation of the name itself*. In other words, dishes are ascribed to the Russian national cuisine which from an internal point of view are uncommon in Russia or untypical of it. The

¹ It is noteworthy that the German word *Quark* is Slavonic in origin, being derived from Lower Sorbian *twarog* [Kluge 2002: Quark1], and is thus cognate with Russian *tvorog*.

² Polish *sadlo* is the same as the German *Speck*, pork fat as a delicacy. [Transl.].

³ The last of these evidently appeared during those hungry years (at the beginning of perestroika?) when instead of butter all that could be bought in the shops was margarine or other ‘butter-like’ products. Cf. also colloquial Russian *profsoyuznoe maslo* (‘trade union butter’), ‘mustard’ <<http://forum.ixbt.com/post.cgi?id=print:15:64950>>.

⁴ Catriona Kelly has suggested that *Russian yoghurt* is motivated not only by the fact that vodka is marked for ‘Russianness’, but by irony at their own expense on the part of Russian people among whom it is regarded as a ‘health food’.

subjectivity of the formation of the name seems to result from two causes: firstly it may proceed from a *particular view of Russian geography* (drawing the borders of Russia more widely or more narrowly than they are in fact, etc.), and secondly from a *peculiar understanding of Russian culinary habits*, which may include ideas about the material culture and way of life of the country, and likewise national psychological stereotypes.

Let me give an example in which both these sources of subjectivity are combined. *Pierogi ruskie* (Russian dumplings¹) ‘pasta stuffed with potato or curd cheese’ [ISJP 2000 II: 61; Komenda 2003: 82] are very popular in Polish cookery. During my visits to Poland over the last ten years the following scenario has been played out on several occasions: different Polish colleagues from the world of linguistics have drawn the attention of their Russian guests to this dish and treated us to it in various cafés and restaurants. As an experiment in cultural linguistics, we never failed to ask each other why they were so called. Usually these conversations provided no answer to the question, which demonstrates that the motivation for this collocation has been forgotten in modern Polish (and that it does not exist in Russian). There was a lively discussion of the name of this dish amongst Polish linguistic scholars in Lublin in September 2010 during the conference on ‘Wartości w językowo-kulturowym obrazie świata Słowian i ich sąsiadów’ (Values in the culturo-linguistic world of the Slavs and their neighbours). The participants seem finally to have come to the conclusion that the name reflects the specific semantics of the adjective ‘Russian’ in Polish. The point is that besides its proper meaning of ‘Russian’, the adjective *ruski* in Polish may designate the Eastern Slavs in general, without differentiation, and thus those Eastern Slavs who are the Poles’ nearest neighbours, that is, the Ukrainians. In this particular case *ruski* should be understood as ‘Ukrainian’, and *varenyky*² are indeed a favourite Ukrainian food. (This version was expounded in greatest detail by J. Bartmiński.) It is instructive that in America the name under which potato *varenyky* are sold, both in restaurants and as frozen food, is *Polish pierogies* (*pierogi*, *perogies*) [information from M. Jakubowicz and A. Kushkova].³ There could be no better illustration of a typical feature of ethnonymic derivatives: as they migrate from language to language the original name of the ethnic group in its internal form may be replaced by another, more relevant to its new cultural and linguistic environment.

¹ Polish *pierogi* are usually translated as ‘dumplings’, though in fact they bear a greater resemblance to *tortelloni*. [Transl.].

² *Varenyky* — the Ukrainian name for the same type of pasta parcels. [Transl.].

³ There are numerous recipes for this dish on the Internet: see in particular <<http://allrecipes.com/recipe/grandmas-polish-perogies/>>.

Besides the fundamental motivation described above, the name *ruskie pierogi* has a further element of motivation in the opposition between native and foreign: these *varenyky* are stuffed with 'common' potato¹ and are inferior in taste to analogous Polish dishes, indicating a certain 'plebeian' quality in the stereotype of the Ukrainian and Russian as seen through Polish eyes. (This version was suggested by Jan Adamowski.)² It is hard to say whether these motivations appeared simultaneously, or whether the second is older. The main thing is that both of them are relevant to the nature of such terms formed from ethnonyms and may be reconstructed within the linguistic consciousness.

There follow some sketches devoted to the names of four particular dishes or foodstuffs. They provide more extensive illustrations of the positions stated above.

Russian herrings

This concerns both the fish itself and the dishes made from it, insofar as their names have a most intimate metonymic connexion. The 'Russian herring' is an interesting subject because *the same designation is given externally and internally to similar (but not identical) things, with different motivations.*

The Slavonic languages offer names of various types of herring which may be supposed to be formed from the root *rus-*, 'Russian'. ESUM, in its commentary on Ukrainian *rusak* 'large herring', draws comparisons with Russian *rusak* 'the largest type of ordinary herring', Czech *rus* 'Russian sardine', Slovak *rus* 'small fish, sprat', and states 'not entirely clear, perhaps connected with *Rus*'³ [ESUM C: 146]. One might imagine that a greater degree of confidence is possible; however, as to their motivation, the facts stated in ESUM are more diverse.

From the 'internal' point of view it is first and foremost the large shad from the Black Sea or Sea of Azov that is considered 'Russian': Russian (Azov and Dnepropetrovsk dialects) *rusak* 'anadromous shad', (Black Sea dialect) 'the largest common herring' [Dal IV: 114]. This name is motivated, in the first place, geographically: the shad spend the winter and spring in Russia, in the Black Sea, and then go to 'Outer Europe' to spawn, along the Danube, Dniester, Bug and other rivers. Secondly, the name provides an assessment of the quality of the fish: 'Russianness' combines the marks of a standard

¹ There is other evidence that very simple potato dishes may be seen from outside as the favourite food of the Eastern Slavs. In American restaurants one may find something called *Russian potatoes*, consisting of boiled potatoes cut into cubes and served with dill and garlic butter [information from A. Kushkova].

