

Education Policy of the Russian Federation in Teaching Co-official Languages

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ABSTRACT

The research topic relevance is justified by the globalization process that put regional and minor languages in a vulnerable position. The system of education considered from this viewpoint can protect and develop the regional languages. The aim of the paper is to expose the modern tendencies in the Russian Federation education policy regarding learning and teaching the co-official languages so as to elaborate new approaches of enhancing their functional potential development through the education system. The aim fulfillment required using the methods of the statistic and contrastive analysis, synthesis and modeling that allowed having all-round view of the Russian Federation co-official languages employment in the education process considering the new Federal Education Standards. The analysis carried out estimates and notes the discrepancy in the hours for co-official languages learning in primary school after the new Education Standards for each year of primary school coming into force. That allows foreseeing further development of co-official language learning and elaborating recommendations on the process enhancement. The paper materials present a practical interest for enhancing the education policy in the RF regions, developing curriculums and programs for primary school. The research results can serve as a practical material when planning work for education authorities, teaching staff and politicians interested in boost of co-language teaching efficiency and using them as an education tool.

KEYWORDS

Co-official languages teaching; education policy;
regional component; co-official language

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Introduction

Urgency of the problem

Minor and regional languages support is a relevant topic in a modern sociolinguistics. The issues take on a greater importance considering the globalization trends. The Russian scientists such as T. Kambolov (2007), M. Goryacheva (2002), D. Mustafina (2012), E. Grishaeva (2011), V. Michalchenko (2010), V. Mikhalchenko (2010), actively work at supporting the Russian Federation

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linguistic diversity and co-official languages of the national regions. The grounding for the modern scientific papers is the fundamental sociolinguistic research by J. Fishman (1976, 2006), C. Ferguson (1971), and others. The results of the sociolinguistic research aimed at finding more enhanced ways for minor and regional languages protection processes and tackling the global issues of tolerance development and boost have proved education to be essential for achieving the set goals of the language policy. Education is the main means of direct and active influence on a position, prestige, and development of the languages (Mustafina, 2012). In the majority of states and regions that experienced their languages deterioration through historical events and phenomena the destructive process for a language and ethnos emerged and came to end in education, science, and culture. The language prestige is boosting when it is employed in education and enlightenment. For the last centuries education has incorporated the way to wealth and stability that are the targets the mankind pursues. The 20th century processes of political and geographic reconstruction of the world triggered by the states tending to get free from dominions' and metropolises' oppression and influence, international recognition of the human basic rights and freedoms brought up the matter of reviving the languages. A lot of regions and states started taking measures to reverse the language processes. As well as during the assimilation tendencies, education stepped up as a main tool for implementation of the set goals and tasks. (Slavina, Mustafina & Mustafina, 2014b; Mustafina, Slavina & Mustafina, 2014a).

Both in Europe and the Russian Federation granting the state or co-official status to the regional languages was accompanied by the reforms in the education system. The norms on the language application were legislated. Learning the regions' majority language was getting obligatory according to the regional legislation, it was possible to teach through the medium of them. It is needless to say that such measures cannot be limited only with the legal framework. Education has a multilevel structure. So that the languages should be efficiently implemented process continuity is to be considered. The languages should be involved in upbringing and education from nursery school on, widely employed at school; the opportunities to learn and be taught through the medium of them in universities and secondary specialized colleges should be provided, and scientific research on a language should be supported. Continuity of the process will allow us to revive, preserve, and develop a language as well as to get parents and children motivated. Success of language implementation in education and providing continuity mostly depend on material and technical provision and resources for these initiatives. A qualified teaching staff, efficient and enhancing textbooks, teaching continuity are part and parcel of adequate language learning implementation. The language prestige is defined with communication capacity, e. i. scope of the functions fulfilled. A high communicative capacity expressed by the language functional potential in the professional sphere, Mass Media, administration stems from education. The fact that school leavers and alumni possess a high level language command provides opportunities for the further language development in other spheres. Such individuals present potential for more complex initiatives, language promotion to the state-of-the art technology system, employing it in the advanced sectors (Mustafina, 2012).

