



DOI 10.22363/2618-8163-2021-19-3-271-284

Research article

Image characteristics of the Russian language in the aspect of “soft power” politics

Larisa V. Selezneva¹✉, Olga I. Severskaya², Levon N. Sahakyan³

¹*Russian State Social University,*

4 Vilgelma Pika St, bldg 1, Moscow, 129226, Russian Federation

²*Vinogradov Russian Language Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences,*

18/2 Volkhonka St, Moscow, 119019, Russian Federation

³*Pushkin State Russian Language Institute,*

6 Akademika Volgina St, Moscow, 117485, Russian Federation

✉ loramuz@yandex.ru

Abstract. The article examines the possible ways to promote the Russian language within the framework of the Russian state policy of “soft power”, which forms a positive image not only of the Russian world, but also of the Russian language itself. The relevance of the research area is determined by the need to adjust this policy to the current conditions, complicated by the information war. The authors proceed from the fact that, acting in two different qualities – as a tool and as the owner of “soft power” – the Russian language forms its image and reputation. Endowing the Russian language with the properties of a “soft power” actor, the goal of analyzing the mechanisms of forming the attractiveness of the Russian language in professional and “naive” advertising, comparing the models of its presentation and determining the specific indicators of attractiveness, is set. The examples of social advertising (both domestic and foreign), emphasizing the power and strength, spirituality and purity of the Russian language, the examples of advertising slogans invented by native speakers, to which methods of text and discourse analysis are applied, are given. The research is carried out on the corpus of slogans taken from advertising campaigns of the Russkiy Mir Foundation, advertisements of university educational projects, school contests for advertising the Russian language, polls initiated by the media. The “professional” and “naive” models of the Russian language social promoting are compared, and the latter assessed as the most creative and promising. “Naive” advertising seems to be a more effective tool of “soft power” policy, since it turns out to be more multidimensional, more meaningful and more human than professional advertising, and forms a more attractive image of the language.

Keywords: Russian language, promoting text, social advertising, naive native speakers, attractiveness indicators

Article history: received 05.02.2021; accepted 18.04.2021.

For citation: Selezneva, L.V., Severskaya, O.I., & Sahakyan, L.N. (2021). Image characteristics of the Russian language in the aspect of “soft power” politics. *Russian Language Studies*, 19(3), 271–284. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22363/2618-8163-2021-19-3-271-284>



Introduction

Good Russian language helps.
Advertising
of the Russkiy Mir Foundation

The process of forming the image of a country is directly related to the language and its role and competitiveness in the modern world. Choosing between the close concepts of the same semantic field *image – reputation*, we focus on *image*, since we are interested in the terminology of a marketing metaphor, which implies branding not only names and entire loci (cities, countries, and even continents, for example, the brand strategy of Africa “Artemy Lebedev Studios”) (Parshin, 2014: 29), but also intangible cultural concepts, in particular, such as the language of the nation. And in this sense, the image as a stereotypical concept turns is a really effective way of studying the mass consciousness. We define the image as the sum of impressions that are formed in the minds of people and affect the attitude to the denotation, while in contrast to the brand, whose axiological characteristics are always only positive, the image can also be negative, which is important for our research.

Acting as a tool of communication, language also forms its own image, which is socially conditioned and, as A.V. Olyanich noted, depends “on the characteristics of a particular society in which this image is formed – on its values, norms, traditions, attitudes, etc.” (Olyanich, 2007: 107). Russian has always served as a means of international, interethnic and intercultural communication, being one of the six official languages of the United Nations. In the post-Soviet space and abroad, it is positioned as one of the main instruments of the state policy of “soft power”, which contributes to forming a positive image of the Russian Federation and the so-called Russian World – an integrative transnational socio-cultural space with special cultural values and norms. Being the basic component of the Russian World, the Russian language acts “as one of the main tools for promoting and implementing the strategic foreign policy interests of the Russian Federation”¹ and becomes the object of study in various fields of humanitarian knowledge (Arefyev, 2014; Astafyeva, Kozlovtseva, 2017; Ivanchenko, Chimiris, 2020; Molodov, 2017; Khudorenko, 2020, etc.).

