The Sociolinguistics and Cultural Values of Global Competitiveness of the Russian Federation: Problems and Perspectives[1]

Gulnaz Mavletzyanovna Galeeva[2]& Ekaterina Alekseevna Potapova[3]

Abstract

Language and society are intertwined because a society moves with language. A language defines the linguistic behaviour of a group of people in a given society. We will find out what sociolinguistics means by examining various definitions and unearth their points of convergence. The paper considers sociolinguistics and cultural values of global competitiveness of the Russian federation. The article highlights the common sociolinguistics and cultural features of the countries-leaders of global competitiveness. In particular, they have an almost identical sectoral structure and high investments in R&D. In addition, the most developed industries are those related to the welfare of the population, infrastructure and technological development. This allows us to talk about the strategic importance of these industries and their impact on the global competitiveness of the state. The presented analysis of the state of the Russian economy showed that in general Russia has a high growth potential. At the same time, for further sustainable development of the country, it is necessary to solve many problems that impede the growth of competitiveness of the Russian Federation. The range of identified problems includes poor infrastructure development and too little investment in R&D, insufficient development of innovations and poor development of the financial market. The work noted the need for timely adoption of measures to improve the economic situation across a wide range of problems.

***Keywords**:* Sociolinguistics; Cultural Values; Competitiveness; Russian Federation.

1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context on the way language is used

---

[1] Please cite this paper as follows:

Galeeva, G. M. & Potapova, E. A. (2019). The sociolinguistics and cultural values of global competitiveness of the Russian federation: Problems and perspectives. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics,10* (SP), 1404-1414.

[2] Kazan Federal University, Russia; *gmgaleeva@mail.ru*

[3] Kazan Federal University, Russia; *potapovakate@gmail.com*

(Trudgill, 2000). Just as regional variation of language can give a lot of information about the place the speaker is from, social variation tells about the roles performed by a given speaker within one community. Sociolinguistics is also considered as a branch of sociology in that it shows the relationship between language use and the social basis for such use (Hudson, 1996; Shakibaei, Shahamat, & Namaziandost, 2019). It differs from sociology of language in that the focus of sociolinguistics is the effect of the society on the language, whereas the latter's interest is on the language's effect on the society (Bell, 1976). Sociolinguistics is a practical, scientific discipline which researches into the language that is actually used in order to formulate theories about language change Cross-cultural communication issues, and their potential for creating obstacles to effective, successful organizational and professional interactions, have become a critical aspect of the movement toward a globalized society. Competent communication, a central instrument for an organization to create a sustainable competitive advantage, is further complicated when cultural differences must be managed (Persikova, 2002; Abedi, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019). To overcome these communication difficulties and lessen misunderstandings, individuals and professional organizations have instituted cross-cultural training programs.

In addition to training in general intercultural sensitivity, corporate managers need to acquire culture-specific knowledge before embarking on an overseas assignment. This requirement is made difficult by the amount of available cultural information and the need to determine what is beneficial and what is useless. For instance, noting that characters in Russian films always seem to be quarrelling (while, in fact, they are not) can be confusing. Just observing this activity as a behavioral display will only produce negative opinions (a reason why Soviet – and now Russian—films never enjoyed commercial success in the U.S.). But, spending time and effort to analyze what the behavior may denote, and how it relates to other facets of Russian culture, can often provide insight into problems of cross-cultural organizational communication and group dynamics.

Linguistic research of cross-culture communication and related cultural anthropology topics generally agree that basic cultural values, which indicate a culture's worldview, are often reflected in certain "key words" or "key concepts" (Shmeljov, 2002). Wierzbicka's (1992) influential book on cross-cultural pragmatics provides generalizations about the basic values and features of Russian culture.

Due to the increase in oil prices and stabilization of the macroeconomic situation, in 2017 in Russia a slight economic growth resumed. However, the growth dynamics was uneven. In 2017, on the whole, the growth trend continued, similar to the pre-crisis period, when growth was mainly provided by the mining sector (Ivanov & Galeevab, 2016).

2. Materials and Methods

The material for the work was the data of the World Economic Forum, Institute of Management Development IMD (Institute of Management Development). If we consider the sectoral structure of the Russian Federation and compare it with the sectoral structures of the leading countries of competitiveness, we can see that the latter have a high share of the economy in the service sector (more than 50%). The basis of the Russian economy is industry, mainly mining (Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation):