Nowadays, it is noticeable that a modern sociolinguistics is lacking in research based on quantitative analysis of the primary statistics (Michalchenko, 2010). Theory and methodology of the language planning is considered to be in a way pre-

paradigmatic and characterized by lack of a single tool capable of providing systematic research of sociolinguistic aspects (Grishaeva, 2011). Scientific papers relying on complex analysis of quantitative data of sociolinguistic phenomena provide a clear insight into a current language situation and allows elaborating a criterion and index system of quantitative and qualitative data for all-round sociolinguistic research.

Materials and Methods

The methods of the paper are contrastive study of the statistics, the results synthesis and modeling. The contrastive study is applied for statutory documents of the RF and national regions of the RF: case study is the Republic of Tatarstan. The results are synthesized in the tables. Such methods as content analysis, mental experiment, foreseeing, fact and concept systemization and generalization, and design are widely employed.

The research was carried out in four stages. Firstly, the data on the RF education legal framework was systematized and the content analysis was conducted. The second stage involved the quantitative analysis of the basic curriculums and the co-official language learning hours was estimated in all 3 versions of the basic curriculum before and after implementation of the contemporary education standards. At the stage 3 the results underwent the contrastive analysis and were generalized. The final stage included prediction of the possible options for co-official languages development in the education system and elaboration of recommendations on efficiency boost of language learning in primary school.

Results

According to paragraph 1 article 3 of the Russian Federation Law “On Education” the Russian Federation Legislation of Education includes the Russian Federation Constitution, the Russian Federation Law “On Education”, and other Russian Federation statutory and regulatory acts are introduced in concord with it as well as statutory and regulatory acts of the Russian Federation constituencies in terms of education.

Before 2007 the State Education Standard leant on three components: federal, regional, and of education institution. It was the main for basic curriculum planning, assessment of graduates’ competence, defining the state financing size of education serves, and specified the requirements for education institution, etc.

The federal component controlled by the Russian Federation was given 75% out of the education scope. The component was stable. The regional component was up to 15% out of the whole standard time and specified by the RF constituencies. The education institution component also could be 10% and controlled by the education institution itself.

November, 2007 federal law N 309 “On Making Amendments in Some Statutory Acts of the Russian Federation Considering the Amendments in Understanding and the Structure of State Education Standard”. It annulated the three step system of the precious law. Under the law the State Education Standard was named the Federal State Education Standard (FSES) and all requirements for education programs complied only with the Russian Federation Government competence. In terms of paragraph 5 article 14 of the new law the education content of a particular education institute is specified by the education program (education

programs) confirmed and being implemented by this education institution itself. The main education program of the accredited education institution is planned according to relevant main education program samples and should assure learners will acquire the main education programs confirmed by the Federal State Education Standard.

Since September 1, 2011 the new generation Federal State Education Standard has been compulsory for the first grade, since September 1, 2015 – for the fifth grade, for full secondary general education (10 grades) the new standard will become compulsory September 1, 2020.

So that the prospects of national language protection and development should be analyzed we consider the basic curriculum for primary school designed according to the new Federal State Education Standard. The official web site of Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation provides a sample of education program for primary school and in accordance with it the education institutions should design their curriculum under the federal law N 309. The basic curriculum for the Russian Federation education institutions specifies the maximum of students' academic load, subjects and extracurricular activities, allocates study time required for education program acquisition by grades and subjects. The basic curriculum consists of two parts – a compulsory part and a part formed by the education process participants including extracurricular activities. The compulsory part of the curriculum defines academic subjects of compulsory academic fields that should be implemented in all the accredited education institutions. The part of the curriculum formed by the academic process participants is aimed at meeting students' individual needs. The time allocated for the part within the students' maximum week load allowed (in the first grade the part is lacking according to the sanitary and hygiene requirements), can be used for: increasing the study hours of the compulsory subjects; introducing academic courses meeting the students' different interests, including ethnocultural ones. The part formed by the academic process participants incorporates the extracurricular activities as well. According to the standard requirements, the extracurricular activities are arranged to mold a personality (spiritual and moral, social, intellectual, cultural, sport and health development).