² In the opinion of Catriona Kelly, this stereotype could present them as mean as well as common.

³ I.e. the historical name of the Russian nation. [Eds.].

(it is the usual, 'common', typical herring) and scale (a large herring, of the proper size). This sign of quality is also manifested in the name of a herring recorded far from the Black Sea: Russian (Karelian dialect) *russskaya seledka*, 'a kind of herring': 'The Russian herring is big, five kopecks' [SRGK V: 534].

The 'Russian herring' is seen differently from the 'external' viewpoint. It may be a Baltic herring, or a sprat, or a sardine: Czech *rus* 'Baltic herring' [Machek 1968: 525], *rus*, *ruská sardinka*, *rusňáček* 'a small marinated fish, a Russian sardine' [PSJČ IV(2): 1075, 1077], Slovak *rus* 'common sprat' [SSJ III: 894], Slovene *rus*, *rusel* 'marinated herring with a large onion' [SSKJ IV: 556], Polish dialect *rusy* 'marinated herrings' [SGŚC 1995: 294] etc. Similar meanings may be developed in names derived from the toponym Moscow, such as Polish *moskal*, *moskalik* 'a small fish sold as "Russian sardines"' [SW II: 1047], dialect *moskal* 'marinated fish in sauce with onion': 'Moskole są to małe rybki marynowane w puszkach. Trochę większe od sprotok' (*Moskole* are little tinned fish, a bit bigger than sprats) [KSGP], Ukrainian *moskalik* 'a kind of sea fish' [Grinchenko II: 447], dialect *moskal* 'marinated sardine' [Horbach 1965: 64]. In the first place this reflects the idea of Baltic sprats, produced in the Baltic States and Kaliningrad and widely exported to Europe (they are regarded as Russian, because the Baltic States used to be part of the USSR, and Kaliningrad is part of the Russian Federation).

As for 'Russian sardines', these are products which have nothing in common with real sardines apart from the brand name. In the Ukraine (at Balaclava) *Russian sardines* in oil were anchovies, while in Austria and Germany 'Russian sardines' was the name for a small variety of herring or sprat prepared like anchovies¹ in a particular piquant sauce <<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=877500>>.

In the end, the genesis and usage of these names is to a certain extent determined by stereotypical ideas of Russian culinary habits: herring (with onion) is a common snack in Russia (often accompanying vodka).

Russian tea

In this case the thing is marked from outside.² At the same time 'Russian tea' *in various 'external' languages, Slavonic, Germanic and Romance, has different motivations, which are not the same.*

¹ Like Baltic anchovies, that is, not the salted Mediterranean kind. [Eds.].

² The collocation *Russian tea* is also possible in internal usage, but with a somewhat different meaning: it means not so much the actual drink, as the meal, the ceremony of tea-drinking, associated with the samovar, pies etc. A small survey of Russian native speakers (fifteen persons of different ages and levels of education) asking how they understood the meaning of *Russian tea* revealed that they were inclined to associate the expression with the meal, and not with the drink (and are indeed doubtful as to whether it is a stable collocation).

Firstly, it may be the name for tea grown in Russia (in the North Caucasus); see, for example, Ukrainian ‘Russian tea’, tea from Krasnodar [contributed by O. V. Merkulova], or English *Russian tea*, ‘tea grown in the Caucasus or a drink made from this’ [OED XIV: 295].

Secondly, in a number of Slavonic countries ordinary black tea is called ‘Russian’: Polish dialect *ruski tej*, *ruska arbata* ‘natural tea, *Thea chinensis*’ [KSGP], Slovak *ruský čaj* ‘black tea, as opposed to herbal tea’ [SIRS 1976: 451], Czech *ruský čaj* ‘the same’ [VČRS 2005: 897], Slovene *ruski čaj* ‘real tea, made from the leaves of the tea bush’ [SSKJ IV: 556], Serbian *ruski čaj* ‘the plant *Thea chinensis*; the drink made from its leaves’ [Simonović 1956; RSHKJ VI: 835]. V.I. Dal was aware of the name ‘Russian tea’, but he indicated that it was used ‘abroad’ [Dal II: 230]. In Russia, according to Dal, the same thing was called China, or Khyaagta tea; China tea was transported overland via Khyaagta to central Russia, and thence to Europe (this route was favourable to preserving its quality). Tea was also imported into Europe by sea; in this case it was called *Cantonese tea* [Dal II: 230].¹ Thus the Slavonic designations of real tea with the internal form ‘Russian tea’ are motivated by the fact that tea was imported into the countries concerned via Russia.

Thirdly, in some Romance and Germanic languages tea with lemon and (optional) sugar or rum, which may be served in glasses, is called ‘Russian’: English *Russian tea* ‘any tea laced with lemon or rum’ [OED XIV: 295], ‘tea with lemon (served in glasses)’, ‘tea in the Russian style (with lemon and sugar)’, ‘tea with added rum and specifically served with lemon’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3], Dutch *Russische thee* ‘tea with lemon’ [BNidRS 2006: 614].² There are attempts to explain the fondness of Russians for drinking tea with lemon. According to one popular version, travellers in Russia were so wearied by its long and uneven roads that they used sour products as a remedy for travel-sickness: the less well-off were given sour cabbage and salted cucumbers at the post stages, while the rich were served tea with lemon <<http://www.nirvana.fm/blog/16992/>>, <<http://www.tea.ru/247-4516.html>>. On French Internet pages one can find legends about how this taste was introduced in the 1950s by the tea merchant Dammann, whose Russian wife used to put orange juice in her tea [information from G. I. Kabakova].

¹ It was by no means only Slavonic countries which imported tea via Russia. To this day, the term ‘Russian Caravan’ is used in the UK for one specific source of tea, commemorating in its name the old export routes (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Caravan>).