At the same time, the communicative function that provides an effective intercultural and interethnic dialogue, the cumulative function that preserves and transfers cultural experience, and the integrative function of the Russian language are put at the forefront. This is taken into account, for example, in the university programs “Ambassadors of the Russian language in the world” (Shevchenko, 2019), “Getting acquainted with Russia in Russian” (Arskaya, 2017), etc. The Russian language in this approach turns out to be “a universal translator of meanings, ensuring the cultural and civilizational unity of the CIS, linking national cultures

¹ The concept of state support and promotion of the Russian language abroad (approved by the President of the Russian Federation from November 3, 2015, No. Pr-2283). Retrieved March 3, 2021, from <https://http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/news/50644>

with the Russian world, and through it with the European cultural space with the help of ‘language constants’ ” (Vasilyeva et al., 2011: 103), and “universality” is interpreted as “an indication of a really special position of language practice among the whole set of social practices, where meaning generation occurs” (Ibid.). The advertising policy takes into account the signs of “Russianness” reflected in the public consciousness.

However, the reduction in spheres of using the Russian language in some countries and regions (Vasilyeva et al., 2011: 103)², the reduction in the number of native speakers over the past 20 years (Arskaya, 2017; Verbitskaya, 2015; Bovt, 2013)³ and, as a result, the decline in interest in the Russian language in the world has negatively affected the image of the Russian language, primarily in the post-Soviet space, where it has lost its dominant position (Arefyev, 2014: 899). Therefore, the urgent problem is to restore the reputation of the Russian language, create its positive image and attractiveness and identify the resources of the language as a “soft power”.

The term “soft power” was introduced by J. Joseph Nye, who used it to determine the ability of a person to get what he wants by bringing somebody to his side, and not by coercion or purchase: “It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” (Nye, 2004: 19). Being one of the tools of power, the concept of “soft power” has gone beyond the political sphere (McClory, 2015: 21–22), turning into a “complex set of instruments including everything from the economy and business, culture and education, the interaction between societies and individual relationships, to a set of other instruments” (Simonyi, Trunkos, 2014: 24) and even as a way of thinking (Ibid.).

Considering “soft power” as a concept, researchers distinguish in its structure such tools as the “image (brand)” of the actor – the owner of “soft power” and reputation, which is an indicator of the relative effectiveness of the concept implementation and represents the reverse side of the image (Pestsov, Bobylo, 2015: 112). The reputation of a language as “a public assessment, a general opinion about the qualities, advantages and disadvantages of someone or something” (Ozhegov, 1987: 553) is formed most often on the basis of objective information, for example, the number of native speakers (Molodov, 2017), the degree of prevalence (Arefyev, 2014; Verbitskaya, 2015)⁴, the number of foreign students in Russia (Arskaya, 2017). The image is often formed on the basis of subjective ideas about the language and can be determined by the attitude to the country and

² Arefyev, A.L., et al. (Comps.). (2020). *The index of the position of the Russian language in the world* (M.A. Osadchii, Ed.) (pp. 22–32). Moscow: Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language Publ. (In Russ.)

³ Dorofeev, N. (2020). Why the Russian language is losing its positions. *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, <https://www.pnp.ru/social/pochemu-russkiy-yazyk-utrachivaet-svoi-pozicii.html>; Arefyev, A.L., et al. (Comps.). (2020). *The index of the position of the Russian language in the world* (M.A. Osadchii, Ed.) (pp. 8–9). Moscow: Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language Publ. (In Russ.)

⁴ Artemyev, A. (2014). Battalion of linguistic offensive. *Lenta.ru*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, from <https://lenta.ru/articles/2014/01/21/russian/>

the political situation, ranging from admiration for the language (“great, powerful, truthful and free”⁵), to its rejection “Russian is simply an unsolved language”⁶, “The state of the Russian language at the end of the twentieth century is alarming. It seems that along with the depopulation of the country, there is a delexification of its language, a depletion of the vocabulary” (Epshtein, 2006). To create the image of an “immature language”, since the middle of the XX century, a comparison with the English language has been used, showing “the main difference in historical terms between the green Russian literary language and the mature English language, like a fig bursting at the seams: between a brilliant, but still insufficiently educated, and sometimes rather tasteless young man, and a venerable genius combining reserves of motley knowledge with complete freedom of spirit”⁷. In addition, the image of a language often depends on the reputational harm caused by the speech behavior of its speakers, these two concepts can be mistakenly identified⁸.

So, the image of the national language consists primarily of the following components: 1) subjectively evaluated characteristics of “language in action” – the ease/difficulty of learning, the properties of speech itself (for example, musicality and beauty or rough throat); 2) further – attributes associated with this language (proper names, material culture artifacts, spiritual concepts, socio-political formations); 3) and finally connotative meanings – value judgments, often emotionally charged. Note that depending on the psychological attitudes and goals of the study, the sequence of these characteristics may be different. We can argue that the image of the Russian language is being affected in modern geopolitical battles: connotative meanings are attributed to the language, which are in no way related to the lexical meaning of the phrase “Russian language” and are neither consequences nor conclusions from it⁹.

