

# ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE CONDITIONS OF SOVEREIGN UZBEKISTAN

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## Abstract:

The Russian language in Uzbekistan implements linguistic communication among the multinational population. Knowledge of the Russian language affects career growth for every person.

**Keywords:** Russian language, language situation, intercultural communication, language community.

## РОЛЬ И ФУНКЦИИ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА В УСЛОВИЯХ СУВЕРЕННОГО УЗБЕКИСТАНА

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## Аннотация:

Русский язык в Узбекистане реализует языковую коммуникацию среди многонационального населения. Владение русским языком сказывается на росте в карьерном плане для каждого человека.

**Ключевые слова:** русский язык, языковая ситуация, межкультурная коммуникация, языковое сообщество.

The current linguistic situation in Uzbekistan lies in the prestige of knowledge of the Russian language among representatives of Uzbek nationality, which contributes to the spread of the Russian language in Uzbekistan. The role and significance of the Russian language presupposes an initial basic position for the implementation and increase of linguistic and intercultural contacts among many countries and peoples. The development of science, technology and education in Uzbekistan provides a reason to maintain rational respect for the Russian language. The Russian language in Uzbekistan implements linguistic communication among the multinational population.

Knowledge of the Russian language affects career growth for every person. The process of translating documents from Uzbek into Russian, document flow and office work in government bodies is underway. The Russian language, according to Article 35 of the CIS Charter of January 22, 1993, serves as the language of the commonwealth for the functioning of office work. This fact allows us to assume that the same settings are assumed for the Russian language



as for the state language. All members of the CIS, including Uzbekistan, have assumed responsibilities in teaching, education, culture and the media (mass media) to prevent interethnic conflicts and support mutual understanding.

Today in Uzbekistan, the media are published in two languages: Uzbek and Russian. Thus, the leading role in preserving the Russian language through the media is given to the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and commercial advertising. Regarding the latter, it can be noted that on almost all signs, billboards, banners, flyers, and stickers in Tashkent, advertising information is often published in two languages. Three languages are used on the Internet portals of the Uzbek government: Russian as an interethnic language, Uzbek as a state language and English as a foreign language. A significant part of the population uses the Russian version. While the state language is actively popularized in the region, the Russian language still has a place in the media. It is also noted that some Uzbek realities, which include the Russian language, enrich the vocabulary. The vision of the world is changing: for example, in Russian-language versions of the media there are headlines that contain traditional Uzbek words: Navruz, samsa, halim, sumalak, mahalla, Oliy Majlis

Today in Uzbekistan, the Russian language also serves as a social sign. For example, residents of Tashkent often find it easier to use Russian in everyday life, while residents of rural areas usually use Uzbek. This does not apply to individual regions, enclaves and territories with compact residence of representatives of certain nationalities: Tajiks, Karakalpaks. In such conditions, linguistic communication is conducted in their native language.

Representatives of many nationalities live in the Republic of Uzbekistan, among which the majority of the population speaks Russian. Thanks to the Russian language, friendly relations are maintained in countries in the post-Soviet space. In turn, this is stimulated both by the economic sphere and by a common language in the scientific, cultural spheres, and in the media.

The functioning and importance of the Russian language in the modern realities of Uzbekistan 42 spheres of public activity in the region. The development of science, technology and education in Uzbekistan contributes to maintaining respect for the Russian language. Today, the importance of the Russian language in Uzbekistan influences the communicative and information function of the country. The trend in relations in the field of education between Uzbekistan and Russia deserves special attention. As a result, it is worth noting that Uzbek students have the opportunity to study at higher educational institutions in Russia. The number of grants provided for Uzbekistan is steadily increasing. Teachers from Russia come to Tashkent to teach Uzbek students the Russian language using the latest pedagogical technologies. As a result of the work done, today there are 10 branches of Russian higher educational institutions operating in Uzbekistan, which include MGIMO, REU. G.V. Plekhanov.

In terms of cultural development, a number of poets and honored cultural figures continue their creative activities in Russian in Uzbekistan. Their number includes such famous people as Victoria Osadchenko, Alexander Fainberg, Vadim Muratkhanov, Sanjar Yanyshhev, Lyudmila Bakirova. In addition, about 10 theaters have a Russian-language repertoire and stage their performances for a wide range of audiences. Among the latest events that affect the support of



the language situation for the Russian-speaking population of Uzbekistan, we can note the “Class!” project. (“Zŷr!” translated in Uzbek). This event was organized in cooperation between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Education of Uzbekistan and the Alisher Usmanov Foundation “Art, Science and Sports”. The essence of the event is to develop knowledge of the Russian language. Trends of this kind affect the study and consolidation of the Russian language in the region. In turn, this is reflected in the partnership between Russia and Uzbekistan, which is noticeable in the field of quality education by qualified specialists. The policy pursued by the Republic of Uzbekistan demonstrates a careful attitude towards both the state language and other languages. The current linguistic situation in Uzbekistan lies in the prestige of knowledge of the Russian language among representatives of the titular nationality. It is not only prestigious, but also a language of interethnic communication, fulfilling the role of a lingua franca with functional international significance.

An important conclusion from all of the above is the identification of a trend towards the spread of the Russian language in Uzbekistan. In turn, development presupposes an initial basic position for the implementation and increase of linguistic and intercultural contacts among many countries and peoples. The development of science, technology and education in Uzbekistan provides a reason to maintain rational respect for the Russian language. Ultimately, the Russian language in Uzbekistan implements linguistic communication among the multinational population.