² The expressions *thé russe* and *thé goût russe* also exist in French, but they do not appear to be widely known. They refer to tea with citrus.

This sort of explanation need not be taken seriously,¹ but the practice of adding a slice of lemon to one's tea is, nevertheless, genuinely widespread in Russia (although Russians themselves do not perceive it as a 'national' habit). The idea that Russians add lemon or other fruit to their tea has taken on a life of its own, attracting other culinary stereotypes connected with Russia, and resulting in recipes for all kinds of unheard-of mixtures under the name of *Russian tea*. Here is one from an English-language cookery site:

1 c. instant tea — with or without lemon 2 c. Tang 1 ½ c. sugar 1 (3 oz.) pkg. lemonade with sugar 1 ¼ tsp. cinnamon 1 ¼ tsp. cloves.

Mix all ingredients together and keep in tightly sealed container. Use 1 teaspoon Russian tea in a cup of hot water <<http://www.cooks.com/rec/doc/prt/0,1718,154165-251205,00.html>>.

This is evidently a manifestation of the idea that Russians are fond of Eastern cookery with its spices and of extremely sweet and intense food (see also below in the sections on 'Russian dishes with mayonnaise' and 'Russian sandwiches').

One peculiarity of Russian tea-drinking, the habit of drinking tea from a glass, was already remarked on by Dumas *père*, who was under the impression that in Russia men drank from glasses and women from china cups. Glasses were particularly widely used in Soviet public eating places and railway trains (invariably with holders), so that foreigners could not fail to notice them.

Fourthly, there is another concept of 'Russian tea' which is connected with how it is brewed and served: English *Russian tea* 'tea poured into the cup from the teapot and then diluted with hot water (as opposed to the usual British practice of making tea in a large china teapot from which it is poured into the cups)' [information from N. B. Vakhtin]. According to Vakhtin, when he found this name in an Edinburgh museum café, he asked the woman behind the counter what it meant, and was told 'It's like normal tea but with hot water in it'. The woman's face, as she told him this, 'wore an expression of horror and disgust'. Evidently the Scots regard such a method of preparing tea as tantamount to adding water to beer or other alcoholic drinks, or other forms of culinary abuse.² There is no exact equivalent in English for the Russian word *zavarka* (one may compare the

¹ It would appear that *Russian tea* meaning 'tea with lemon' first appears in the sources long after the time of horse-drawn transport in Russia: the first recorded use of *Russian tea* in this meaning in the OED dates from 1952: 'She said he had lemon in his tea 'stead of milk an' I know that's called Russian tea' [OED XIV: 295].

² Catriona Kelly has suggested that in order to understand the context for such an expression, it should also be considered that the Scots like strong tea, and so may react negatively to weak tea. Furthermore, the name of the tea may have been a gesture on the part of the administration towards welcoming their Russian guests.

English word *brewing*), and a number of sources actually use the word *zavarka* when describing the Russian tea ceremony. When describing the preparation of *Russian tea* English-language sites insist on the necessity of first making a concentrated brew, and then diluting it with hot water <<http://www.cooks.com/rec/doc/prt/0,1718,154165-251205,00.html>>.

Fifthly, Russian tea is sometimes the name given to something other than ‘proper’ tea — a drink made from the leaves of something other than the tea bush, or the plant from which this drink is made: Polish dialect *ruski tej* ‘limeflower tea’ ‘Russian tea — tea made from lime flowers’ [KSGP], Bulgarian dialect *ruski chai* (or sometimes just *chai*, without the national qualification) ‘marjoram, *Origanum vulgare*’ [Akhtarov 1939: 224, 501]. These facts may perhaps be explained as follows:

- 1) tea is not grown in Russia (that is, ‘typical’ Russia, excluding the Caucasus), and therefore Russian tea cannot be real tea, it must be some sort of vegetable substitute;
- 2) Russians often drink herbal teas, including those made from marjoram or limeflowers.

One might also conjecture the following history for the Bulgarian name *ruski chai*: it reflects the Bulgarian tradition of making marjoram tea, as a result of which marjoram came to be called *chai*, to which the adjective *ruski* was later added under the influence of the well-known collocation *ruski chai*.

There is another understanding of Russian tea close to these, namely as a honey-based drink. Thus the OED records a context (dated 1799), in which a hot ‘mixture of honey, water and spanish [sic.] pepper’ is called real Russian tea [OED Online]. This is evidently *sbiten* — the old Russian drink made with honey, water and herbs and spices.

Returning to herbal teas as such, in the context of their ‘Russianness’ we should also mention the tea made from rose-bay (*Chamerion* (syn. *Epilobium*) *angustifolium*), known in Russian as *koporskii chai* [Dal II: 1]. The drink is named after the present village (formerly the ancient Russian town) of *Kopor’ye*, Lomonosov Region, Leningrad Province, where it used to be made. It is pointed out that this drink was not only popular in Russia, but exported from early times to Europe, where it was called ‘Russian tea’ <<http://kedr.promorye.ru/biblio/health/koporsky/>>, <[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Копорье_\(село\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Копорье_(село))>. The Internet resources cited here, which advertise this tea in connexion with attempts to renew its production, claim that it was a powerful competitor for Indian tea, so that a tea company which dealt in the latter created a scandal, alleging that the Russians were adulterating their tea with white clay that was injurious to

health.¹ Be that as it may, I have not been able to find any mention of ‘Russian tea’ made from rose-bay in modern foreign-language dictionaries (though this does not rule out the possibility that such linguistic units may have existed in the past, nor their influence on the naming model according to which ‘Russian tea’ is a herbal tea).