⁵ Turgenev, I.S. (2020). *Poems in prose* (p. 80). Moscow: Detskaya Literatura Publ.

⁶ Melts, B. (Buensi, A.). (2008). *The Russian language has no future*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, from <https://proza.ru/2008/09/09/56>

⁷ Nabokov, V.V. (2014). *Postscript to the Russian edition of the “Lolita”* (p. 438). Saint Petersburg: Azbuka Publ. (In Russ.)

⁸ Sidorchik, A. (2019). “Poor Russian cloach”. HSE Professor spoke about the Russian language. *Argumenty i Fakty*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, https://aif.ru/society/media/ubogiy_kloachnyy_russkiy_prepodavatel_vshe_guseynov_vyskazalsya_o_yazyke

⁹ A recent example of manipulation with the Russian word *novichok*: the general public “Novichok” as the name of a certain terrible toxicant became known from the Hollywood political thriller “The Price of Fear” in 2002, but in 2018 after the incident in Salisbury, the word-symbol was reanimated and launched in the Western media. After that, it turned into an implicit translator of negativity, overgrown with connotations, and has gained the power of social influence. At the same time, in the Soviet secret program, as the British researcher Tim Hayward writes, these developments were coded completely differently: A-230 (1973) and A-232 (1975), and according to the statement of the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova, neither in the USSR nor in the Russian Federation “research and design and experimental developments under the code name ‘Novichok’ were never carried out.” Without evaluating the factual side of the “Salisbury poisoning” in any way, we would like to focus on its negative image component for the Russian language. See: <https://timhayward.wordpress.com/2018/04/01/update-to-briefing-note-doubts-about-novichoks>

Therefore, it is currently relevant to strengthen the attractiveness of the Russian language. Being an instrument of “soft power”, the Russian language, in our opinion, is at the same time its “actor” – the owner (adjusted for the personification of the language, correlated with a variety of specific actors – its native speakers) and forms its positive image and reputation with linguistic means.

The aim of this study is to analyze the mechanisms of forming the attractiveness of the Russian language and determining its positive image characteristics based on the proposed idea of the Russian language as an “actor” – the owner of “soft power”.

Methods and materials

The object of the study is professional and “naïve” advertising of the Russian language, which uses correlated, but different models of its representation. The authors analyzed the slogans of the advertising campaigns of the Russkiy Mir Foundation (15 units), advertising of literate speech in the undergrounds and other modes of transport (30 units), in school competitions (18 units), in social networks (12 units), as well as obtained as a result of a survey in the program “We speak Russian!” on the radio “Echo of Moscow” (58 units). When analyzing the material, we used, along with corpus, contextual analysis, semantic parameterization, a discursive research method based on understanding discourse as a process of text construction: the text is considered inseparably with the situation of its creation (as N. Phillips and S. Hardy (Phillips, Hardy, 2002) note, “texts do not have meanings by themselves”), together with the external conditions of its production. This gives reason to use the “selection mechanism” in the formation of “soft power” in the study. This mechanism involves ranking the levels of the object attractiveness: “attention – interest – benevolence – sympathy – admiration” (Pestsov, Bobylo, 2015: 112). Here external stimuli, i.e. attractive qualities of the object, are combined with the reaction caused by them.

Results

The study led to the following results:

- considering the Russian language as a conductor of the policy of “soft power”, it is necessary to talk not only about the image of the country, but also about the image of the language itself, about the tools for its promotion;
- one of those tools is advertising, which can be used to form the attractiveness of the language;
- two models of “soft power” were identified: the “naïve” promotional advertising model and the professional advertising model;
- the similarity and difference of these two models and the degree of their effectiveness are determined: “naïve” advertising seems to be more effective, since it forms a more attractive image of the language;
- indicators of attractiveness in “naïve” advertising are “sincerity”, “humanity” and “rejection of stereotypes”, typical for professional advertising.

