

**THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE STUDY OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES**

Musaeva Amina Karamatovna

*Senior Lecturer of the Russian Language, Doctor of Philosophy
(PhD) in Pedagogical Sciences, Acting Associate Professor,*

Department of Uzbek and Russian Philology, Asia International University, Uzbekistan

E-mail: musayevaaminakaramatovna@oxu.uz

Abstract.

A distinctive feature of new educational relationships, in contrast to traditional instructional models, lies not in students' complete independence or in the restriction of instructional activity, but rather in goal-oriented learning, the collaborative organization of the educational process, and the conscious guidance of learners toward active engagement. Special emphasis is placed on fostering students' interest in studying the Russian language and other foreign languages. Through the effective organization of instruction, the learner is granted the right to free choice without limiting individual needs, interests, and capabilities.

Keywords: speech culture, improvement of skills, pedagogical technology, technological approach, educational model, didactics, foundations for increasing effectiveness in the learning process.

Introduction. The purpose of this article is to promote the development of students' in-depth knowledge, skills, and competencies that enable them not only to communicate fluently in Russian in both oral and written forms across various spheres of interaction, but also to read and comprehend works of classical and contemporary literature, as well as socio-political, fiction, popular science, and professionally oriented academic texts.

Another objective is to provide a general understanding of the current state of the modern Russian literary language, to deepen foundational knowledge and practical skills, and to offer essential basic knowledge of speech culture and the principal functional styles of the Russian language. Particular emphasis is placed on improving students' ability to work with various types of dictionaries, to analyze and interpret texts, to expand their vocabulary, and to enhance communicative competence.

Through the study of the Russian language, students acquire fundamental linguistic competencies, develop and refine speech skills, and learn to apply them effectively in academic and professional contexts relevant to their fields of study. The expansion and enrichment of previously acquired knowledge contribute to the development of a гуманитарно-oriented worldview grounded in high moral values and democratic culture.

Main Body (Extended Theoretical Version).

This article examines the role of the Russian language in the study of English and other foreign languages within the framework of higher education. The study aims to identify the key functional and methodological aspects of Russian as a mediating language in multilingual academic environments. Special attention is given to the following theoretical questions: What is language as a socio-cultural and cognitive phenomenon? Why does linguistic diversity matter in contemporary society? What epistemological and humanities values does language learning generate?

In modern linguistics, language is interpreted not merely as a system of lexical and grammatical units, but as a complex semiotic, cognitive, and socio-cultural construct. Within intercultural communication theory, language functions as a mechanism of encoding and decoding cultural meanings. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it operates as a marker of

identity and social integration, while in cognitive linguistics it is viewed as a tool for structuring human experience and conceptualizing reality.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the anatomical notion of the “tongue” and language as a structured sign system. As a semiotic system, language performs several fundamental functions: communicative, cognitive, accumulative, and cultural-transmissive. It enables the production, storage, and transmission of knowledge and thus serves as one of the principal mechanisms of civilizational continuity.

The existence of multiple languages reflects the diversity of historical experience, cultural models, and worldviews. Each language represents a unique conceptual system and encodes a specific interpretation of reality. Consequently, language learning is not limited to mastering grammar and vocabulary; it entails entering a new cultural and intellectual space.

Within higher education, the Russian language can serve as a cognitive bridge in the acquisition of other foreign languages. For students in multilingual contexts, previously acquired linguistic competence in Russian facilitates the development of metalinguistic awareness, comparative analysis skills, and structural sensitivity to grammatical systems. These competencies significantly enhance the effectiveness of subsequent foreign language acquisition.

