

# Image of Russia in Modern Chinese Russian Language Textbooks as Foreign

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## Abstract

Reformation of an image of Russia in the Chinese textbooks of Russian as foreign post-war time is considered, since a 1950th year and finishing with the 2017th. The conclusion is drawn from the transformation of a positive image of the country to negative that is recorded in modern manuals of China about the culture of Russia. The solution of this problem is a creation of new textbooks for the Chinese students in whom the positive image of Russia, the country with a rich cultural heritage which is carrying on interesting and constructive dialogue with other countries and cultures, including with great centuries-old Chinese culture would be formed.

**Keywords:** Russian as a foreign language (RFL); the image of the country; textbooks; culture.

## 1. Introduction

In the conditions of the modern world, the formation of the so-called image of the country among the representatives of other national cultures is important. "Image" and "Prestige" of the country, its positive image contributes to the successful development of mutually beneficial political and economic relations, cultural and educational. The number of people wishing to learn the language, culture, traditions of any country, come to language practice, develop intercultural relations and introduce countrymates with the peculiarities of "the foreign" language is in direct dependence on this factor. One of the means of formation of the image of the country is the textbooks of Russian as a Foreign Language(RFL).

## 2. The Image of Russia in the Textbooks of Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL).

The European view of Russia based on the analysis of the RFL textbooks, created in the 16th and the 20th centuries, was presented in the monograph of S.K. Miloslavskaya "Russian as a foreign language in the history of the formation of the European image of Russia" (2012). In this article, the author will try to show the main stages and directions of the formation of the image of Russia in China, to trace how the image of Russia was formed in the Chinese RFL textbooks, post-wartime since the 1950th till today.

The 1950s can be defined as the period of formation of a positive image of Russia in China and China in Russia. The slogan known to everyone "Russian with Chinese are brothers forever" better than the other characterizes this stage of the development of relationships between two countries. In the textbooks of the 1950's learning of foreign languages is positioned as important for work (worker must understand his foreigner colleague), in the 1990s it shifted on tourism and educational activities.

## 3. Material and Methods

To achieve this goal, certain methods have been used, such as analysis, description, synthesis, comparison and classification. The aim of our study is to analyze the existing textbooks for the implementation of the principle of intercultural dialogue in teaching Russian as a foreign language and offer the most optimal way of studying together Russian language and Russian culture in the Chinese audience in terms of training in the language environment. For the study, the researcher worked on the theory and practice of cultural linguistics, linguistic studies on the language picture of the world, on methods of teaching Russian in a foreign audience, textbooks and manuals on Russian for Chinese audiences.

## 4. Results

In these years there have been successful attempts in the development of intercultural communication and the establishment of an atmosphere conducive for learning the language and culture. One of the most popular in those years was the "Textbook of the Russian language for beginners" by Hae Jing (Beijing, 1950).

The time of writing a textbook predetermined selection of vocabulary and phraseology of the textbook, which was a large number of Soviet words, for example, in the following exercise: *This is a citizen Ivanov, he is Russian. This is a citizen Ma, he is Chinese. This is a citizen Petrov, he is my teacher. Comrade Li is a worker; Comrade Mao is a teacher* [p. 28].

The importance of learning foreign languages and Russian language, in particular, emphasized in the text: "Foreign languages to the masses!" [c.165-166]: *You understand how important it is to know foreign languages. When the different foreign workers work together, if they do not only know their languages but also know other foreign languages, they understand each other. When workers of different nationalities will understand each other, it will strengthen the international solidarity of the proletariat. The Soviet workers are well aware of this,*

so many Soviet workers learn English, Chinese or other languages. In the Soviet Union, there is the slogan: "Foreign languages to the masses!". Therefore, the Soviet Workers learn your language and other foreign languages, as you and other foreign workers learn the Russian language. Next, we are talking about slogans: I read one of the slogans: "Long live the Republic of China!". Another slogan: "We must strengthen our Republic!".... In the Soviet Union, there are slogans: "We must strengthen the International solidarity of the Proletariat" (p. 167).