In general, the popularity of ‘geographical’ names for different sorts of tea has led to a jocular model of naming ersatz teas: an adjective indicating a place where real tea cannot possibly grow + the noun ‘tea’. I. Rystonová lists a whole series of them: Czech *čaj evropský* [European tea], ‘small-leaved lime, *Tilia cordata*’, *čaj nemecký* [German tea] ‘ling, *Calluna vulgaris*’, *čaj švýcarský* [Swiss tea] ‘ground ivy, *Glechoma hederacea*’, *thé uherské, thé římské* [Hungarian, Roman tea] ‘*Chenopodium ambrosioides*’ [Rystonová 2007: 93, 331]. Herbal teas are made from limeflowers, ling and ground ivy; as for *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, it is not made into tea, but provides an oil with a sharp, unpleasant smell of camphor; it is thus understandable that its name should have a higher degree of jocularity than the others listed.

Here are some more names of plants from which herbal teas are made (mostly used in popular medicine): Russian *kalmýtskii čaj* [Calmuck tea], ‘*Rhododendron chrysanthum*’ [Dal III: 549], *sibirskii (mongol’skii) čaj* [Siberian, Mongol tea], ‘*Saxifraga crassifolia*’: ‘the old leaves, which have lain under the snow, are collected and used instead of tea by the Calmucks’ [Annenkov 1878: 317]; German *europäischer Tee*, Russian *čaj evropeiskii* ‘common speedwell, *Veronica officinalis*’ [Annenkov 1878: 377], French *thé d’Europe* ‘the same’, *thé de France* ‘sage, *Salvia officinalis*’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3]. There is an analogous model using ‘coffee’, e.g. Archangel dialect *fedorovtsevskii kofei* ‘a drink made from bracket fungus, and the fungus itself (which grows on trees in the Fedorovtsevskaya woods in Krasnoborskii Region, Archangel Province)’: ‘The birch tree splits, sap runs out, a growth forms; it tastes good, Fedorovtsevskii coffee’ [KSGRS], German *schwedischer Kaffee*, Russian *shvedskii kofe* ‘milk-vetch, *Astragalus boeticus*’ [Annenkov 1878: 56], Serbian *švedska kafa* ‘the same’ [Simonović 1959: 59].

Sixthly, the idiom ‘Russian tea’ is used as a jocular name for vodka: Czech dialect *ruský čaj* ‘vodka’ [Dial-Brno], English slang *Russian tea* ‘vodka, originated from the public drinking of vodka through a coffee mug or travel cup, generally used to redirect authority figures, cops’ <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=russian+tea>>. The motivation here is transparent: according to the common stereotype (as already mentioned, it is both internal and

¹ The opinion that what was made from rose-bay was not proper tea is reflected in Dal’s dictionary: ‘It is used for making tea mixed with used tea-leaves from hotels’ [Dal II: 1].

external) vodka is the Russian national drink. Similar examples are to be found in Belgian restaurants, where coffee with vodka is called *café russe* [information from A. V. Yudin]; in a certain Polish restaurant (the Mandragora, in Lublin) we found the name *kawa po rosyjsku* denoting coffee with *źubrówka* (and cane sugar).¹ The model in which alcoholic drinks are humorously called tea, and the invention of such tea is attributed to the inhabitants of a particular region (usually a neighbouring region), is a very persistent one, cf. Czech dialect *valašský čaj* [Wallachian tea] ‘vodka with cinnamon, cloves and honey’ [SVN 2001: 393], Russian (Kostroma dialect) *tatarskii chai* ‘home-made vodka’ [Dal IV: 598], Polish *herbata po góralski* [Góral tea²] ‘vodka’ [information from M. Jakubowicz], Serbian *šumadijski čaj*³ ‘hot sweet *rakija*’ [recorded by the author in Serbia], etc.

Russian dishes with mayonnaise

Russian eggs. Russian sauce. ‘Russian eggs’ are perhaps the greatest source of ‘*internal bewilderment*’ regarding something distinguished from outside. None of the approximately eighty native speakers of Russian surveyed regarded ‘Russian eggs’ as a stable collocation, and none could guess to what Russian dish foreigners could give this name.

It is eggs with mayonnaise upon which the West Slavonic, Romance and Germanic languages have bestowed the quality of ‘Russianness’: Czech *ruské vejce* [VČRS 2005: 897], Slovak *ruské vajce* [SIRS 1976: 451], English *Russian egg* ‘hard-boiled egg with mayonnaise’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3], German *russische Eier* ‘stuffed eggs with mayonnaise’, Dutch *Russisch ei* ‘hard-boiled egg with tomato and mayonnaise’ [BNidRS 2006: 614], Italian *uova alla russa* ‘eggs copiously dressed with mayonnaise’ <garzantilinguistica.sapere.it>, Belgian French *omelette russe* ‘half a hard-boiled egg with mayonnaise’ [information from A. V. Yudin]. The reason why the Russians find this dish and its name so bewildering is largely that their own cultural and linguistic consciousness firmly attributes mayonnaise (both the word and the thing) to the French.

So how did ‘Russian eggs’ appear in Western European languages? There are two possible explanations.

¹ These ‘tea’ and ‘coffee’ designations exist against a background of a wider model, attested in many of the world’s languages, in which ‘Russianness’ is attributed to different drinks which include spirits. Compare, for example, the names of a whole range of cocktails — English *Black Russian*, *White Russian*, *Gay Russian* etc. — which can now be found on the menus of bars and restaurants throughout the world: these are vodka-based cocktails, the other ingredients being variable — coffee liqueur, cream, cherry liqueur and so forth.

² The Górale live in the mountainous areas along the Polish-Slovak border. [Transl.].

³ Šumadija is the central region of Serbia, south of Belgrade. [Transl.].

