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RUSSIAN WORLD – LANGUAGE AND CULTURE –
IN CIS COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The article studies the problem of the Russian language in the countries of the former Soviet Union and the main problems and ways to overcome them. The prevalence of the Russian language in the former Soviet Union varies considerably from country to country, but the dynamics of the use of Russian in the mostly stable. The status of the Russian language in every country in the post-Soviet space has its own specifics, but it continues to perform a number of important functions, and above all, a function of the interstate language, the language of science and culture. But due to the political situation in the world and the aggression against the Russian Federation, the status of the country in general and language in particular is changing and, unfortunately, not for the better. Post-Soviet countries continue to maintain contacts with Russia, many high school graduates go to Russia for the higher education, but at the same time, the level of Russian language skills among young people is much less than before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: the Russian language, the state language and the official language; the post-Soviet space; the Russian-speaking space.

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РУССКИЙ МИР – ЯЗЫКИ И КУЛЬТУРА –
В СТРАНАХ ПОСТСОВЕТСКОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА

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Аннотация

В статье исследуется проблема функционирования русского языка в странах бывшего Советского Союза, выявляются связанные с этим трудности и рассматриваются пути их преодоления. Преобладание русского языка в странах бывшего СССР варьируется от страны к стране, но динамика его использования остается в основном стабильной. Статус русского языка в каждой стране на постсоветском пространстве имеет свою специфику, но язык продолжает выполнять ряд важных функций, прежде всего – функцию межгосударственного языка, а также языка науки и культуры. В связи с изменившейся политической ситуацией в мире и агрессией против Российской Федерации статус страны в целом и языка в частности меняется и, к сожалению, не в лучшую сторону. Постсоветские страны продолжают поддерживать контакты с Россией, многие выпускники школ едут в Россию получать высшее образование, но в то же время уровень владения русским языком у молодых людей гораздо ниже, чем до распада СССР.

Ключевые слова: русский язык, государственный язык и официальный язык; постсоветское пространство; русско-говорящий мир.

The history of Russia in the XXI century – is a period of revival of Russia, becoming as a strong state, and now the discussion about the Russian language, the Russian self-identity are particularly relevant.

One of the important factors in strengthening solidarity and strengthening integration processes in Russia, CIS countries, unrecognized South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic is the

Russian language, which, without rejecting cultural differences, is a powerful mechanism for achieving interaction between people of different nationalities and the formation of general civil loyalty.

In this regard, concerted efforts to support the Russian-speaking space, promotion of Russian culture are priorities, not only in Russia but also in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Russian language, ranking fifth in the number of speakers (after Chinese, English, Hindi and Spanish), is one of the world's major languages and the most widely spoken language in Europe – both geographically and in the number of native speakers.

Russian is the official language in many countries of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan (along with Kazakh), partially recognized Republic of South Ossetia (along with Ossetian) and the self-proclaimed Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (along with the Moldovan and Ukrainian). The Russian language is the official language of government agencies in the following countries: Kazakhstan, partially recognized Republic of Abkhazia. In a number of administrative units of Abkhazia, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic the Russian language is recognized as one of the official languages. In Tajikistan, the Russian language is constitutionally the "language of interethnic communication." In Uzbekistan the Russian language is used in the registry office.

Russian is spoken in the CIS countries, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Israel, Mongolia, Finland, on Svalbard, in Eastern Europe, in Germany, France, in the big cities of the USA, Canada, China, Australia. Until 1991, Russian was the lingua franca of the USSR, de facto fulfilling the functions of the state language. It continues to be used in all countries of the formerly part of the Soviet Union. Russian remains the most popular domain zones in the largest countries of the former USSR – Kazakhstan, Abkhazia, Moldova, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and others.

However, the decline in the prestige of the Russian language, which is noted in the XX century in a number of regions and countries, has led to a reduction in the number of Russian-speakers, especially among the younger generation in many of the former Soviet republics; to reduce the role of the Russian language in educational and training institutions of the CIS, where the training is increasingly conducted in the language of the titular nation, and, consequently, to a decrease in access to education in Russian. Reducing the popularity of the Russian language as the language of interethnic

communication leads to dissociation of intercultural peoples of Russia and the CIS nations.

Reducing the share of Russian-speakers among the youth is due to two main factors: the first reason is a serious reduction in the number of hours devoted to the study of the Russian language in educational institutions, and in many schools it is left only for optional study. The second factor is the demographic situation in the CIS countries: the Russian share in recent years has decreased significantly, which is due not only to move to Russia and other countries, but with a decrease in the birth rate in the Russian-speaking environment. An important role is played by the factor of the change of identity of the Russian-speaking population in connection with the need to adapt to the new social and cultural reality, as in many countries, to enroll in college or the work requires the knowledge of the language of the titular nation.

In many post-Soviet countries, the very fact of the Russian-speaking, the use of Russian as the main language of communication often causes not only cultural, but socio-economic and political problems. A kind of an indicator of the main trends of changes in the language situation in the country is the sentiments and language preferences of the post-Soviet young people as a kind of socio-demographic group, formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. A number of the young post-Soviet republics are largely perceived through the value, mostly related to the national ideology, and are not focused on the Russian language and the Russian culture. To a certain extent an indicator of the situation in this regard is the fact that in most countries, the prevalence of the Russian language in everyday communication among young people is below its prevalence among the general population.