The international community, mutual understanding, partnership - are the keywords of educational texts. The image of Russia is representing the image of "fraternal country" and the Soviet people, first, as the workers (the role of the labor is underlined), secondly, as comrades, comrades-in-arms.

Another textbook of RFL of the same period, the authors of it are Serebryakova M.A. and Dae-Zhou. The textbook of the Russian language: a manual for evening courses of the Russian language. Grad. 1. The publication of the society Sino-Soviet Friendship in Harbin, 1955. In this textbook from the beginning in the lexicon of students were introduced soviet words. Already in the first lesson, the following words are: I, we, you, he, she, it, they, the pupil, student, teacher, teacher, boy, girl and a pioneer, komsomolets, communists [c. 5]. Among the texts for beginners were characterized such examples: *Here is the map. Here are countries and provinces. This country is called China and it is the USSR, or the Soviet Union. Here is the city of Moscow. This city is the capital. This is the Chinese province - Manchuria. Here is the city of Harbin. Here Chinese, Koreans and Russians are living. Here we are living. Chinese, Koreans and Russians are friends* [c. 36].

Here at the place of the nomination "comrade" appears more intimate than the word "friends", generalized "we". In this case, Harbin was an island of Russian culture and the Russian language in China; further Harbin quickly released from Russian emigrants, but at the time of publication of the textbook the presence of Russians in Harbin was evaluated positively.

The turning point in changing the image of Russia in China and China in Russia becomes a cultural revolution (1960s- 1970s) happened in China and influenced on economic, cultural and social life of the country. A sharp cooling of relationships between the countries led to a drop in interest in the study of the language, and in the period from the end of the 1950s to the late 1980s was not issued new and worthy textbooks.

The revival of interest in the study of the Russian language in China began in the last twenty to thirty years, but as yet we cannot speak of the same popularity of Russian language, what was in the 1950s .

One of the most popular and authoritative textbooks of Russian Language in China was 俄语 Russian language textbook in three parts: The 第一册 I Beijing, 1998, II 第二册 Beijing, 1998, III 第三册 Beijing, 1999. In the first part of a new vocabulary, in which no soviet words(which, of course, due to the time): mother, son, wife, grandfather, the head of the Department, the chef. From the echo of history : We will give all forces of our great nation, our great Homeland [II, c. 9]. From nominal proposed word "Russian citizen", "the comrade" still exists.

The economic relations have changed: if in the textbooks of the 1950's, learning of foreign languages is positioned as important for work (worker must understand his foreigner colleague), in the 1990s it shifted on tourism, educational activities: *Different people come from different countries to Russia from England and France, from Japan and China, from the United States and Italy, and even from many other countries. They are tourists, interns, postgraduates and students* [I, c. 67].

Thus, Russia is representing as a favorable country for tourism and interest to studying Russian language and Russian culture. On the pages of the textbook were mentioned magazines like "*Renmingribao*", "*Knowledge is power*", the films "*Office romance*", "*The Quiet Don*", "*War and Peace*", novels "*How the Steel Was Tempered*", "*Anna Karenina*", the opera "*Eugene Onegin*".

The last decade was marked in China by release of textbooks on Russian culture. The broadcasters of the dialogue of cultures are primarily textbooks of Russian as a foreign language. A worthy place in the Russian language textbooks occupies a genre of oral folklore: riddles, proverbs and sayings. As it is known, knowledge of proverbs and sayings attaches foreign students to popular wisdom, enrich their vocabulary.

According to L.Z. Shakirova's point of view, "connection between language and culture should be considered in two aspects: the first, in terms of how students in the process of mastering the communicative function of speech of Russian language will know the culture and traditions of its carrier, and secondly, as agents of the Russian language, they deepen their knowledge of other cultures "(Shakirova, 2008).

