

Sociolinguistic aspects of teaching the Russian language in the multilingual educational space of the republic of Uzbekistan.

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ANNOTATION

This article explores the sociolinguistic dimensions of teaching the Russian language in the multilingual educational environment of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study examines the status of Russian within national language policy, patterns of bilingualism and multilingualism, and the role of Russian as a language of interethnic communication and academic mobility. Particular attention is given to language contact, code-switching, sociocultural adaptation, and the formation of communicative competence in educational institutions. The paper argues that effective Russian language instruction in Uzbekistan requires the integration of sociolinguistic awareness, culturally responsive pedagogy, and context-sensitive methodologies. Recommendations for improving curriculum design and teacher training in multilingual settings are proposed.

Keywords: *sociolinguistics; Russian language teaching; multilingual education; bilingualism; language policy; intercultural communication; Uzbekistan; code-switching; communicative competence.*

Uzbekistan is a linguistically diverse country where Uzbek functions as the state language, while Russian continues to play an important role in education, science, media, and professional communication. In major urban centers, especially Tashkent, Russian remains widely used in academic and business contexts. This sociolinguistic situation creates specific conditions for teaching Russian both as a second language and as a language of instruction in Russian-medium schools.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on classical sociolinguistic concepts. Edward Sapir emphasized the close relationship between language and culture, arguing that language reflects social reality. Joshua Fishman contributed

significantly to understanding language maintenance and shift in multilingual societies. Their ideas help explain the functional position of Russian in Uzbekistan today.

In the Russian pedagogical tradition, Evgeny Vereshchagin and Vitaly Kostomarov developed the concept of the interconnection between language and culture, stressing the importance of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching. Their approach is particularly relevant in the Uzbek context, where students often operate within multiple linguistic and cultural systems simultaneously.

Russian in Uzbekistan performs several important social functions. It serves as a means of interethnic communication among representatives of different national groups. It is widely used in higher education, scientific publications, and international cooperation. Educational reforms initiated under Shavkat Mirziyoyev have emphasized modernization, multilingual competence, and integration into the global academic community, which indirectly supports the continued relevance of Russian language education. Sociolinguistic stratification should also be considered. Access to Russian-language media, private tutoring, and urban educational infrastructure often determines the level of language proficiency. Rural schools may face shortages of qualified teachers or modern teaching materials. Addressing these inequalities requires systemic professional development programs and the creation of updated textbooks that reflect contemporary linguistic realities.

The dialogic concept of language developed by Mikhail Bakhtin highlights that meaning arises in interaction. This principle suggests that Russian language teaching should emphasize authentic communication, project-based learning, debates, and collaborative tasks. Such methods foster pragmatic competence and prepare students for real-life communication rather than purely academic exercises.

Another important aspect is language identity. For many students, proficiency in Russian is associated with academic success, career opportunities, and broader cultural access. At the same time, maintaining respect for the state language and national identity

is essential. A balanced multilingual model encourages additive bilingualism, where acquiring Russian strengthens rather than replaces Uzbek linguistic competence.

Digitalization has further transformed the sociolinguistic environment. Social networks, online platforms, and multimedia resources increase exposure to Russian-language content. Teachers can integrate digital tools, podcasts, online discussions, and interactive materials to enhance motivation and contextual learning. Digital communication also introduces new registers and informal speech patterns, which require critical linguistic awareness.

Bilingualism is a natural feature of Uzbek society. Many students grow up using Uzbek at home and Russian in educational or professional settings. Code-switching between languages is common in everyday communication and even in classroom interaction. From a sociolinguistic perspective, code-switching should be viewed not as a deficiency but as a communicative strategy that reflects linguistic flexibility and social adaptation. Teachers should recognize this phenomenon and incorporate it into teaching strategies rather than discourage it.

Sociocultural factors significantly influence the effectiveness of Russian language teaching. Differences between urban and rural schools, access to media resources, and family language environment all shape students' language proficiency and motivation. The dialogic nature of language, highlighted by Mikhail Bakhtin, underlines the importance of interaction and social context in developing communicative competence. Classroom communication should therefore be organized around meaningful dialogue rather than mechanical grammar practice.

Despite certain challenges, such as unequal language exposure and competition with English as a global language, Russian continues to maintain a stable and influential position in the educational system of Uzbekistan. The future of Russian language teaching depends on integrating sociolinguistic principles, promoting intercultural awareness, and improving teacher-training programs.

In conclusion, the multilingual educational space of Uzbekistan requires a balanced and socially informed approach to teaching Russian. Recognizing bilingual realities, respecting linguistic diversity, and applying communicative and culturally responsive methods will enhance the effectiveness of Russian language instruction and support students' academic and professional development.

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