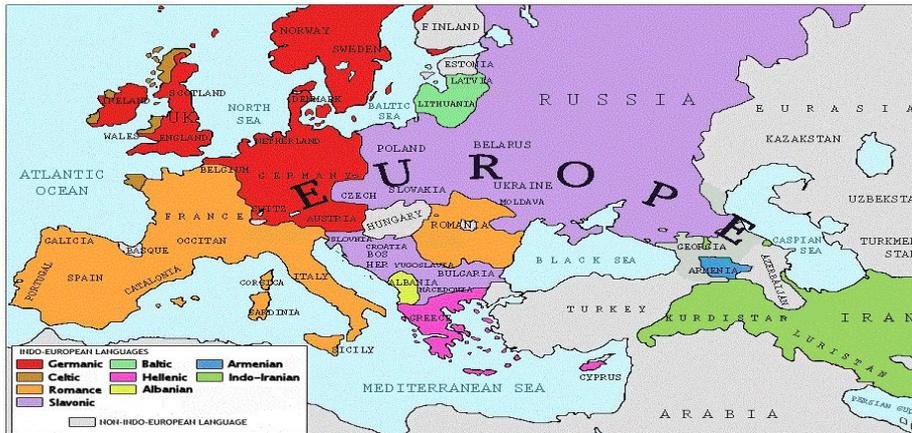
Moreover, language development is inseparably linked with the development of thinking and consciousness. Historically, the evolution of language has enabled humanity to preserve and transmit accumulated social experience from generation to generation. This continuity has played a decisive role in the advancement of science, technology, education, and culture. In this sense, language is not merely a communicative instrument but a fundamental condition for intellectual and cultural progress.

Thus, the role of the Russian language in the study of foreign languages should be understood not only as instrumental but also as epistemological and cultural. It contributes to the formation of a гуманитарно-oriented worldview grounded in intercultural dialogue, democratic values, and high moral standards. Many learners of English often report: “*It is easier for me to formulate my thoughts in Russian first and then translate them. I simply cannot think in English...*” Such difficulties are widespread and highlight the crucial role of the Russian language in translation studies, particularly in philology, where translation occurs either from English to Russian or from Russian to English. The use of Russian as a mediating language ensures grammatical accuracy and semantic coherence in the translation process.

This effectiveness is partly due to the structural and typological similarities shared by the two languages. Linguistic research in philology demonstrates that contemporary and ancient languages across the world often derive from common roots within several language families. For instance, the English language evolved primarily from three Germanic tribes: the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons. Scholarly works on English frequently delve into historical linguistics, as understanding the evolution of English requires knowledge of Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English.

In this study, we aim to clarify key aspects of the historical development of English: how the language emerged on the British Isles, how it evolved over the centuries, and why historical English terminology differs so markedly from contemporary usage.

English belongs to the extensive Indo-European language family, which encompasses most European languages and several Asian languages. Understanding this historical and genealogical context is essential for comparative linguistics, translation studies, and the development of metalinguistic competence in foreign language learning.



Historical linguists do not have a complete reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European language. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace genealogical relationships among languages that, at first glance, appear radically different in their lexical systems. One of the simplest methods for such analysis is etymology. For example, the word “father” appears as “father” in English, “Vater” in German, “pater” in Latin, and “pitr” in Sanskrit. Over millennia, the phonetic form of the word has changed, yet its etymological connection remains easily traceable even for non-linguists.

While the detailed pathways of Indo-European language diffusion across Europe are complex—entwined with migrations and cultural development—today more than 2.7 billion people, or approximately 36% of the world’s population, speak an Indo-European language. Old English, however, represents a more specialized domain of historical linguistics. Scholars estimate that English emerged as a distinct linguistic system around 450 CE, following the migration of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes to the British Isles. The Anglo-Saxons resisted assimilation with the indigenous population, driving it into the island’s interior, which allowed Celtic languages to persist in regions corresponding to modern Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. Research suggests that only about 80 Celtic words were fully incorporated into Old English, with only 12 of these universally accepted.

Latin also had a substantial influence on the development of English, as Britain was a Roman province from 44 BCE to 436 CE. Additionally, Old Norse influenced English during periodic Viking incursions and territorial control. Interestingly, both English and Russian ultimately trace their roots to the Indo-European language family. This common origin explains certain lexical and grammatical similarities between the two languages and illustrates why proficiency in Russian can significantly facilitate the study and understanding of English. Consequently, Russian functions as a linguistic catalyst in foreign language acquisition and occupies a central role in comparative philology.

In contemporary society, English lexicon increasingly permeates everyday communication, with slang and borrowed expressions widely adopted. This rapid lexical integration underscores the ongoing importance of cross-linguistic competence.

Turning to the history of the Russian language, it is one of the most widely spoken languages globally, ranking fifth in terms of the number of speakers. Moreover, it is the most prevalent Slavic language in Europe. Russian belongs to the East Slavic subgroup of the Indo-European family. In prehistoric periods, Slavic languages formed a complex network of dialects spoken by different tribes. Old Russian itself was subdivided into three ethnolinguistic groups: South Russian, North Russian, and Middle Russian (East Russian).