One of these works - 俄罗斯文化风情图 (2012) devoted to the Russian cultural traditions. The edition includes texts which contain the lingvocultural information. Among them are: "*Russian table etiquette*", "*the tastes of the borsh and calf*", "*the traditional national costume*", "*fur coat on the cold territory of Russia*", "*The Political History of Russia with the reforms*", "*Reverent orthodox*" (about Christianity in Russia), the flowering of Russian literature", "*Moscow and St.-Petersburg: two capitals, two world view*", "*The Wonders Of Russia: The Vyborg Castle*", "*Travel to famous museums of Russia*" (The Kunstkamera, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, the State Hermitage, the Tretyakov Gallery), "*the theatrical art and life*", "*Beauty in force*" (on the athletic achievements), the old and the New Arbat in Moscow", "*Barge haulers on the Volga*" etc.

Students become acquainted with the accentology base of the Russian person, and acquire knowledge of logoeπισystem and precedential names. In the textbook, to a greater or lesser degree, are following precedential phenomenon of Russian culture: matryoshka, zhostovskii tray, painted Easter eggs, the Tula samovar, Caftan, Borsch; such names as : V.V. Putin, D.A. Medvedev, A.S. Pushkin, M.Y. Lermontov, A.A. Vrubel, V.A. Serov, N.S. Mr. Leskov, A.N. Ostrovsky, A.P. Czechs, N.V. Gogol, F.M. Dostoevsky, Peter I, Catherine II, V.I. Lenin, G.S. Ulanova, etc.; Proverbs: "bread is the staff of life"; potatoes - helper of bread; if you drink tea will live up to 100 years; drink tea and will forget melancholy, etc. This publication contains encyclopedic information based on the linguistic, historical, geographical materials. We can say that this textbook is aimed at forming a positive image of Russia and the successful intercultural communication.

Thus, for example, is the text of the Russian samovar: "In Russia samovar always stands in the center of the table. He is "good" in his image - the concentricity of forms. ... Today The Samovar is a symbol of Russian hospitality and respect for its guests. Samovar - this is part of life and destiny of the Russian people, as reflected in its proverbs and in the works of the classics of Russian literature - of Pushkin and Gogol, Block and Gogol...Samovar - this is poetry. This is circle of friends and relatives, warm and cordial rest" (p. 182).

In the terminology of the imagologie (Lat. imago - the image, the image, likeness), you can talk about the implementation of this passage macroimatogem "people" through imatogem "attitude towards people": such features of the Russian people as hospitality, friendliness and respect for each other and the guests, close friendly contacts. Macroimatogem "country" in this textbook is presented through the nomination for power: "...the desire of Peter I elevate Russia as a naval power, Russia, as one of the world's sport power in many competitions." Besides, let us pay attention to emphasize the primacy of Russian athletes "in the world".

The authors speak positively about the Russian Education: "...Russia surpasses many of the economically developed countries. The educational level of the population of Russia is the basis for the development of the country, as well as the hope of Russian people". Education in Russia appreciated and presented as competitive on the world stage. Accordingly, it can be assumed the interest of Chinese students in obtaining education in Russia.

The textbook about Russian culture - 俄语畅谈畅听 俄语国家文化(2015), its name literally translates as "I am happy to talk and nice to listen to the Russian language. The textbook is based on the following principle: the actual problem, is dialog and the category "Overview of culture", which analyzes the attitude of Russians to the problem. Presented topics such as *"Family is the most precious thing we have"*, *"Make yourself at home!!! Tea or coffee?"*, *"We will have dinner at the Russian restaurant!"*, *"A sound mind in a sound body!"*, *"Borsch and cabbage – in the house it isn't empty"*, *"bread kvass is better than water"*, *"what soberness conceals, drunkenness reveals"*, *"You will be warmed with a birch, but you won't put it on"*, *"Theater is not displaying mirror, it's an increasing glass"* and etc.