The reasonable majority of people now living in the so-called post-Soviet space agree, calling the collapse of the Soviet Union one of the greatest disasters of the twentieth century, which influenced the fate of millions of citizens of the former superpower, caused many interethnic and religious conflicts and a huge flow of population migration. This event launched the process of reintegration in all spheres of life, and among many problems, one of the main ones was the problem of the educational space, which led to a change in the status of the Russian language, and, consequently, to a change in the conditions for its functioning in the educational environment of the CIS countries

Let us recall that the process of forming the educational space of the Russian Empire in the Central Asian region on the basis of the Russian language, as an intercultural communication factor, began in the 70–80s. XIX century with the creation of Russian-native schools, which marked the beginning of teaching the Russian language to the local population. Uzbek researchers of the Soviet era recognized that with the arrival of the Russian Empire in the Central Asian lands, education and infrastructure in the broadest sense of the concept began to develop here.

But special attention to the development of the education system began to be paid in Central Asia from the first years of Soviet power. In the 20–30s, teaching of national (native) languages was mainly cultivated and expanded, and writing was developed for previously unilliterate peoples. Historian O.G. Zhukova notes an important feature of the process of eliminating illiteracy deployed throughout the entire country, the entire USSR - first of all, citizens of the young Soviet state were obliged to acquire literacy in their native language! And also in Russian, which has become the language of interethnic communication of a multinational



country (Zhukova, 2018). By the end of the 30s. The study of the Russian language is officially recognized as compulsory for national schools. In the 30s–80s. XX century The fundamental principles of teaching the Russian language to non-Russian children were formulated, general and specific teaching methods were developed. A single methodological educational space was formed and existed before the collapse of the Union, uniting all the peoples of the USSR, which was based on common programs, since common unified requirements were put forward and ensured for different conditions.

However, in the 90s. The growth of national self-awareness and the desire to isolate from the common communicative space at the initial stage of the formation of independence of the former republics of the Union were marked by a negative attitude towards the Russian language, even to the point of refusal to study it. According to the law “On the State Language” in Uzbekistan, adopted in 1989, the Uzbek language was declared the only state language, but the role of the Russian language as a language of interethnic communication was preserved. With the adoption of amendments to this law in 1995 and in 2004, the Russian language became only one of the foreign languages studied in schools and universities of the republic.

Only the most conscious citizens of the country understood the full drama of what was happening and even tried to resist it. Many people remember the touching story of Russian television filmed in Uzbekistan at that time - an elderly Uzbek woman, on her own initiative, in her own home began to teach Russian to everyone, explaining her action by the fact that many important publications, including world classics and educational literature, were simply not published in Uzbek, and people should not impoverish themselves by ignorance of them.

But an outflow of Russian-speaking specialists began from the republic. According to statistics, since the late 1980s, almost 150 thousand specialists have left the country. The Russian language was being squeezed out of business and social circulation in the republic. The number of schools with Russian as the language of instruction has more than halved. Recent decades in Uzbekistan have been accompanied by processes of a steady decline in the level of qualifications of school teachers and university teachers, both in the Uzbek and Russian languages. In fact, teaching aids for the subjects were not published; teachers were forced to use publications from the Soviet period, which were becoming obsolete. The number of teaching hours for teaching the Russian language decreased significantly. In national schools of Uzbekistan, the Russian language is studied only 2 hours a week (the same number of hours is allocated for studying the state language in Russian schools), which in no way contributes to the development of this language. According to numerous wishes of parents, starting in 2002, Uzbek schools began to introduce an optional Russian language course: an additional 1 hour per week. Even in Russian-language schools, 8-10 hours a week are allocated for teaching Russian language and literature. On average, 1-2 hours per week is less than what is provided for in the Russian program for schools in the Russian Federation.

Today, most Uzbeks try to send their children to Russian-language schools. And there are objective reasons for this. Parents understand that their children should not grow up in a kind of cultural isolation; knowledge of the Russian language will give them the opportunity to receive the best higher education, apply for vacancies, perhaps in Russia or in such a promising





industry for Uzbekistan, tourism, to participate in the creation and development of the future economic cooperation with the Russian Federation, which also has great prospects.

Today, up to 40% of the population of Uzbekistan consider themselves “bilingual” (speaking both Russian and Uzbek). The number of people fluent in spoken Russian is about 13 million people. According to employees of the Roszarubezhcenter representative office in Uzbekistan, the demand for holding various events in Russian is very high. “Roszarubezhcenter” provides several schools with textbooks and dictionaries, organizes permanent language courses of the Russian language, and in the foreseeable future intends to create extended-day groups in Uzbek schools, where Russian language clubs, circles for lovers of the Russian word, and much more will operate

In the area of the Internet, Uzbek and Russian languages are used simultaneously; there is both a version in Uzbek and Russian. On official websites such as the Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the website of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, etc., a trilingual version is used - Uzbek, Russian and English are used together. It is interesting to note that on the Internet, users mainly communicate in Uzbek, while access to resources is mainly provided in Russian. We can say that in this area the Russian language has a great advantage.

Thus, the need for the Russian language remains quite high, although the state has done everything for decades to leave this need unsatisfied. But Uzbeks hope that Russia will realize the need to create programs to maintain the Russian language.

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