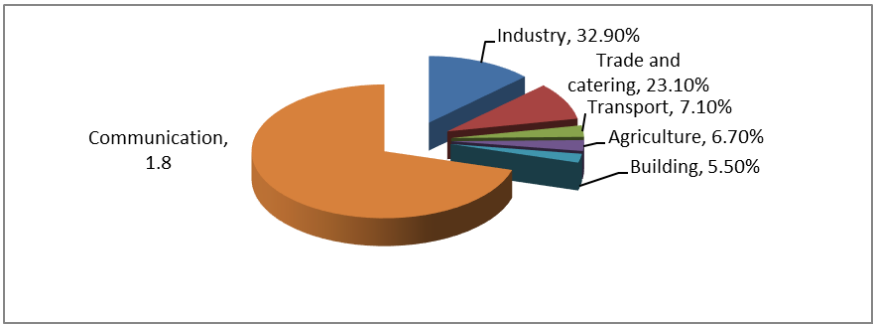


Figure 1. Sectoral Structure of the Russian Economy

The sectoral structure of the country's economy has become a determining factor for the composition of its exports to the international market. Since the basis of Russian industry is extractive industry, the basis of export is the products of extractive industry activities. It is due to trade in raw materials that the macroeconomic performance of a country, reflected in international ratings, often occurs.

In other words, the increase in oil and gas exports is provided by non-processed natural resources, and the export growth in monetary terms is provided by prices. This is a relatively easy way to obtain funds, but it also carries certain risks: focusing on the export of raw materials, the country pays less attention to other export items and the development of its industry, and, in addition, it becomes vulnerable due to the emerging dependence on energy prices.

The country's orientation to the mining industry is due to high external demand and relatively high prices for Russian oil. These indicators stimulate the development of production and export growth. Russia supplies the world market with many types of raw materials, but the most important, valuable and highly profitable of them is oil, the production and sale of which are the main influx of foreign currency into the country's budget. According to estimates of oil reserves, the Russian Federation is second only to Saudi Arabia, and ranks second in the world (Federal State Statistics Service).

Table 1. *Oil Production by the Leading Countries, in Million Tons*

Country:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Saudi Arabia	509.9	456.7	473.8	525.9	549.8	538.4	543.4	567.8	585.7
Russia	493.7	500.8	511.8	518.8	526.2	531.1	534.1	540.7	554.3
USA	302.3	322.4	333.7	344.9	393.2	446.9	522.7	565.1	543.0

The raw material orientation of Russia, despite the measures taken, will continue in the short term. The Bank of Russia continued efforts to reorganize the banking system, reducing the number of banks that do not comply with requirements and conduct risky operations. So, the number of banks in Russia decreased from 561 at the beginning of 2018 to 558 as of February 1, 2018 (Federal State Statistics Service). In February, the Bank of Russia published the Strategy for the Development of Financial Technologies, "The Main Directions for the Development of Financial Technologies in 2018–2020," along with a detailed roadmap aimed at creating a regulatory framework in support of digital technologies and creating financial infrastructure and regulation. The Bank of Russia has identified a number of high-priority areas for the development of innovative technologies that are recommended for the banking sector: big and smart data, artificial intelligence, machine learning, biometrics, blockchain technology and an open application programming interface. The goal of the strategy is to develop competition in the financial market; increase the availability, quality and range of financial services, reduce risks, reduce costs in the financial market and increase the competitiveness of Russian technologies. Earlier, the Bank of Russia announced the creation of a test system for regulating innovative technologies, products and services.

The considered macroeconomic indicators reflect the state of the country in 2017-2018, however, in the context of the globalization of the world economy, for the most objective assessment of the country's competitiveness, a simple analysis of its condition in isolation from relations with other countries is not enough. In order to most fully and adequately assess competitiveness, one should consider the country not only by itself, but also in comparison with other countries, in particular, with the most powerful and successful, world leaders in competitiveness. To do this, it would be appropriate to look at global competitiveness indices, some of which have already been mentioned.

You should start with the Global Competitiveness Index, published annually by the World Economic Forum. In the ranking for 2017-2018, the Russian Federation significantly improved its position. So, the country made a real leap, moving from

43rd place in the ranking immediately to 38th. For Russia, this is the highest position in the ranking over the past ten years. Positive trends were observed earlier, but so far the country has not succeeded in achieving such successes (Figure 2). In total, since the period of 2012, when Russia occupied historically the lowest position (67), it managed to overcome 29 positions (World Economic Forum).

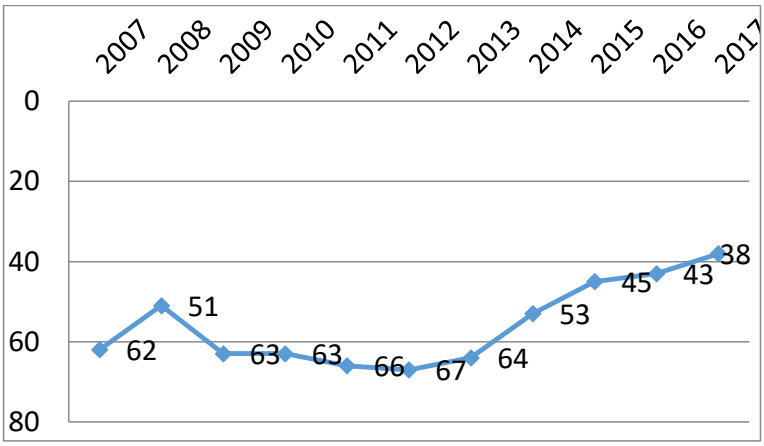


Figure 2. Positions of the Russian Federation in the WEF Global Competitiveness Rating by Years