Discussion

The survey held in 2015 among the Russians, compatriots abroad and foreigners in the social networks VKontakte and Facebook (Astafyeva, Kozlovitseva, 2017: 130), which was attended by 759 people from 69 countries of the world, showed that the respondents consider Orthodoxy (27%), traditions and customs (12%), literature (12%) and art (6%) to be the main elements of Russian culture, Russian cuisine was also mentioned; among moral and ideological qualities, there dominated strength of spirit, justice, freedom, love and friendship, firmness, kindness, mutual help and beauty; among the stereotypes, a special place was taken by a bear, a matryoshka, a balalaika, winter, a bath-house. For this article, we conducted a survey (March 2021), which was attended by 352 respondents – students of Moscow universities. Among the main components of the Russian culture people named the Russian language (38%), art and literature (18%) – at one end of the scale, the army and sports (4% each) – at the other. Between them are traditions and customs (10%), Orthodoxy (6%), cuisine (7%) and “other”. As for advertising slogans, the students showed their best qualities: love for their native language and country, creativity and sense of humor: *Touch the great – learn Russian. The Russian language is the wealth of the country. I don't care what the others do; I'm going to learn Russian! Is there a problem in life? – The Russian language will always help! Learn Russian, learn the power of a great people. Russian is the language of the soul. Speak not with your tongue and lips, but with your heart – speak Russian! The most important words in life are a hundred times more important when they are said in Russian.*

Professional advertising of the Russian language

Russian language advertising abroad (created at the request of Rossotrudnichestvo, International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (MAPRYAL), societies of Russian language lovers), as a rule, not only marks the number of native speakers of the Russian language (*300 million people speak Russian, and you?*) and the beauty of its tone (*the Russian language is beautiful!*), but also ruins stereotypes: first, the concept of *Russian* (*russskiy*) becomes broader than the concept of *Russia-based* (*rossiyskiy*) (Russian-does not mean Russia-based!), that emphasize the supranational and cross-cultural nature of the Russian language, and secondly, it is directly emphasized: *Language and culture are not the same as stereotypes.*

The latter was the slogan of an advertising campaign in Krakow in 2013, organised by David Lasut, teacher and propagandist of the Russian language. It was a large-scale campaign (billboards, “All-Polish Ball of Russian Language Lovers”, motocross “Krakow-Vladivostok”, art exhibitions), which had broad public response. In his interview, Lasut argues that he “promotes Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Siberia, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Baikal, samovar, Russian-Japanese matryoshka, open relations”, based on the belief that Russian should be “advertised” and “sold” as a fashion brand (cit. by: Ogórek, 2013).

There is not a lot of professional social advertising of the Russian language, but it is worth noting, first, the campaign of Russskiy Mir foundation, which took

place in 2007, in the Year of the Russian language, placed posters in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok and many other Russian cities. The campaign used statements about the Russian language of Russian classic writers. *There is a grace-giving power / In the consonance of living words, / And there is an incomprehensible, / Holy charm in them* (Lermontov); *And we will save you, Russian speech, / The Great Russian word...* (Akhmatova); *Sounding so wonderful in Pushkin, / Our Language writhes in anguish / When they send God-defying things / In it, in Russian* (Yevtushenko), etc. Secondly, we should mention the campaign “Let’s talk like Petersburgers”, which began in the same year on the initiative of the president of MAPRYAL and St. Petersburg State University, L.A. Verbitskaya, and continues until now. Within the framework of the campaign spelling and orthoepic norms were broadcast by advertising posters in the metro. Thirdly, we can point to the campaign “Literate trolleybus” organized in 2018 in Yaroslavl as part of public educational projects of Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushinsky by future professional creators – students of the Department of Communication Theory and Advertising.

“Popular” social advertising of the Russian language

In 2010-s, YouTube and social networks showed social advertising, criticising stereotypical ideas about native speakers’ responsibility for the fate of the language, the role of Russian in human relations¹⁰. Competitions are held to advertise the Russian language among Russian language teachers and students, mainly claiming that the language is the history of the people: *Language is the path to civilization and culture. Therefore, the study and preservation of the Russian language is not an idle occupation with nothing to do, but an urgent necessity; Russian is the united language of the Russian nation, but at the same time it is also the language of international communication in the modern world;* but also pleasing with “creativity”: *Your language is your life, your dreams, / You are no longer you without it; / Your language is like your mother, / Who you cannot humiliate, insult; / Your native language is your soul, your world, your ray, / Love it for the fact that it is powerful*¹¹. As you can see, the image of the Russian language in both domestic professional and “folk” advertising emphasizes its strength, unifying principle, spirituality, beauty and purity.

In 2013, the radio station “Ekho of Moscow” held a contest among the listeners of the program “We Speak Russian!” (O.I. Severskaya), who were asked to come up with advertising slogans to promote the Russian language. The results obtained can be considered relevant for assessing the “naïve” component in the ideas about Russian as an instrument of “soft power” policy: according to the research of the company Comcon, the daily audience of the radio station is approximately 900 thousand. There are about 1.8 million people in Moscow and

¹⁰ The Russian language: Social advertising. (2013). Retrieved March 12, 2021, from https://vk.com/video-48277274_165124147

¹¹ Russian language advertising. Methodical projects. (2020). Retrieved March 12, 2021, from <https://longsword.ru/sots-reklama-o-russkom-yazyke>

about 1.8 million in other regions of Russia, the potential is 46.835 million people, and the geographical, social and age coverage of the audience allows us to recognize the results of the study as statistically significant.

