

RUSSIAN AS A TRULY FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Introduction

The paper analyses different ways of studying and acquiring Russian as a foreign language that can be observed among students with different learning experience.

According to Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the majority of foreign students in Russia represent CIS countries, with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan taking top 3 places (China takes the fourth).

With the dominant position and prevailing of the national language, the role of Russian has become less significant in CIS. The students do not tend to use Russian in everyday life and have certain difficulties discussing the academic subjects due to the language barrier and the habit of relying on the national language.

In former soviet republics, due to historical and cultural regions Russian is still spoken by older generations who studied in Soviet schools. The modern generation of young people hear Russian almost every day but do not have a proper command of it.

Methods

The study is based on the observation and analysis of practical lessons with foreign students.

The statistic results were taken into consideration while preparation of the research: use of the Russian language in CIS countries, data about speakers of Russian in CIS countries.

Key findings

- ❖ Students from CIS countries form a very numerous group and their learning needs and peculiarities have to be taken into account.
- ❖ Passive learning experience of such students is important.
- ❖ 'False beginners' face more difficulties in structural aspects of language but adapt easierto speaking and listening, have less fear and lower language barrier than 'pure beginners'.
- ❖ Cultural adaptation of students from CIS is easier as many CIS countries including Russia still share common background regarding literature, mass culture, holidays, traditions, history.

Discussion

The important factor for CIS students are:

- the reducing number of schools that offer education in Russian;
- still a big number of native and bilingual speakers of Russian in the society;
- often Russian words are used as barbarisms without proper grammar;
- strong ties between CIS countries.

Some schools include Russian as a special discipline but the subjects are taught in the state language. At the same time urban youth is often a very mobile and curious part of the society and young people tend to 'snatch' the language from other sources: big part of citizens speaking Russian as native or near-native, Russian music and social media.

Having come to Russia for study they may be defined as 'false beginners'. They have the **passive knowledge** of Russian in their background which can be very helpful in mastering the language.

Students who never studied Russian surprisingly have certain benefits: the common mistakes have not yet formed, a completely different language environment serves as an encouraging factor.

On the other hand, students from CIS tend to **stick to their native language's morphological and syntactical norms**. Russian words were used like barbarisms or in a kind of combination of Kazakh and Russian, Uzbek and Russian. It is harder for them to use Russian words and restructure the sentences completely, according to the norms of the Russian language.

Conclusions

The learning background of students has to be taken into consideration while planning the lessons with the group. Not always but very likely students from CIS, even without formal knowledge of Russian, will acquire the language easier, having usual difficulties with writing and grammar but being quite fluent with speaking and listening.

A teacher should pay attention to some specific mistakes that may have resulted from combination of their native language and the variant of Russian peculiar for their region (that concerns grammar structures, local mistakes in lexical units).

In a mixed internationalgroup such students may become tutors for the rest of the group, which is both beneficial for them and effective for the class.

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