The fact that even in the conditions of the recession of 2015-2016 in the ranking of global competitiveness, the positive dynamics of changes in the position of Russia is quite obvious. This is due to such positive factors as the widespread dissemination of higher education and the development of infrastructure. At the same time, one can not ignore the fact that sometimes the competitiveness rating can drop significantly in the absence of macroeconomic problems in the country.

In addition, if we talk about the problematic places of this rating specifically for Russia, it is noteworthy that this approach is characterized by some difficulty in assessing and objectifying an unambiguous interpretation of a number of the criteria considered, for example, characterizing the economic situation or the penetration of innovations in business. So, the Russian Federation is characterized by a high penetration of new technologies in the military-industrial sector, but it is traditionally quite closed and cannot be evaluated and taken into account.

In the WEF global competitiveness rating, the strengths of the Russian Federation are most often called the high prevalence of higher education, the size of the domestic market, and quite good business regulation indicators that continue to improve over the years. Thanks to these macroeconomic indicators, which remain quite high and differ favorably from a number of other countries, even in periods of recession, Russia's competitiveness was rated rather high and did not sag too much during crisis periods. It also seems reasonable to dwell in more detail on other

macroeconomic indicators of the country, individual components of the index. In total, 12 are distinguished (tab. 2).

Table 2. *WEF Global Competitiveness Index Components*

Index component	Rank / 137	Index
1. The quality of institutions	83	3.7
2. Infrastructure	35	4.9
3. Macroeconomic stability	53	5.0
4. Health and primary education	54	6.0
5. Higher education and training	32	5.1
6. The effectiveness of the market of goods and services	80	4.2
7. Labor market efficiency	60	4.3
8. The development of the financial market	107	3.4
9. The level of technological development	57	4.5
10. The size of the domestic market	6	5.9
11. Competitiveness of companies	71	4.0
12. Innovation potential	49	3.5

Based on WEF data [42]

As can be seen from table 2, the innovation index is low, which is only one tenth higher than the financial market development index. This is a serious problem, because now, in the era of globalization, on the threshold of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, innovation can be a determining factor for success for countries in the world market. This is also confirmed by the words of Klaus Schwabb, the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum. He assumes that over time, global competitiveness will be increasingly determined by the country's innovative potential, which means that if a country does not want to lose in the competition and lose the opportunity to defend its place on the world stage, it should pay great attention to the development of innovation and achieve a significant increase investment in this area.

However, Russia may have problems here, because the development of the financial sector is crucial for increasing investment in innovation. Thus, in order to achieve the greatest success, one should pay attention to this problem and take measures conducive to its solution.

Other areas of concern include the quality of institutions (83), the efficiency of the market for goods and services (80), the competitiveness of companies (71), property rights (106), judicial independence (90), and corruption, which remains one of the most problematic factors of doing business (Expert analytical portal). The diagram below (Fig. 3) illustrates that although Russia has risen in the ranking of global competitiveness, it is still far from the leaders in almost all respects. Many sectors of the economy, including those previously identified as strategically important (infrastructure, level of technological development), are too poorly developed in Russia, which is a serious obstacle to the growth of the state's competitiveness.