In some countries, the former Soviet Union educated elite is a conductor of linguistic nationalism, cultural and historical autonomy, ousting the Russian language. In others, on the contrary, it is opposed to traditionalism and ethno-nationalism, while maintaining focus on an inter-ethnic and interstate dialogue. An indication to this trend may be common among people with higher education in the Russian language (or, on the contrary, the language of the titular nation). In most countries, the prevalence of the post-Soviet Russian language among people with higher education is greater than among those with lower levels of education. This, obviously, is the result of more Soviet practice of training, when many representatives of the national intelligentsia trained in Russian universities and / or Russian teachers in Russian.

Residents of the capitals of the former Soviet Union, tend to form a special group, which largely defines the cultural patterns, advanced behaviors and social practices. In most cases, the capitals of the CIS countries maintain the Russian influence, their citizens are focused on the value of inter-ethnic and inter-civilizational dialogue. This is especially true for the capital of Kazakhstan and Abkhazia, where half or more of the inhabitants of the capital cities use the Russian language in interpersonal communication. In the capital cities of Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic the share of the Russian-speaking population of residents is about one-third of total number of inhabitants.

The prevalence of the Russian language in the former Soviet Union varies considerably from country to country, but the dynamics of the prevalence of the Russian language is stable. You can select the following classes (types) of post-Soviet countries with different characteristics and prospects of the prevalence of the Russian language:

–Countries with a large share of Russian-speaking population, comparable to the proportion of the population of the titular nationality. On the one hand, we can say that the position of the Russian language in them is very strong, the other – the obvious linguistic division of the country sometimes goes into the political sphere due to the competition of various elite groups who use the language as an instrument of competition (Kazakhstan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia).

–Countries with a significant, but rapidly diminishing Russian-speaking community with a clear dominance of the titular nationality (Tajikistan, Armenia, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic).

–Countries with a small Russian diaspora and the lack of long-term migration flows to Russia. The Russian language is used mainly in the narrow elite groups – the intellectuals, the power (Kyrgyzstan).

An advanced social group of citizens of newly independent states (the youth, citizens with a higher education, residents of capital cities) are more likely to use the Russian language than the general population. This phenomenon in some countries can give rise to the phenomenon of transition of the Russian language from the mass to the elite where it will be used mainly by intellectuals, businessmen, and in international politics. Strengthening and intensification of educational, cultural, scientific and economic relations of Russia with the countries of the former Soviet Union may give rise to an increased demand for learning Russian.

To maintain the status of the Russian language in the post-Soviet countries we should:

– carry out activities which are a large-scale presentation of social initiatives in an international community;

– create a multi-format platform for exchange of views on topical issues of the cultural and language policy;

– organize the work on the issues of maintaining through the Russian language cultural orientation on Russia as a major communicative and integration partner;

– increase the functional significance of the Russian language as a means of combining the spiritual and intellectual resources in the linguistic and cultural space of Russia and the world.

We need:

1. The preservation of the Russian language as the common cultural heritage of the peoples of the world to support the culture and history of the Russian state, the rich spiritual and moral traditions established by scientists, writers, artists, historians and public figures, which are famous in Russia.

2. The development of common information, educational, social, cultural and economic space of the Russian Federation.

3. Strengthening Russia's prestige in the world community, the preservation and development of the Russian-speaking space.

4. Combining educational, cultural and scientific communities in Russia, CIS, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic.

Considering the prospects of the Russian-speaking space in the CIS, it should be noted that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of the status and support of the Russian language, of course, should lie on the countries that are home to the Russian-speaking population. The Russian Federation as the basis of the Russian people, its language and culture can and should provide protection and carry out the protection of the Russian population of the CIS countries, their compatriots. In addition, the protection of language rights and the rights of ethnic minorities is one of Russia's international obligations. We should not forget that saving the Russian language is also the strengthening of the prestige of the Russian Federation, its position on the international arena.

The essential foundation for the support of the Russian-speaking media in CIS projects are accepted and implemented by Russia:

- A program of work with compatriots abroad,
- The Federal target Program "The Russian Language",

- The State program to assist the voluntary resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots living abroad [9].

Thus, the analysis of the problem of the status of the Russian language in the former Soviet Union led to the following conclusions.

Firstly, the Russian language in the former Soviet space serves several important functions. First of all, it is the function of the interstate language, the language of science and culture.

Secondly, during the formation of the new independent states of the former Soviet Union there is a gradual decay of a single language area.

Third, the status of the Russian language in every country in the post-Soviet space has its own specifics. This is due to several factors, such as the features of economic and political development in the post-Soviet period, the number of Russian-speaking population living in the country, the specifics of Russia's foreign policy in relation to a particular country.

Fourth, a special role in maintaining the Russian language as a means of international communication in the CIS played by the Russian Federation, implementing a number of federal programs.

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