The first is rooted in everyday life. In Soviet times (beginning at the end of the 1930s, and particularly in the 1950s and 60s), mayonnaise came to be widely used in Russia, and it remains very popular to this day. Research into the history of cookery reveals that the rapid increase in the consumption of mayonnaise began in the Stalin period, when it became part of the selection of foodstuffs which were issued as rations. It is believed that at present 90 % of the inhabitants of Russia regularly consume mayonnaise, one of the highest rates in the world. Partisans of healthy living have recently begun to combat the ‘mayonnaisation’ of Russian cookery, asserting that the liberal dosing of all kinds of food (especially salads) with mayonnaise not only piles on the pounds and attacks the stomach, but also camouflages a lack of freshness in the food itself. This struggle does not yet seem to have achieved much in the way of results: one can still recognise the approach of a major holiday by the citizens’ shopping bags, weighed down by countless plastic containers full of this product.

Moreover, the menu of Soviet canteens did indeed frequently offer an egg (or rather two halves of the same egg) covered in mayonnaise. The author of these lines remembers it well from her visits to the canteen at school and university, or indeed from those in the villages and other settlements where we did our fieldwork. The variations on this dish were relatively insignificant: sometimes tinned peas were added, and sometimes the mayonnaise was replaced with soured cream. These memories belong to the period from the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s (though older colleagues could no doubt extend its lower limit). Thereafter the popularity of this adornment of mass victualling declined, and now it is extremely rarely met with. At home this dish seems to be less common than in the canteen, and if it is found at all, it forms part of a more complex ‘construction’, such as stuffed eggs.¹

In all these theories only one detail is unclear: when exactly did ‘Russian eggs’ appear in European languages: under Stalin (during the ‘rise of mayonnaise’), or earlier? It is hard to settle this question within the limits of the present article, as it would demand a profound knowledge of the relevant texts. It seems that the expression in question may have emerged earlier.

‘Russianness’ may be ascribed not only to eggs, but also to sauces, or hors-d’œuvres, based on mayonnaise: Czech dialect *ruská omáčka* [Russian sauce] ‘a mayonnaise-based sauce’ [Dial-Brno], English *Russian dressing* ‘a savoury dressing with a mayonnaise base’ [OED XIV: 295], French *à la russe* ‘with a sauce based on mayonnaise and caviare mixed with the creamy parts of lobster or langoustine and

¹ Nowadays on the British Internet the collocation *Russian eggs* is also often used to mean stuffed eggs.

a small amount of mustard' — Côtelette da saumon à la russe [Trésor XIV: 1364].

The reason for the 'mayonnaisation' of the Russian menu as envisioned by foreign languages should not, however, be thought to lie only in the actual widespread use of mayonnaise in Russia. The 'everyday life' argument must be supplemented by the 'stereotype'. There is a persistent notion in European countries of the oriental qualities of Russian cookery, in particular its fondness for hot and greasy foods. In this respect Russian cookery is felt to be much the same as Tartar cookery. What the stereotype of the latter is may be judged from the term 'Tartar sauce', which has a considerable similarity to mayonnaise, cf. Slovene *tatarska omaka* 'a mayonnaise sauce with salted cucumbers, capers, parsley and onion' [SSKJ V: 36], German *Tatarensoße*, Polish *sos tatarski* 'an cold snack of egg yolk, salted cucumbers, vegetable oil, vinegar, mustard and spices, usually accompanying fish' [Komenda 2003:94], Czech *tatarská omáčka* 'a sort of sharp sauce' [PSJČ VI: 47], English *tartar(e) sauce* 'a thick cold sauce made of mayonnaise with chopped capers and onion, usually served with fish', French *sauce tartare* 'mustard sauce (mayonnaise with capers and mustard)' [ABBY Lingvo x 3] etc. *Tartar sauce* is also available in our shops and restaurants, though it is probably less well known than it is abroad; at least, the expression is not to be found in the basic dictionaries of the Russian language.

Modern representatives of the Tartar language and culture seem not to acknowledge this sauce as typical of their national cuisine (we surveyed over ten persons from different towns, mostly in Tartary), just as the Russians do not regard eggs with mayonnaise as one of their dishes. But the external stereotype is powerful, and the language objectifies it clearly and distinctly.¹

Russian salad. Let us now turn to the name of a dish which *is also externally regarded as Russian* (and called 'Russian salad'), but *internally* most often *ascribed to the French*, both notionally and within the system of language (indirectly through the name *Olivier*, or directly through the alternative name *French salad*). The conviction of the salad's French origins does not prevent the Russians from regarding it as one of their favourite dishes, and the symbol of a dinner party (usually on the occasion of a holiday, particularly New Year — cf. the name of the New Year's Eve television programme transmitted on Channel 1 of Russian State Television, 'The Olivier Show'). This salad's cultural history in Russia and its perception by contemporary Russian informants is described in a thorough and entertaining manner by A. N. Kushkova [2005].

¹ Catriona Kelly has suggested that the sauce may have been so named because it originally accompanied *steak à la tartare*; it should also be borne in mind that in the nineteenth century 'Tartar' could also refer to Central Asian cookery.

Let us consider the ‘external’ names of the dish: Slovene *ruska solata* ‘a salad with meat, mayonnaise and certain vegetables’ [SSKJ IV: 557], English *Russian salad* ‘a salad of vegetables with mayonnaise’ [OED XIV: 295],¹ ‘vegetable *salade Olivier*’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3],² French *salade russe* ‘a mixture of various finely chopped cooked and raw vegetables with mayonnaise’ [Trésor XIV: 1364], ‘*salade Olivier*’ <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salade_russe>, Italian *insalata alla russa* (or *all’italiana*) ‘a dish made out of cooked vegetables, cut up with pickles; hard-boiled eggs and mayonnaise (and sometimes also gelatine (brawn), tuna etc.)’: ‘Broadly speaking, like the French, it means a dish made out of cold cooked vegetables, fish, etc., with a mayonnaise sauce and with the flavour of vinegar, as a salad’ [Battaglia XVII: 269], German *russischer Salat* ‘a cold dish made of beetroot, peas, mushrooms, anchovies, cucumbers and ham with mayonnaise or soured cream, caviare, boiled eggs, and sausage’ [Komenda 2003: 82].