Focusing on Russian language dispersion, naive native speakers assign it place inside the Russian borders: *Be an insider in 1/8 of the world – learn Russian!* (some people, though, speak about the borders of the Soviet Union spreading the Russian language to 1/6 of the world) and abroad: *The Russian language is spoken far beyond the borders of Russia*; some people think on a global scale, building Napoleonic plans: *We will teach the whole world to speak Russian!* and considering: *Russian contains all the world beauty*; and others give the native language a cosmic scale: *Russian is the language of the Space*.

Many people build their advertising policy on the image of the Russian language as a symbol of openness of relations, both interpersonal: *Learn Russian, and we will be able to live in harmony and love each other*, and gender: *The most beautiful girls will be closer – learn Russian! If you want a Russian girlfriend – learn the Russian language!* Russian is also seen as a “recipe for happiness”, one of the slogans refers to the aphorism from the film “Let’s live until Monday” – “Happiness is when you are understood”: *If you want to be understood, learn Russian*. At the same time, the language itself appears in a personified image of a friend, as a means of communication: *You are not yet acquainted, but the Russian language is waiting for you; My language is my friend*. The advertisers also emphasize the special value of warm, responsive, informal relationships, which is manifested at the verbal level: *Let’s talk to you... in Russian?*

Many of the proposed slogans exploited stereotypes of Russian culture. One of the respondents decided to slightly modernize the traditional advertising model of the “Russian World” by placing portraits of famous compatriots and the slogan: *Russian language – and my language!* on the billboard. Thereby he emphasized the connection of any Russian language native speaker with the history and culture of Russia. Many appealed to Pushkin, advising: *Read Pushkin in Russian*, and offering to advertise our language with Pushkin's poems, for example: *I don’t like Russian speech without a grammatical error, as well as girl’s face without a smile*. This line turned out to be the most popular, which indicates the proximity of the non-dogmatic attitude of “naïve” native speakers to their language. When referring to Pushkin, the respondents paraphrased classics – for example, Mayakovsky: *I would have learned Russian only because Pushkin spoke it*, or quoted them – one of the “naive advertisers” remembered Akhmadulina: *And Pushkin looks affectionately, / And the night has passed, and the candles went out, / And the delicate taste of native speech / So purely cools my lips*. As a whole, we can say that in this advertising cluster, Pushkin turned out to be “our everything”, his name and etalon Russian language are nearly the same (which corresponds to the linguistic ideas about Pushkin’s language as a starting point in the development of the modern Russian literary language).

There were quite a lot of references to the classics (here the contestants followed the established practice in advertising discourse). We saw the periphrase of

Mayakovsky's advertising text about the pacifier nipples of "Rezinotrest" (*There has been no better language, I'm ready to chat until my old age*), allusions to Chekhov (*Everything should be perfect in a person: the soul, thoughts, and the Russian language*) and M. Cervantes (*Nothing is so cheap and at the same time so expensive as the knowledge of the Russian language*). It is noteworthy that there was not a single appeal to Turgenev and his words about the "great, powerful, truthful and free Russian language": naïve native speakers consider them "vulgar" and in the worst sense of the word "stereotyped", turned into "folk words" of a "song" boring to death (and this point is proved by such examples of teachers' "creativity" as the *great, mighty, truthful, free, life-giving spring*).

A whole block among the slogans submitted for the competition is formed on the ambiguity and associative potential of the lexeme *value*, indicating both the phenomena of *morality, culture* and their *importance, significance*, and the *commodity value, price* in its economic sense, as well as the ambiguity of the lexemes *treasure, wealth*. The first group of the slogans is formed by the following appeals: *The Russian language is the key to the treasury of Russian culture; Find your treasure! Dive into Russian literature – and you will emerge a decent person!* and the tips: *Read Russian classics – and you will get richer*. The second group contain slogans addressed to representatives of foreign countries who came to Russia to earn money: *After learning the language of Russia, feel free to go to it!*, hinting at the "broken Russian" of migrant workers: *You know Russian – you earn well* – the slogan is encouraging and motivating for migrant workers. Other slogans were addressed to the entire consumer society, for example: *Consume... Russian*. Russian itself is positioned exclusively as the greatest value, immeasurable in the economical sense, but at the same time advertising templates introduce a metaphor of market value: *A villa in Miami is \$ 1,000,000, a sports car is \$ 500,000, a private yacht is \$ 100,000, the native language is priceless* (a variation on the popular MasterCard advertising), cf.: *You can learn any language, but know that the first, Russian is the most expensive*.

