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### Russian Language as a Tool for Social Integration among Foreign Students in Russia: An Informative Commentary

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#### Abstract

This paper examines the crucial role of the Russian language as a vital tool for social integration of foreign students in Russia. The paper argues that in a country like Russia with many foreign students, the need for proficiency in Russian language cannot be overemphasized. This is so because proficiency in Russian language plays a fundamental role in ensuring improved social interaction, increased job opportunities, understand cultural experiences and achieve academic success. Furthermore, the benefits of proficiency in Russian language among foreign students include effective communication and socio-cultural experiences that foster interpersonal relationship among the foreign students and the Russian citizens. Moreover, through cultural and linguistic adaptations (CLA) this article provides valuable insights into the role of Russian Language in facilitating social integration of

foreign students in Russia. Also, this paper argues that since language is used to express our feelings, ethos, cultural beliefs, religion, values, socio-political issues etc., it becomes paramount for international students of diverse origin, cultural identities, migrants, and tourists in Russia to leverage on the importance of Russian Language to overcome language barrier, cultural differences, difficulty in social interaction, and academic adjustment. The study recommends that language courses, language exchange programs and immersion strategy models can be employed. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of Russian Language proficiency, and how foreign students can take steps to improve their language skills and enhance their overall experience and academic performance in Russia.

**Keywords:** Russia, Language Proficiency, Russian Language, Foreign Students, Social Interaction

#### Introduction

Generally, Language is highly valued in every society because it is a medium of communication. Owing to this fact, Humans cannot do without language. This is because language is a primary mode of human expression. It is the hallmark of human existence in any society because language fosters mutual understanding among people of the world. It is pertinent to note that through the means of language, man interact with each other, express, feelings, thoughts, emotions, and exchange ideas and aspirations in the society. In view of the essence of language in human society, language has been variously defined by scholars, linguists and non- linguists<sup>[1, 2]</sup>.

According to Bamgbose Ganiu <sup>[3]</sup>, “language is the most significant tool in human existence. It is the means through which humans bond, and it is the distinct property that distinguished human beings from other creatures. Beyond being a means of communication, language serves as a carrier of world views, the instrument of ideologies and a tool for carving identities.” Relying on this submission, the importance of Russian language to foreign students in Russia cannot be overemphasized. This is so because Russian language plays a vital role in actualizing positive communication, mutual understanding, and a sense of belonging among people of diverse backgrounds, nationality and creed studying in Russia [Figure 1].



**Fig 1:** Importance of the Russian Language

It is instructive to note that Russian Language is gradually becoming a global language spoken throughout Europe. Thus, proficiency in the language is a condition for effective functioning and participation in Russian system of education. However, the role of Russian language as a bridge to inclusivity for interdisciplinary collaboration in Russia's multifaceted academic and professional context is anchored on the fact that Russian Language is becoming a global language spoken in the world and the syntax and diction of the language is not difficult. Many expressions in Russia are very interesting to understand and easily assimilated by foreigners. The forgoing implies that Russian language is recognized and utilized as a means of communication and a tool to propagate ideologies, culture, social and political values in a country that place high values on their language. Given its relevance as a national language of communication in Russia, the Imperative of communicating effectively using all the syntactic and semantic ideals cannot be overemphasized, especially to foreign students and migrants and diplomats who study the language as a second language.

Adejimola <sup>[4]</sup> opine that “language refers to the means through which members of a social group exchange ideas, information and the like, a means of self-expression, a powerful instrument of social interaction and the most potent means of sending and receiving information” In view

of this submission, it is significant to note that language occupies a central place in human society. Thus, clear understandings of Russian language create effective communication strategies for building resilience and addressing security concern among foreigners living in Russia. In a similar vein, Gomwalk <sup>[5]</sup> submits that “man cannot function without a language; all human activities have language at their nucleus.” To this end language is the basis of communication which enables human beings from different part of the world to corporate, interact and live in harmony among them. According to these linguists, language is a universal phenomenon peculiar to mankind. Human beings are the only animals to acquire a highly developed and complex system of communication.

Language as an aspect of communication belongs solely and strictly to humanity. The importance of language is further stressed by Onwuekwe <sup>[6]</sup> unequivocally states that “language play a “pivotal role in any human endeavor” The above view is corroborated by Iwara <sup>[7]</sup> who remarks that language and communications are the heart of human relations. It is on these bases that one can see the social relevance of Russian Language among foreign students who lives in Russia. This places an unavoidable task on all foreign students who must, as a matter of fact display spoken and written competence in the use of Russian language if they must navigate effectively within the hurdles of the academics stress in Russia. One set of belief about the Russian Language is that it is the official language of the country and enjoy wide acceptance because it is crucial unifier of the many linguistically differing people of the world who came to study and live in Russia. The Russian language describes ideas and feelings through symbols and words. This is why the language is important, arbitrary and structured yet it is flexible and dynamic.