The emergence of the Old Russian literary language dates back to the 11th century CE, corresponding to the formation of Kievan Rus’. Greek culture had a certain influence on the

development of writing. However, the use of the Greek alphabet could not fully convey the phonetic and grammatical features of the Slavic language. Therefore, Byzantine Emperor Michael III ordered the creation of a new alphabet for the Old Church Slavonic language. This development facilitated the simplified translation of Greek religious texts into Slavic. The creation of the Russian literary language is traditionally associated with the Christian missionaries Cyril and Methodius.

The rapid spread of literacy and the development of language in Kievan Rus' elevated the Slavic language to a position comparable with the leading languages of the era. Between the 9th and 11th centuries, language served as a crucial unifying factor among Slavic peoples. One of the outstanding literary monuments of this period is *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, an epic recounting the campaign of Russian princes against the Polovtsians. The author of this work remains unknown.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, political fragmentation, the increasing influence of the Mongol-Tatar yoke, and frequent raids by Polish-Lithuanian forces led to significant changes in the Russian language. By this time, it had subdivided into three major groups: Great Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian. With the formation of the Moscow principality, certain reforms in written language emerged. Sentences became shorter, incorporating abundant colloquial vocabulary and folk proverbs. A prominent example of this style is *Domostroy*, printed in the mid-16th century. The introduction of printing played a significant role in the consolidation of the literary language.

In the 17th century, Polish became the source of scientific, technical, legal, and other terminologies across Europe. Gradually, the Russian language underwent modernization. In the early 18th century, the Russian alphabet was reformed, aligning it more closely with European conventions. From this point onward, the Russian literary language existed independently of ecclesiastical ideology.

During the second half of the 18th century, French influence in Europe increased, which contributed to the Europeanization of Russian society. Around the same period, Mikhail V. Lomonosov introduced new norms for the literary language, establishing a system of styles and unifying various forms of Russian speech, including official, oral, and regional variants. Other writers who significantly influenced the development of Russian in the 18th–19th centuries included Fonvizin, Derzhavin, Karamzin, Gogol, Lermontov, and, most notably, Pushkin. Aleksandr S. Pushkin fully revealed the richness and beauty of the Russian language, liberating it from stylistic constraints.

Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Central Federal District, Doctor of Philosophy, and member of the Union of Writers of Russia, M.M. Zyazikov, spoke on the role of the Russian language in the modern world as follows:

The role of the Russian language in contemporary conditions is becoming increasingly significant due to the continuous changes occurring both in the country and globally. The history of our planet objectively demonstrates that a great, unique, and distinctive country such as Russia has been, is, and will remain a powerful state, despite repeated external challenges. Historically, Russian has served and continues to serve as a language of interethnic communication, bridging linguistic barriers among representatives of different ethnic groups within a multinational state. The mutual penetration of national cultures only contributes to its strengthening and enrichment.

In the context of globalization, English has functioned as the universal language of international communication for several decades: in literature, documentation, scientific forums, political and economic negotiations of various formats, and, notably, in the Internet, which originated with predominantly English-language content.

Conclusions. Human history demonstrates the dynamic shifts in linguistic leadership in international communication: in the ancient world, Greek; subsequently, Latin in Europe and Arabic in Asia, which maintained their dominant positions until the Late Middle Ages; in the 19th century, French; and in the 20th century, English. However, times change. Only 20–25 years ago, it was unimaginable that guidebooks would be published, and shop or bank signs displayed, in Russian. Today, such practices are common across most European Union countries, as well as in the tourist zones of several Asian countries. Alongside English, German, and Japanese, Russian-language announcements are made in airports worldwide.

A particularly important and illustrative development in the status of global languages is the creation of Russian-language websites on the World Wide Web. This is now a reality. Russian is among the most widely spoken languages globally. By the number of speakers, it ranks fifth in the world after Chinese, Hindi (together with closely related Urdu), English, and Spanish. According to other estimates, Russian ranks third in terms of total speakers (over 500 million), after Chinese (over 1 billion) and English (750 million). Russian is studied to some extent in universities and schools in more than 140 countries worldwide.

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