This edition contains a large number of proverbs and sayings: *"Borsch without porridge is the widower, and porridge without borsch is the widow"*; *"a hearty welcome is the best dish on the table"*; *"don't (never) look a gift horse in the mouth"*; *"there is no place like home"*; *"everyone has his own taste"*, etc. There is an acquaintance to the case phenomena of the Russian culture (a birch, the Russian furnace, a nested doll, the Russian bath, kvass, vodka, the Tatiana Day, a St.George's Ribbon, bread salt, Father Frost, the Let's Get Married program, etc.), the reasons of their precedent, rate of the use and popularity speak, the short background or historical digression is given. Precedent names occur in texts of a grant: B.N. Yeltsin, D.A. Medvedev, V.V. Putin, M. Sharapova, N.S. Mikhalkov, T. Bekmambetov, A.S. Konchalovsky, etc.

This publication due to its relevance and clarity, qualitatively compiled by after texts tasks will undoubtedly contribute to the formation of the image of Russia to Chinese students. However, it contains and what can only be considered unfavorable for creating an image of the country in studying Russian language.

**Firstly**, it is the cultivation of the vodka in Russian culture and life of the Russian people: *"The main national drink, vodka. In Russia there are three currencies - rubles, dollars and vodka"*; *"Festive feasts are simply inconceivable without alcoholic beverages – vodka for men, champagne and wines for women, and in improbable quantities. Russians will sympathize with you if you refuse to toss a liqueur glass because it means for them only one: you have seriously got sick"*; *"The sober Russian, before having a drink, always at first will look for the company"*; *"Each sane rural old woman keeps under a bed couple of bottles of vodka in a case when it is required to plow a land or to clean a draw-well"*, etc.

**Secondly**, the description of the Russian people as not polite, narrow minded, gloomy, irresponsible. *"The Russian characteristics is peculiar unpractical, the frivolity in serious questions, non-rhythm in labor, lack of practice, discipline and inability of a long time concentration on one thing at a time..."*; *"the majority of Russians live from pay to pay. "Russians consider normal when the periods of intensive work alternate with the periods of inertness and passiveness"*; *"In society the habit to treat lightly observance of the schedule of the working day has taken roots: to be late for work, to leave before the due time, to stretch a lunch break, for hours to drink tea ..."*

**Thirdly**, underlining the backlog of Russia in the different sectors: "The History of the development of

cinema in Russia started in 1896... But the process of formation, development and improvement of cinema lasted for quite a long time." Of course, this textbook did not fail to draw attention to the topic of cold climate and "homeless people" ("As one Russian homeless told: "I don't need anything, only drink a bit alcohol and to sleep under the bridge"), smoking and public transport.

## 5. Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that, in the middle of the 20th century up to the present time image of Russia in the Chinese textbooks of Russian language endow significant changes: if during the period of Soviet-Chinese friendship of Russia is a country of workers and comrades, at the present stage of Russia often appears as a country of hard drinking people who do not love to work and are not polite towards each other.

This does not negate the merit of Chinese authors in an attempt to understand Russian culture and mentality of Russian people, although they often find themselves under the influence of the collective cultural stereotype of perception, attracted to ethnography and "souvenir" of the country.

One of the challenges in overcoming this problem is to create new language textbooks and manuals for Chinese students, which will form a positive image of Russia, a country with a rich cultural heritage, which will lead to an interesting and constructive dialog with other countries and cultures, including with the great centuries-old Chinese culture.

The textbooks of the Russian language for foreigners must adhere to the principles of the systematic approach, logic, consistency, clarity of presentation, have the material in the framework of the educational edition from simple to complex, providing receipt, mastering, and consolidation of the material in practical activities, developing educational functions that reflect the richness of the Russian language and Russian culture. In addition, these textbooks will contribute to the formation of intercultural communication.

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