It may be seen that there is considerable variation in the ingredients of which the salad is composed, and this can be explained by a well-known principle that operates when foods migrate from one culture to another, and which one might call the *law of available ingredients*: the receiving culture adapts the dish, replacing some atypical ingredient with one of its own, more typical for it. Despite all the variations, the basic dish remains a mixture of vegetables with a sauce. Semantic variation may place the emphasis on the vegetables, in which case it means a salad (English *Russian salad* [OED XIV: 295], Italian *insalata (alla) russa, all’italiana* [ABBYY Lingvo x 3], Spanish *ensalada rusa* [ABBYY Lingvo x 3],³ or else on the non-culinary features (French *salade russe* ‘confusion’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3], Spanish *ensalada rusa* ‘motley, unharmonious combination of colours’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3]).

In Russia it is most often called *Olivier*. It may also be called a *French, Moscow, capital, meat, mayonnaise, boyar* or *winter salad*, etc. (for more details of other names, see [Kushkova 2005]). As for the name *Russian salad*, it is also known to Russian speakers, of whom some believe that ‘it is not made anywhere outside Russia’, whereas others believe that this is what *salade Olivier* is called in other countries [Kushkova 2005].

¹ Judging by the contexts in the OED, the salad could also include other ingredients: ‘Cold boiled beetroot; cold carrots [etc.] <...> smoked salmon, or white meat of chicken and tongue. Cut the vegetables into pieces all of one size, add the salmon, mix with Mayonnaise sauce. Garnish with anchovies’ etc. [OED XIV: 295].

² As Catriona Kelly remarks, *Russian salad* with mayonnaise was already to be found in English supermarkets in the 1960s, next to the coleslaw. She continues, ‘The latter is markedly American, so I suspect that “Russian salad” in its modern meaning may in fact be an American dish’.

³ According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salade_russe>, *salade Olivier* was called ‘Russian’ in Spain.

So why does the external viewpoint attribute 'Russianness' to this salad? It would appear that the reasons are similar to those which were identified in the case of the eggs with mayonnaise.

Firstly, this salad, as mentioned above, really is exceptionally popular in Russia. As Kushkova notes, in domestic conversation *salade Olivier* 'is just "salad", Salad with a capital S, *the salad*' [Kushkova 2005]. This sort of denomination appears in situations expressed in utterances such as 'I still have to grate the salad', or 'They made a whole bowlful of salad', in which people imbued with modern Russian culture can hardly fail to recognise *salade Olivier*. It has become a sort of archetypal salad, which is the most convincing linguistic testimony to its popularity. Secondly, it contains liberal quantities of mayonnaise, which, as demonstrated above, helps it to pass the 'Russianness test' in the eyes of speakers of other European languages. It is no accident that one Italian lexicographical source stresses that the Italian *insalata russa* means 'mayonnaise with vegetables' rather than the other way round <garzantilinguistica.sapere.it>. Thirdly, *salade Olivier* is highly calorific, which matches the stereotype of Russian food with a high fat content.

Finally, a fourth circumstance may also have come into play. Even the most cursory acquaintance with European cookery shows that the idea of salad and its role in the organisation of the meal in urban culture is quite different in Russia and several Western countries. In Russia salads are made in large quantities, they are served as an 'independent' first course (before the hot food), and strike the 'keynote' of the meal (which may sometimes consist entirely of salads, for example, when something is being celebrated at the workplace where there is no possibility of heating up the soup or meat course, and instead people bring salads which they have prepared at home). In Europe salad does not play such a fundamental role, it is made in smaller quantities, and they usually serve as an accompaniment to the main dish and are served with it. (In America, where the 'salad tradition' is closer to that of Russia, it is rather different.) For someone whose culture is Russian, salad is understood in the first place as a *mixture* of vegetables, with the stress on the fact of its 'being a combination of several ingredients', and the cook is encouraged to be wildly imaginative in the search for new ingredients (though by no means at the expense of the old ones). In Europe it is the vegetable element that is more prominent, so that salads of a single type of vegetable are common (finely shredded carrots or cucumbers in some kind of dressing are acknowledged as a salad). Compare the tongue-in-cheek remarks of Genis and Vail: 'A genuine French salad, strange as it may seem, contains salad and only salad: a few fresh lettuce leaves sprinkled with dressing. This is such a ridiculously frivolous sort of food that Russian does not even have the concept of this sort of salad. If it is a question of a vegetable salad,

then what is meant is a mixture of tomatoes, cucumbers and various green leaves with a dollop of soured cream. <...> Our understanding of salad is a whole dish, one portion of which would be more than sufficient to feed the entire clientele of your average health food shop' [Vail, Genis 2001: 97, 98]. *Olivier* is thus a perfect realisation of the model of a 'Russian salad', both in the multitude of its ingredients and the central role it takes in the organisation of the meal.