For the first step of secondary education the three versions of the basic curriculum are displayed:

Version 1 — for Russian-medium education institutions;

Version 2 — for Russian-medium education institutions but including one of the national languages of Russia;

Version 3 — for Native (non-Russian) language – medium education для including the educational institutions of the Russian Federation constituency with two official languages.

Consequently, a school is offered to choose the version of the basic curriculum corresponding to the students' and parents' interests and realizing the academic aims of the education institution.

Presence of the national languages at this education stage that is the most sensitive and forming the linguistic preferences and skills of the students is outlined in the second and third versions of the basic curriculum. The first option of learning the second official language of the Russian Federation constituency is possible through the part formed by the education institution (if applicable) from the second

grade on. If the all available hours of the part are allocated to it, it will make 3 hours per a week. However, these hours can be allocated to several subjects providing only an hour per a week for language learning or even completely excluding it. In the first version of the basic curriculum Russian and Literature are given 9 hours per a week for 4 years of primary school.

The second version provides National language and Literature learning in the compulsory part. Hour allocation in the version is following – 198 hours per a year for Russian and Literature in the first grade and 272 hours for each grade for the rest 3 years. National language and literature are given – 99 hours in the first grade and 102 hours for each three years. The discrepancy is 100 hours in the first grade and 170 hours in the following three years. The maximum hours of the part formed by the education institutions in the version is an hour per a week in the second and third grades (in the first grade is not provided) and the half an hour in the fourth grade. The little amount of the extra hours can be allocated to any subject including Russian and Literature.

In the second version the hours for National language and Literature in the first grade are allocated at the expense of reducing in Russian and Literature hours by 99 hours. In the rest grades hours for Russian are reduced by 34 hours in each year, e. i. an hour per a week. The rest hours are obtained at the expense of reduction in the optional part that is specified by the education institution by 68 hours (2 hours per a week). When comparing hours for Russian and Literature learning and National Language and Literature per a week in the second version of the basic curriculum, we get the following ratio: in the first grade – 6:3, in the second – 8:3, in the third – 8:3, in the fourth – 8:3. Considering the possibility of allocating to National language all the possible additional hours of the optional part, we will increase hours for the subject buy an hour per a week in the second and third graded (then the ratio in the second and third grade will be 2:1) and by 0,5 hour in the fourth grade.

Let us study the third version that provides National Language-medium education. The quantity of hours for Russian and Literature and National Language and Literature is equal during the whole education period; the discrepancy is only in hour allocation by the years, but not more than an hour per week, approximately 5 per week for each language. The optional part is also reduced to an hour per week in the second and third grade and to 0.5 hour in the fourth grade.

Within our research the optional part is considered as possibility to introduce a national language into education to the maximum though it can be allocated to other academic subjects. Having studied the most favourable options of presence for a national language, we are handed the opportunity to compare the current education opportunities being implemented and the prospects being provided by the new Federal State Education Standard.

Let us study the percentage ratio of the basic and optional part in primary school. As it was mentioned above, the optional part is not provided in the first grade. Therefore, in the first grade there is not a possibility to enhance national language learning. In the first version of the basic curriculum (that does not include other language learning apart from Russian) such an opportunity is excluded. In the second version it is limited by the hours in the curriculum (3 hours a week that is twice less than for Russian learning). In the third version (national school) in the first grade Native language and Literature is studied 5 hours per a week, Russian –

4 hours (in the second and fourth grades of the national school hours for Russian are more than for native one – 6:5).