The resulting selection did not contain any examples that involved the concept of Russian cuisine. But there was a slogan using a culinary metaphor and reminding of the rules of the Russian language: *Russian is a delicious language, try it*. The author of this slogan seems to provoke purists who believe that it is impossible to talk delicious, and at the same time focuses attention on the idea of good taste, a developed sense of beauty.

If you speak Russian – your horizons will not be narrow – one of the listeners of Echo wrote, appealing to intellectual values. This parameter correlates with the data of Pushkin State Russian Language Institute demonstrating the high position of the Russian language in world science – in the honorable fifth place¹². Some participants of the competition contrasted intelligence and arrogance: *Don't be arrogant – speak Russian!* Many compared the language and the so-called IQ:

¹² Arefyev, A.L., et al. (Comps.). (2020). *The index of the position of the Russian language in the world* (M.A. Osadchii, Ed.) (p. 12). Moscow: Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language Publ. (In Russ.)

Knowledge of the language is an indicator of the level of intelligence. Overcoming the complexity of the Russian language is a task for intellectuals. Russian is one of the most difficult languages in the world. Are you weak? Prove that you are genius: be able to learn Russian. Moral reward will definitely follow. They also associated the Russian language with professional success: *Language is a tool of thinking. Russian is the language of professionals. Russian is the language of the best programmers, and professional creativity: Russian is a creative language (practically – the language of creators).*

The slogans also reflected the “two troubles” of the Russian language – thoughtless borrowings, ridiculed in the “harmful” appeal: *Let us speak Russian with English words – let it become a British language!*, and obscenity: *Spit out three letters, say in Russian! And what obscenities can compare with the Russian ones!*

They offered to make a poster where kids would call on adults: *Speak to us in Russian correctly!* The concepts of life and death were emphasized: *We grow up with Russian; With the death of the language, the nation dies. Don't become a gravedigger, learn Russian.*

Language and national identity are almost synonymous for “naïve advertisers”: *My homeland is the Russian language!* And this is not accidental: *only in your native language you can express yourself*, as one of the listeners said, *with all shades of meaning.* Hence the appeals: *The Russian, learn Russian! Learn Russian, don't be an Olban! If you love the Russian language, don't disfigure it.*

Note that “naïve” advertising is based on the concept of “soft”, not “hard” impact, motivating both Russian citizens and people of near and far abroad *to learn* the Russian language. As Yu.E. Prokhorov notes, today “the world does not speak Russian: whether we like it or not, it speaks English and more and more Chinese” (Prokhorov, 2019: 7), he prefers the slogan “*Teach (or learn) Russian!*” to the “*shattered dream of a certain period of teaching Russian as a foreign*” (Ibid.). Motivation – a state of cognitive and emotional motivation that leads to a conscious decision of acting (Williams, Burden, 1997: 23), both in advertising the Russian language and in teaching Russian as a foreign language – is based on the same external factors, such as the prospects of studying in the country of the language, the successful use of communication skills in contacts with Russian specialists, fruitful career, opportunities for friendly and personal relationships, deeper immersion in the national culture and history, as well as the internal need for cognitive and emotional effort. The effectiveness of combining a heuristic approach to language and the method of “dialogue of cultures” (Uskova, Sahakyan, 2019: 16) is confirmed by the American physicist and computer scientist Douglas Hofstadter in his book “Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid”, awarded the Pulitzer Prize, where he tells about his translation of the “encyclopedia of Russian life” – “Eugene Onegin” by Pushkin – as an example of incredible emotional and cognitive motivation to enjoy Pushkin’s novel in verse in the original and “acquire” it already in his native language (Hofstadter, 2001: IX–XV): “Why do I have to translate the book, which has already been translated in the best way?”

Hofstadter continues: My answer is simple: it is done because of love” (Ibid.: XIII). Thus, the basis of forming the attractiveness of the Russian language is learning, cognitive effort, culture, references to Russian literature, love.

Conclusion

The material considered shows that the “naïve” model of promoting the Russian language, largely focusing on professional social advertising (and using its techniques and templates), at the same time differs from it. On the one hand, it emphasizes the power and inclusiveness, spirituality, and beauty of the Russian language as a conductor of Russian culture and traditions. On the other hand, “naïve” slogans depart from stereotypes, external attributes of “Russianness”. The most important role for “folk advertisers” is to create strong, open human relationships, language is the most reliable friend, helping to establish mutual understanding and marry for love. The Russian language purity and beauty in its “etalon” (but not “conventional”) form are associated with preserving national identity, “naïve” native speakers of Russian tend to make fun of their own and other people’s mistakes. They emphasize not only the moral, but also the intellectual value of the language, because the Russian language, in a naive view, is not only a spiritual and cultural wealth, but also a creator of quite material goods. Thus, the “naïve” promoting advertising model turns out to be more multi-dimensional, deeper and more human, and as a result – has more “soft power” than the professional model used in social advertising created at the request of state.