Having determined why *salade Olivier* is the embodiment of 'Russianness' when evaluated from outside, we should consider the co-existence within a single language of a paradoxical pair of names, structured on the 'native versus foreign' model and denoting one and the same thing. It is not only that *Russian salad* = *French salad* in Russian, but similarly *insalata (alla) russa* = *insalata all' italiana* in Italian (and there is a similar pair of salad names in Spanish too, see below). The appearance of such a nomenclatural paradox is evidently connected with an expansion of the cultural context in which the languages function, with the result that names which attest to different stages of the cultural (and even transcultural) history of the things in question, and express diametrically opposite viewpoints of them, may co-exist within a single linguistic system. Thus the collocation *French salad* expresses the 'genetic' marker (the salad is believed to have been invented by a French chef), while *Russian salad* expresses what we might call the 'functional' marker (the salad became popular in Russia, Russians accept it as their own, and it is known as such abroad).¹

Onomastic turncoats may also be politically motivated. One Internet user quoted by A. N. Kushkova sees a political element in the Russian attempt to abandon the name *French salad*: the name *capital salad* appeared as a replacement for 'the old name, which had disappeared along with other victims of the campaign against cosmopolitanism' (quoted in [Kushkova 2005]. Something similar has been observed in Spanish: under Franco the *ensalada rusa* (which is a *salade Olivier*) was changed into a 'national salad' <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salade_russe>. It is possible that this sort of motivation may also have given rise to the pair of names in Italian.²

¹ *Charlotte parisienne* has become 'Russian' in a similar manner: according to legend, *charlotte parisienne*, as it was known in France, was renamed *charlotte russe* by a French chef when he went to Russia to work in the Imperial kitchens <http://www.whatamieating.com/charlotte_parisienne.html>. True, one Russian Internet site asserts that a *sharlotka frantsuzskaya* is something completely different from a *sharlotka russkaya* <<http://www.kedem.ru/schoolcook/advice/20110114-Charlotte>>.

² Some other paradoxical pairs of the same type are known. To take a non-culinary example, the roller coaster is known in some languages as 'Russian hills', but in Russian as 'American hills'. It originated in eighteenth-century Russia, and became known abroad as 'Russian hills', and was then re-created in its modern form in America at the beginning of the twentieth century, and named accordingly. The vicissitudes of cultural history have given us a pair of names between which there arises a definite tension, not without a certain expressive effect.

The Russian sandwich

The image of the 'Russian sandwich' has the most subjective organisation of all the culinary images examined in the present article: objective *ethnographic knowledge* (in practically all motivational variants) *is reduced to a minimum*, whereas *stereotypical information about the Russian character and way of life* plays a large part.

The collocation denotes different foods in different languages.

Black bread with white. There is a jocular expression *ruski sendvič* in colloquial Serbian meaning 'two slices of black bread with a thin slice of white bread between them' [information from A. Loma]. This combination seems to be due to two causes. Firstly, the Russians, unlike the English and many other Europeans (but not the Germans, Finns, Hungarians, etc.) often eat black bread. In Russia sandwiches which do not meet the 'classical' European criteria may be made with it. Secondly, it reflects the idea of the poverty of Russian food: instead of butter, meat and so on, the Russian sandwich filling is another sort of bread. It may be that this expression appeared in the former Yugoslavia in the Soviet period, in those years when Russia was plagued by food shortages (or else it preserves the memory of the hungry years before the War).

A sandwich with a mixture of fatty, hot and coarse ingredients. In Dutch there is the combination *Russische boterham* [Russian sandwich] 'a sandwich with cold meat, egg, tomato and mayonnaise' [BNidRS 2006: 614], which echoes the *Russisch ei* 'hard-boiled egg with tomato and mayonnaise' [BNidRS 2006: 614] discussed earlier. Thus the 'Russian sandwich' is a descendant of the 'Russian egg'. There is no such expression recorded as a usual collocation in English dictionaries, but culinary Internet resources in English give a large number of recipes for 'Russian sandwiches'. They may be made with foods associated with Russia such as black bread, mayonnaise or 'Russian dressing', and also a wide range of fruit and vegetables, which reflects the image of the 'Russian salad': cf. the recipes at <<http://www.beallaonline.com/articles/art63835.asp>>; <<http://alexmoseson.net/personal/personal-blog/71-russian-sandwich>>. Many of the ingredients for the sandwich are fatty, hot and coarse, and make up an exotic mixture, which may also be perceived as a substrate of 'Russianness'.

There follows a more detailed list of the components of various kinds of 'Russian sandwich':

a) black bread, garlic, olive oil, cheese, sliced pickles, slices of ham (smoked fish/sausage), sliced cucumber, two tablespoons of mayonnaise;

- b) four slices of black bread, one and a half cups sliced cooked vegetables of sliced cooked vegetables, three tablespoonsful of cream, two teaspoonsful of pressed curd cheese, two tablespoonsful of grated carrot, one teaspoonful of made mustard, half a teaspoonful of sugar;
- c) four slices of black bread made with coarse unsifted rye flour, two tablespoonsful of butter, eight slices of boiled bacon, four pieces of Swiss cheese, a quarter of a cup of horseradish sauce, three table-
spoonsful of mayonnaise, half a cup of chopped green olives, one cup of chopped roasted red peppers;
- d) four hard-boiled eggs, two tablespoonsful of chopped olives, two tablespoonsful of chopped red peppers, olive oil, vinegar, butter, half a cup of chopped onion;
- e) six slices of bread, one banana, a quarter of a cup of sliced pineapple, two tablespoonsful of jam, two teaspoonsful of butter
<<http://bellaonline.com/articles/art63835.asp>>; <<http://alexmoseson.net/personal/personal-blog/71-russian-sandwich>>.

The most impressive in this list is recipe (c), which fully deserves to be called ‘death to the stomach’ (particularly if one takes into account the European love of healthy food).

Other such culinary instructions may be carried out in the realm of the pastry cook, see below.