In the first version learning National language and Literature is possible at the expense of the optional part in the second, third and fourth grade if these hours are considered as an alternative to the eliminated regional component, then the maximum quantity can be 12% in the second and third grade and 10% in the fourth grade. However, the percentage is as high as possible that does not allow allocating extra hours for other academic subjects, and it is obvious that such quantity can be hardly implemented.

If Native language and Literature learning is considered in the first grade according to the second version in the same way (as an alternative to the eliminated regional component or hours aimed at meeting ethnocultural requirements of the region) than the quantity of compulsory hours allocated to National language is 99 hours that is 15% out of the overall hours of the first grade (Russian and Literature learning is – 30% out of the overall hours). According to the second version of the basic curriculum in following three years the optional part is 4% in the second and third grades and 2% in the fourth. Even adding this percentage to hours allocated to National Language and Literature we will get a bit more than 16% in the second and third grades and 14% in the fourth. This is the highest percentage, however. Considering the fact that the optional part can be allocated by the education institution at will, the percentage reduces to 12%.

When comparing the third version and two others and the percentage of the compulsory hours for Russian and Literature we get 20% in the first grade, 25% – in the second grade, 21% – in the third grade and 24% – in the fourth grade. Supposing that the optional part would be given to Russian and Literature (as it was done with the national language in the version 1 and 2), the ration is following 20, 30, 25 and 27% respectively for each year of primary school. Let us compare the indexes on National Language and Literature learning and Russian and Literature in schools working by 3 versions of the basic curriculum.

Table 1. Minimum hours planed in the curriculum:

Basic curriculum	Grades			
	I grade	II grade	III grade	IV grade
	Rus./Nat.lang, %	Rus./Nat.lang, %	Rus./Nat.lang., %	Rus./Nat.lang., %
Version 1	45/0	41/0	41/0	40/0
Version 2	30/15	33,3/12,5	33,3/12,5	32,6/12,2
Version 3	20/25	25/20,8	21/25	24/20,4

The most favourable possibilities for national language learning are observed in a national school that are equal in quantity of hours of the compulsory part for Russian and Literature. In this version national languages are employed for teaching other subjects that is an additional support. The second version of the basic curriculum that is an alternative to the education programs were used in most schools of the national constituencies suppose the hour discrepancy for Russian and National language in 2 -2,7 times in favour of Russian. In the first version the compulsory part is not considered to allocate hours for National language and Literature. Such a school was impossible in the most national constituencies before adopting the New Federal State Education Standard. According to this version, in a school opted for it National language and Literature are unlikely to be taught, or

under the favourable circumstances and hour allocation from the optional part a native language will be taught in the token amount that will not provide with noticeable education results, and the optional character will reduce demand on it.

Let us consider the maximum hour ratio for National Language and Literature and Russian and Literature providing that the optional part of the basic curriculum of the versions 1 and 2 is completely allocated to National Language, and the optional part of the basic curriculum of the version 3 is for Russian.

Table 2. Ratio for National Language and Literature and Russian language and Literature

Basic curriculum	Grades			
	I grade Rus./Nat.lang., %	II grade Rus./Nat.lang.,%	III grade Rus./Nat.lang.,%	IV grade Rus./Nat.lang.,%
Version 1	45% / 0%	41% / 12%	41% / 12%	40% / 10%
Version 2	30% / 15%	32% / 16%	32% / 16%	32% / 14%
Version 3	20% / 25%	30% / 20,8%	25% / 25%	27% / 20,4%

So, even using the hours of the optional part in maximum that is unlikely we have only small quantity for National Language and Literature in primary school according to the first version of the basic curriculum, twice more for Russian according to the second version, and more hours for Russian than National Language in the third version.

For comparing the hours allocated to National Language and Literature in primary school according to the new standard and the hours regulated by the previous standards (nowadays, it is used from the second grade as for the first grade the new federal standard is employed), we cite the data on the hours for National Language and Literature according to the standards being analyzed. The previous standards do not suggest the versions of the basic curriculum; for the national constituencies there is only one version of the basic plan including the regional component. From the 3 versions of the new basic curriculum for primary school we choose the second one as an object for comparison.