At the same time, we can mention the coincidence of the main “topics” used in teaching Russian as a foreign language by the method of intensive immersion and in the “naïve” advertising model. It makes it possible and perspective to interact between the two powerful tools for promoting and strengthening the image of the Russian language.

As for the possible channels for image advertising distribution, when choosing them, it is worth taking into account the data on the global competitiveness of the Russian language, reflected in the study conducted at Pushkin State Russian Language Institute. Thus, the Russian language has the strongest position in social networks, on the Internet in general, in the media, in international organizations where it is a working language. Accordingly, the so-called “viral” texts and videos, popular scientific articles and journalistic research, as well as socio-political discourse can become effective transmitters of advertising that contributes to forming an attractive image of the Russian language and culture.

References

- Arefyev, A.L. (2014). The Russian language in the world. Past, present, future. *Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, 84(10), 896–903. (In Russ.)
- Arskaya, Yu.A. (2017). Promotion of the Russian language abroad as an instrument of “soft power”: The role of universities in the implementation of the Concept of State Support and Promotion of the Russian Language Abroad. *Irkutsk State University Proceedings. Series: Political Science. Religious Studies*, 22, 141–148. (In Russ.)

- Astafyeva, O.N., & Kozlovtseva, N.A. (2017). State policy in the sphere of the Russian language in the context of the Russian world. *Knowledge. Understanding. Skill*, (3), 122–137. (In Russ.)
- Bovt, G. (2013). Soft power of the Russian word. *Russian word.ru*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/myagkaya-sila-russkogo-slova/>
- Epshtein, M. (2006). The Russian language in the light of creative philology of research. *Znanya*, (1). Retrieved March 12, 2021, <https://znamlit.ru/publication.php?id=2854>
- Hofstadter, D. (2001). *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An eternal golden braid*. Samara: Bakhrahk-M Publ. (In Russ.)
- Ivanchenko, V.S., & Chimiris, E.S. (2020). The Russian language in the post-Soviet space as a factor of politics. *Issues of Politology*, 10(8(60)), 2473–2486. (In Russ.)
- Khudorenko, E.A. (2020). Language policy of Russia in the context of Eurasian integration. *Political Science*, (2), 163–182. (In Russ.)
- McClory, J. (2015). *The Soft Power 30 report. A global ranking of Soft Power*. Retrieved March 12, 2021, https://softpower30.com/wpcontent/uploads/2018/07/The_Soft_Power_30_Report_2015-1.pdf
- Molodov, O.B. (2017). The Russian language as a tool of “soft power” in the countries of Central Asia. *Discourse-Pi*, 1(26), 93–100. (In Russ.)
- Nye, J.S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Ogórek, P. (2013). He wants to change the way we think about Russia. “Russian, not Russian.” *Kobieta Onet*. (In Polish.) Retrieved March 12, 2021, <https://kobieta.onet.pl/chce-zmienic-myslenie-o-rosji-rosyjski-nie-ruski/3pwx>
- Olyanich, A.V. (2007). *Presenting the theory of discourse*. Moscow: Gnozis Publ. (In Russ.)
- Ozhegov, S.I. (1987). *The dictionary of the Russian language: Approximately 57,000 words* (N.Yu. Shvedova, Ed.). Moscow: Russkii Yazyk Publ. (In Russ.)
- Parshin, P.B. (2014). *Territory as a brand: Marketing metaphor, identity and competition*. Moscow: MGIMO-Universitet Publ. (In Russ.)
- Pestsov, S.K., & Bobylo, A.M. (2015). “Soft power” in world politics: The problem of operationalizing the theoretical concept. *Bulletin of the Tomsk State University. History*, 2(34), 108–114. (In Russ.)
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). What Is Discourse Analysis? *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Prokhorov, Yu.E. (2019). Foreword. In O.A. Uskova, L.N. Saakyan (Eds.), *The World Speaks Russian (Theoretical and Applied Aspects of Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language)*. Moscow: Russkaya rech' Publ. (In Russ.)
- Shevchenko, Ya.N. (2019). “Ambassadors of the Russian language in the world” and the foreign language policy of the Russian Federation. *Azimuth of Scientific Research: Economics and Administration*, 8(1(26)), 58–61. (In Russ.)
- Simonyi, A., & Trunkos, J. (2014). Eliminating the hard/soft power dichotomy. In A. Jehan, A. Simonyi (Eds.), *Smarter Power: The Key to a Strategic Transatlantic Partnership*. Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations.
- Uskova, O.A., & Saakyan, L.N. (2019). *The world speaks Russian (theoretical and applied aspects of teaching Russian as a foreign language)*. Moscow: Russkaya rech' Publ. (In Russ.)
- Vasilyeva, T.V., Saakyan, L.N., & Uskova, O.A. (2011). The Russian language as a factor organizing the Russian cultural space in the CIS countries. *Vestnik TSMO MGU. Filologiya. Kul'turologiya. Pedagogika. Metodika*, (2), 103–109. (In Russ.)
- Verbitskaya, L.A. (2015). The Russian language as a state language: Current state and measures for its strengthening and development. *Liberal Arts in Russia*, 4(2), 90–100. (In Russ.)