‘Extravagant’ pastries with a high fat content. In French (mostly in Belgium, but also in northern France) there is such a thing as a *tartine russe* ‘a cake consisting of a sponge base and a buttercream topping which is twice as thick as the base’ [information from A. V. Yudin]. This collocation originated in French a long time ago, at the time of the Russian Empire (possibly when the two countries were allies).¹ The Internet provides a recipe for *tartines russes*, requiring equal parts (300g) of butter, sugar and flour, with maraschino to taste <<http://pilet.chez.com/recette/patisserie/gateaux/TARTINER.html>>. This is obviously a highly calorific dessert, which French-speakers would regard as having a high fat content. The name conveys the idea that the cakes are abnormally fatty, and calling them ‘sandwiches’ suggests that the Russian eat fat like an ordinary sandwich.²

¹ The Swiss periodical *La semaine littéraire* for 1894 includes a story in which the hero prepares tea and *tartines russes* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5529078h/f5.image.r=%22tartines+russes%22.langEN>>. Another comparatively early attestation of *tartine russe* is in the menu served on board the *Anversville* and reported in a Belgian newspaper of 1935 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k55878025/f13.image.r=%22tartines+russes%22.langEN>>, though this is listed as an entrée and must presumably have been a savoury dish.

² On the other hand, the term ‘sandwich’ is used in culinary English for a rich sponge cake, split in the middle and filled with jam and/or cream (‘Victoria sandwich’), so this may be another line of linguistic evolution. [Eds.].

It is interesting to note that externally the image of ‘Russian bread’ may be used to denote sweet things: German *Russisches Brot* ‘a type of biscuit made with whipped egg whites’ [ABBYY Lingvo x 3]. In Quebec *pain russe* is an elaborately decorated cream gâteau [information from A. Kaufman].¹ These dishes are probably derived from different culinary prototypes, but their common features are evident.

There are thus three variations on the theme of the ‘Russian sandwich’ Serbian, German and French, with some contradictions between them (more apparent than real, as we shall see later). The Serbian ‘dish’ is very meagre, in contrast to the French and German ones. This may be explained by the fact that the Serbs, who had closer and more immediate contact with the Russians, evidently reflected a historical *datum* — food shortages or hunger in Russia — in their name, whereas the French and Germans took more general stereotypes of Russian food, the Russian character, and Russia in general as their starting-point for the creation of culinary images. There are objective ethnographic elements (Russians do make sandwiches with black bread, and they do like mayonnaise), but more subjective ones: the perception of Russian food as coarse, hot and fatty,² capable of strange and exotic combinations, abundant and ‘excessive’ is projected onto ideas of the oriental priorities of Russian material culture, of Russian intemperance, abandon, love of external display (even a certain ornateness and pomp), weirdly combined with poverty and simplicity (not to say backwardness).

* * *

These notes have done no more than hint at the outlines of a large and significant theme — the study of the culinary code of ethnic stereotypes, and beyond that the ‘material’ layer of stereotypification (alongside the culinary code, this includes codes of dress, building, etc.). Such codes have hitherto been underestimated in ethnolinguistics, but the evidence they provide is very valuable, insofar as when ideas of national character and way of life are conveyed on the ‘material level’ they may be expressed indirectly, not outright (which gives the most objective information about the subjective), and also disclose the contours of a stereotype which is not enunciated by other codes. Russian cookery does not form a prominent part of world cuisine, and is relatively little known. This means that foreigners have much less chance to get to know it ‘ethnographically’ than they

¹ Though a gâteau is called ‘Russian bread’ here, there are also ‘Russian gâteaux’. As a rule these are very sweet, rich, elaborately decorated cakes, such as, for example the French *gâteau russe* ‘thin meringue with a layer of *crème pralinée* with hazelnuts and almonds’ [information from G. I. Kabakova], ‘a cake made with *fromage frais*, raisins and three potatoes (these last are mashed and mixed with the *fromage frais*)’ <<http://www.lesfoodies.com/fimere/recette/gateau-russe-au-fromage-blanc>>, etc.

² There are other ‘Russian’ dishes with similar properties, e.g. the Italian *crocanti alla russa* (‘Russian cracknels’) ‘cylindrical croquettes stuffed with meat and fried in batter’ [Battaglia 17: 269].

do with, say, Japanese, Chinese, French, Mediterranean, Georgian or other cuisines. (Nowadays virtually every large city in the world has ethnic restaurants owned by people from the countries in question, who are trying to give their customers a more or less authentic experience of their culinary traditions.) Such a situation increases the degree of subjectivity in the ideas of Russian cookery reflected in language, and these require a further systematic study.

Abbreviations

- ABBY Lingvo x 3 — ABBYY Lingvo x 3: Electronic dictionary of 6 languages
Dial-Brno — Archiv lidového jazyka dialektologického oddělení Ústavu pro jazyk český AV ČR, Brno
- BNidRS — *Bolshoi niderlandsko-russkii slovar* [Great Dutch-Russian Dictionary]. M.: Zhivoj jazyk, 2006
- ESUM — *Etymologichnyi slovník ukrain'skoyi movy* [Etymological Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language]. 6 vols. Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1982–2012
- ISJP — *Inny słownik języka polskiego*. 2 vols. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo naukowe PAN, 2000
- KSGP — Kartoteka SGP (Słownik gwar polskich). Kraków
- KSGRS — Kartoteka Slovarya govorov Russkogo Severa [Card Index of Dialects of the Russian North], held in the Department of Russian Language and General Linguistics, Urals Federal University, Ekaterinburg
- LKTE — Leksicheskaya kartoteka Toponimicheskoi ekspeditsii UrFU [Lexical Card Index of the Toponymic Expeditions of the Urals Federal University] (Department of Russian Language and General Linguistics)
- OED — *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd edn. Vol. 14. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989
- OED Online — *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edn. (based on the 2011 edn. of the OED)
- PSJČ — *Příruční slovník jazyka českého*. 8 vols. Praha: Státní nakladatelství, 1935–1957
- RSKkJ — *Rečnik srpskokhrvatsoga književnog jezika* [Dictionary of the Serbo-Croat Literary Language]. 6 vols. Novy Sad and Zagreb: Matica Srpska, 1967–1976
- SIRS — *Slovatsko-russkii slovar* [Slovak-Russian Dictionary]. M., Bratislava: Russkij jazyk; Slovacckoe pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1976
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