



THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

Languages have four functions outside their basic territory. These functions are the function of the world languages, the function of the regional language, the function of the contact language and the function of the diaspora language. The Russian language has all these functions. Besides Russian has become the language of minorities in the new states on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Keywords: Language functions, world language, regional language, contact language, diaspora language, the Russian language.

INTRODUCTION

According to the total number of speakers, the Russian language ranks among the top ten world languages, but it is rather difficult to determine this place exactly. The number of people who consider Russian as their mother tongue exceeds 200 million people, 130 million of whom live in Russia. The number of people who are fluent in Russian and use it as a first or second language in everyday communication is estimated at 300-350 million. In Uzbekistan, the number of people who speak spoken Russian is between 50 and 80 percent of the population. As of 2018, there are 903 schools with the Russian language of instruction in the country. The Russian language continues to be used in business circles, the financial and banking systems, in some government agencies, TV channels continue to broadcast in Russian. The President of our republic, speaking Russian at the highest level, speaks to them perfectly. In total, more than half a billion people in the world speak Russian to one degree or another, and according to this indicator, Russian ranks third in the world after Chinese and English.

The functions of a language outside its core territory can be reduced to four: the function of a world language, the function of a regional cultural language, the



function of a contact language and the function of a diaspora language. Not all languages have all the listed functions, but the Russian language in the past performed and, to some extent, still performs all these functions.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Such a language has international significance for all states of the world, or at least for the majority of them. It is the official language of international organizations, texts in it are internationally famous, and the international prestige of the language is consistently high.

In the recent past, this function of the Russian language was undeniable. It was especially significant during the Cold War era, when there was a struggle between two models of life, associated primarily with English and Russian languages. The global role of the Russian language at that time had, first of all, three components, which can be conditionally called “the language of Lenin”, “the language of Gagarin” and “the language of Dostoevsky”. In Japan in the 1960s, it was considered necessary among science students to master the Russian language. Russian literature also enjoyed prestige, which was read throughout the world both in translation and in the original. Of course, interest in the Russian language could also be associated with the desire to know the enemy’s language.

Russian science, of course, to some extent retains international importance even now, but its role has also decreased. The example of space exploration is well known, but here is the humanities of the Soviet period, which in Russia itself is often now viewed exclusively as a science that “was tightly isolated from the rest of the world and, under the supervision of the party apparatus, was forced to revolve in the circle of long-outdated ideas” [Ilizarov, 2003: 186]. But in the West the names of L.S. Vygotsky, V.Ya. Proppa, M.M. Bakhtin, V.B. Shklovsky and others are still respected. They also study Soviet linguistics, including Marxist (E.D. Polivanov, N.F. Yakovlev, L.P. Yakubinsky and even T.P. Lomtev). And among our modern linguists, Russian scientists are mostly known abroad, if at all, as specialists in particular areas, mainly in the languages of Russia or the former USSR: Russian scholars, Turkologists, Caucasian experts, etc., but not as theorists.



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Russian remains the language of many international organizations, including the UN. It can also be a language of communication between speakers of very different languages. They write, for example, that at the NATO summit in 2008, German Chancellor A. Merkel and US Secretary of State C. Rice “stood separately from the men and spoke loudly to each other in Russian - they both speak this language fluently” [Zygar, 2021: 188].

However, this situation is a legacy of the past; both interlocutors studied Russian in Soviet times. Language habits are very inertial, but the change of generations will stop such situations if they are not fed from the outside. Of course, there are unpredictable factors, for example, a famous writer can appear anywhere. But it is obvious that “a country like all others” has less chance of its language playing a global role than a superpower.

Recently, the process of globalization has not only reduced the number of world languages, but also smoothed out the differences between world and regional cultural languages. It is proposed to use English in both functions. This is opposed not only by political, but also by psychological factors. People who are accustomed to any language, it is usually not easy to change it. According to Levada Center data for 2010, 9% of Russians declared fluency in English [Novaya Gazeta]. And this not only in Russia. We prepared quite a lot of English translators for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, but it turned out that the guests were from Japan or Latin America countries, as a rule, did not speak English, and translators from Japanese or Spanish were not prepared.

Situations when speakers of different languages must communicate with each other are very diverse: trade, labor migration, recreation, etc. All these are not cultural, but everyday spheres. Methods of communication can be different: the use of a world or regional cultural language (usually more prestigious than the mother languages of the interlocutors), the development of a special contact language (pidgin), communication in different but mutually intelligible languages (see the example above with the Kiev taxi). However, the mother language of one of the interlocutors can also be used, which can also be “the language of a country like all others.” In Soviet times, the role of the Russian language in this function was small: cross-border communication was hampered by the border regime, and



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Soviet citizens traveled abroad relatively rarely, and if they did, it was more often with translators. Now these contacts have increased sharply while cultural functions have been reduced. For example, with the underdevelopment of resorts in Russia, vacations have spread to Turkey, Greece and other countries. But, as already mentioned, the percentage of Russians who even speak English is small, and a new type of business has appeared in these countries: hotels with Russian-speaking staff. On the other hand, in Russia migrant workers have to master the Russian language at the everyday level.

That is, the international role of the Russian language as the language of a great power is being replaced by its international role, characteristic of the languages of countries “the same as all the others.”

Although the cultural functions of the Russian language are narrowing, the total number of citizens who speak Russian is increasing in a number of countries. Emigration from Russia and some other parts of the former USSR is growing. Emigrants, of course, retain their command of the Russian language (although some of them are ready to forget it), but regardless of their attitude towards it, they do not always pass it on to their children. Another part of the Russian-speaking population are people who changed their state of residence due to changes in borders. Russian language from cultural spheres while preserving only the Russian minority in everyday communication.

The global Russian-speaking cultural space is narrowing and rests more on the traditions and inertia of the past than on new successes. At the same time, the position of the Russian language as a contact language and a language of the diaspora is expanding. But if Russia wants to maintain the world position of its language, it must present to the world something that no one else can present.

Possession of the wealth of the Russian language is an important indicator of the cultural level of any person, regardless of his specialty. To be able to express one's thoughts clearly and clearly, in compliance with all the rules of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, means to be well understood by everyone who speaks Russian. There is also an aesthetic side to this, since the Russian language is a great miracle of culture, created by the Russian people, their best writers and publicists.



At present, the degree of prevalence of the Russian language still ranks fourth in the world. Strengthening the position of the Russian language in the world requires not only more significant resource provision, but also improved interaction between all state and public departments and organizations designed to support, develop and promote the Russian language and culture. At the same time, it is necessary to better take into account the specific features of the following main groups of foreign and Russian citizens, in addition to students of educational institutions with the Russian language of instruction and Russian language teachers.

CONCLUSION

Today, the Russian language not only remains the main language of interethnic communication throughout the post-Soviet space. It is well spoken by the older generation and well explained by the younger, in many countries of the former socialist bloc. And it is hardly possible to say that the role of the Russian language in the world has fallen over the past twenty years. One can only rejoice that the role of national languages has increased over the years in the post-Soviet space. But the Russian language continues to be the language of interethnic communication and one of the world languages, which is not in vain one of the official languages of the UN. Thus, the huge role of the Russian language in the modern world is determined by its cultural value, its power and greatness.

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