Williams, M., & Burden, R. (1997). Motivation in language learning: A social constructivist perspective. *Cahiers de l'APLIUT*, (3), 19–27.

Bio notes:

Larisa V. Selezneva, Doctor of Philology, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Humanities Faculty, Russian State Social University. *Research interests*: discourse, pragmalinguistics, business correspondence, rhetoric. The author of 174 publications, 4 monographs. E-mail: loramuz@yandex.ru

Olga I. Severskaya, PhD in Philology, leading researcher, Department of Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Poetics, Vinogradov Russian Language Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences. *Research interests*: corpus research, pragmalinguistics, media linguistics, functional stylistics, linguistic poetics. The author of 120 publications, 5 monographs. E-mail: oseverskaya@yandex.ru

Levon N. Sahakyan, PhD in Philology, Assistant Professor, Department of General and Russian Linguistics, Pushkin State Russian Language Institute. *Research interests*: semantics and pragmatics of speech communication, allegorical communication, cultural linguistics, bilingualism. The author of 50 publications, 4 monographs. E-mail: sahalev@mail.ru

DOI 10.22363/2618-8163-2021-19-3-271-284

Научная статья

Имиджевые характеристики русского языка в аспекте политики «мягкой силы»

Л.В. Селезнева¹✉, О.И. Северская², Л.Н. Саакян³

¹Российский государственный социальный университет,
Российская Федерация, 129226, Москва, ул. Вильгельма Пика, д. 4, стр. 1

²Институт русского языка имени В.В. Виноградова РАН,
Российская Федерация, 119019, Москва, ул. Волхонка, д. 18/2

³Государственный институт русского языка имени А.С. Пушкина,
Российская Федерация, 117485, Москва, ул. Академика Волгина, д. 6

✉ loramuz@yandex.ru

Аннотация. Рассматриваются возможные пути продвижения русского языка в рамках российской государственной политики «мягкой силы», формирующей позитивный образ не только русского мира, но и самого русского языка. Актуальность темы определяется необходимостью корректировки этой политики в создавшихся внешнеполитических условиях, осложняющихся информационной войной. Выступая в двух разных качествах – как инструмент и как обладатель «мягкой силы», русский язык формирует свой имидж и репутацию. Наделяя русский язык свойствами актора-обладателя «мягкой силы», ставится цель – проанализировать механизмы формирования привлекательности русского языка в профессиональной и «наивной» рекламе, сопоставить модели его представления и определить, что конкретно выступает в качестве индикаторов привлекательности. Приводятся примеры социальной рекламы (отечественной и зарубежной), подчеркивающей мощь и силу, духовность и чистоту русского языка, и примеры рекламных слоганов, придуманных носителями языка, к которым применяются методы текстового и дискурсивного анализа. Сравнение «профессиональной» и «наив-

ной» модели продвижения русского языка в обществе и мире позволяет оценить последнюю как наиболее креативную и перспективную. «Наивная» реклама представляется более эффективным инструментом политики «мягкой силы», так как оказывается более многоаспектной, более содержательно глубокой и человечной, чем профессиональная реклама, и формирует более привлекательный образ языка.

Ключевые слова: русский язык, мягкая сила, рекламный текст, социальная реклама, наивные носители языка, индикаторы привлекательности

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 05.02.2021; принята к печати 18.04.2021.

Для цитирования: Селезнева Л.В., Северская О.И., Саакян Л.Н. Имиджевые характеристики русского языка в аспекте политики «мягкой силы» // Русистика. 2021. Т. 19. № 3. С. 271–284. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22363/2618-8163-2021-19-3-271-284>