Given the fact that the Russian language is the language of socio-economic, political, and social interaction and as well as the language of instructions in most Russia schools, the need to speak and write the language becomes increasingly necessary among international students and migrants in Russia. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the Russian Language shows that it has a communicative value with an orderly arrangement of recurring patterns developed into meaningful symbols and flows of sounds. Russia is a country with the second largest populations in the world. The Russian government places a lot of high value and emphasizes for foreigners and migrants to acquire their language for an effective interaction. This is because skilled communication enhances the most successful human interaction while failed communication can lead to unpleasant misunderstandings, rifts, and even conflicts of interest. The reason for this is not farfetched; it is because human beings are social animals. Furthermore the ideological inclination of Russians that the Russian language is superior serves as a vehicle by which they propagate their culture, social and politics to foreigners and migrants from different countries and cultural background. In light of this, Russian scholarship is an open door for students and migrants from other countries to embrace the Russian culture and language.

Since language is a cognitive aspect, it can therefore develop effectively as people interact with society <sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, it becomes imperative for those foreign students studying in Russia to endeavor to speak and write the language for them to be understood by others who are

intelligible in the same language. It should be noted that foreign students who fail to learn the basis of the Russian language and interact very well from Russians are short changing themselves in terms of access to the ever increasing benefits in Russia ranging from socio-economic integration and advancement in information and communication technology in Russia.

It is pertinent to note that language is a human activity, it is a form of behavior and it reflects behaviour that has occurred and causes behavior to occur. This is why language and culture has a close relationship. The understanding of this fact in Russia provides the basis why many foreigners struggle to learn the Russian language because it is a tool through which they can share feelings, ideas, and emotions with others. The social development theory by Vygotsky states, that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Thus, individuals develop language skills through interactions and performing activities. The Russian language is no doubt a bridge connecting the students to understand the social and cultural reality of Russian both in their academic pursuit and social integration.

### **The significant Role of the Russian Language to Foreign Students**

It is imperative to note that the Russian Language holds a significant role for foreign students, primarily due to its importance in international communication, facilitating intercultural understanding, and enhancing career prospects. Learning Russian can expand social circles enables communication with Russian-speaking individuals, improve adaptability in diverse cultural environments. Furthermore, fluency in Russian can be advantageous in various fields such as education, medicine, language Art, aerospace, and international collaboration among others.

The extent of the relevance of use of Russian Language to foreign students studying in Russian can by no means be overemphasized. This is so because Russian Language is crucial in facilitating social integration, cordial relationship and language development among foreign students in Russia. Previous studies carried out in Russia shows that proficiency in Russian language enables foreign students to achieve academic success with less stress because of the bridge in language barrier.

The overall impact of the language on the foreign students can be seen in many ways especially in their communication and relationship with the instructors, peers from Russia, and the local community. This engenders a sense of belonging and academic motivation for increased drive for quality performance. The use of some Russian words, sentences and phrase can be very difficult for the foreigners whose first language is English or any other language but in other words the benefits of it are very enormous and engaging. It goes beyond the essence of learning the language for academic purpose to a deep personal experience in Russia. The aim of this essay is to underscore the facts that Russia language is important, relevant and useful to the foreign students and migrants living in Russia. This is so because the total identity and embodiment of a country is underline on their language and culture. Moreover, skilled communication in the language of the host community engenders peace, harmony, social integration and human relations while failed communication can lead to unpleasant misunderstanding, suspicion and social conflict.

The vital role of Russian Language in ensuring social cohesion and advancement among foreign students and the Russian community facilitates collaboration, understanding and deep communication for an equitable society. It is important to note that the foreign students integrates very well once they are able to speak and write very well in the Russian Language. This is why every foreign student is enjoined to take a pre class on Russian language during their stay in Russia. This goes a long way to show that language is an instrument to reconfigure existing power boundaries for enhanced intercultural understanding and integration.

Also, the proficiency in Russian Language can create better opportunities for the foreign students in Russia and strength his or her relationship with Russian citizens. This is the reason why Russian language is a *sin qua non* for the foreign students to improve his/her cross border communication and relationship with other international students. The performance and overall wellbeing of international students studying in Russia clearly shows that proficiency in Russian Language has a vital role to play. In this regard, the language becomes a driving force for their academic success and economic wellbeing. This is a result of the global influence and significant role of the Russian language in the history of the country. The followings are the significant role of the Russian language among the foreign students and migrants living in Russian.

### **Conclusion**

The Russian language plays a pivotal role in fostering social integration among foreign students in Russia. As both a medium of communication and cultural immersion, proficiency in Russian enables students to engage more fully with academic life, build meaningful relationships, and navigate everyday experiences. It bridges cultural gaps, promotes mutual understanding, and enhances the overall educational journey. Thus, supporting language acquisition not only benefits individual learners but also strengthens the multicultural fabric of Russian universities. Emphasizing Russian as a tool for integration is essential in creating inclusive, supportive environments where all students can thrive academically and socially.

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