Table 3. Previous standards and new Federal State Educational Standards for the second type of basic curriculum for primary school (hours)

Grades	The previous standard, hours, Rus.&Liter./ Nat.lang. & Liter. (in brackets there are hours for national-regional component).	The new FSES, hours, Rus. & Liter./ Nat.lang. & Liter. (in brackets there are hours of the part formed by the education process participants, the optional part that replaced the regional component).
II	170/ 136 (102)	272/ 102 (34)
III	170/ 102 (102)	272/ 102 (34)
IV	170/ 102 (102)	272/ 102 (17)

Let us imagine the indexes in the percent ratio to the overall hours of the primary school academic load for each year, in the brackets there is the percentage that can be allocated to National language and Literature, and other subjects aimed at meeting the national education needs of the region when the regional component (of the previous standard) and the optional part of the new standards are employed in maximum.

Table 4. Previous standards and new Federal State Educational Standards for the second type of basic curriculum for primary school, %

Grads	The previous standards,		The new FSES	
	Rus.&Liter./	Nat.lang. & Liter., %	Rus.&Liter./	Nat.lang. & Liter., %
II	19,2/	15,4 (30)	32/	12 (16)
III	19,2/	11,5 (23)	32/	12 (16)
IV	19,2/	11,5 (23)	32/	12 (14)

So, having studied two standards it is obvious that hours for a regional component are reduced.

Discussions

The hours allocated to meeting the individual education needs of the region (the national and regional component) by the previous standards cannot be compared with the optional part that is an alternative to the regional component in the new Federal Education Standards. It should be noted that the previous standards mostly corresponded to the European standards regarding to the functional potential of a regional language in education and their main approach to facilitate a regional language is to promote it in education. The approach is considered to be the most efficient for developing and implementing a regional language in the region. The data mentioned above suppose the maximum usage of the national- regional component and the optional part for native language and literature learning, however, these hours can be allocated to other subjects and the little predominance of hours for a native language and literature of the previous standard (providing some support to a minor or regional language) will not be realized. The federal component hours planned for Native language and Literature by the previous standard differ in favour of Russian and Literature but the difference is not that much as in the basic curriculum of the new FSES (it differs in 2,5 times).

By the end of 2011 the sample of the education program for other stages of school education had not been officially introduced by Ministry of Education and Science of the RF. However, increase in the quantity of subjects and academic load raises no doubts that it will reduce hours for national languages.

Theoretically, we can draw some conclusions that the hours for national languages in education are reducing due to introducing the new education standards and almost exceptional powers of the central education authorities granted by the law N309. The real results can be estimated soon when primary school students start gaining knowledge provided by the new standards. We can refer to the Spanish experience for comparison. Under the Federal legislation on Education of Spain the autonomies having the co-official languages allocate 55% for the basic part out of the overall hours, 45 % the autonomy can employ to meet its national needs. The autonomies without the co-official language use only 35% out of overall hours for it (65% - the basic federal part).

The complex study of the previous and new basic curriculums has not been conducted before, therefore, it the first time the results have clearly pointed out the discrepancy of hours allocated to co-official language learning.

Conclusion

Cultural and linguistic self-identification is a crucial issue in the federal state. The multinational state prosperity and stability depend mostly on how efficiently the federal state deals with issues of the regions and federal center interaction regarding the main ethnic markers – the language and culture. In the Russian Federation education is controlled by the federal center and, hence, it is responsible for balancing the academic curriculum regarding the national and cultural needs of the region. The research results point out reduction in hours allocated to co-official language learning by the federal center, however, the steps can be justified by the new requirements for education within the globalization process. Due to it the regions should efficiently use the given possibilities and boost co-official language teaching and co-official language-medium education within the suggested basic curriculums.

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