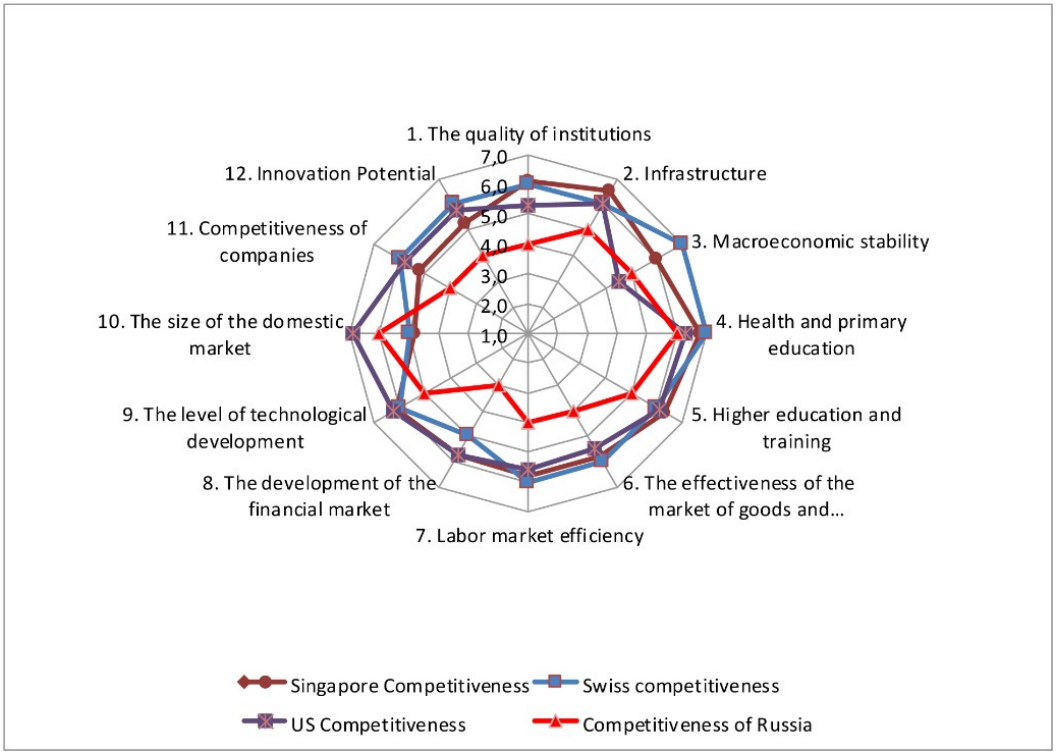


Figure 3. Russian Competitiveness in Terms of the Components of the WEF Global Competitiveness Index Compared to Leaders[1]

In addition to the global competitiveness rating published by the World Economic Forum, there is a rating published by the Institute for Management Development (IMD). According to this rating, among the main positive factors of Russia's competitiveness are noted, as in the WEF rating, a high level of education and employment, the qualification of the workforce and overall macroeconomic stability. However, the low level of economic diversification, underdevelopment of

[1] Based on WEF data [42]

the financial market, insufficient efficiency of state institutions, weak innovation potential, as well as administrative barriers and corruption burden prevent Russia from taking advantage of its competitive advantages. All these factors contribute to the inefficient allocation of the country's resources and hinder the growth of competitiveness.

Of particular interest is the fact that with a significant increase in competitiveness according to the WEF, in the IMD ranking, the Russian Federation not only did not rise higher, but, on the contrary, lost two positions, dropping from 46 to 44 places.

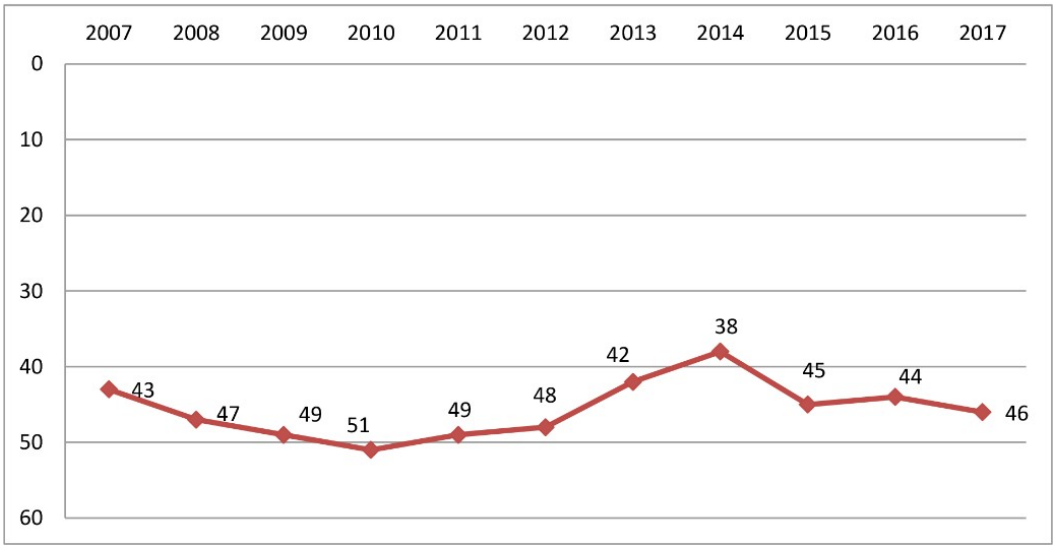


Figure 4. Positions of the Russian Federation in the WEF Global Competitiveness Rating by Years [1]

Despite the lowering of Russia's position in the rating as a whole, according to certain criteria, its indicators improved. So in the group of macroeconomic indicators, our country rose from 49th to 46th place. In terms of the quality of public administration, Russia's position deteriorated by seven points. IMD experts negatively assessed the growth of the budget deficit and the depletion of the Reserve Fund. On the 56th position of the rating of the Russian Federation is in two indicators - the institutional environment and business regulation. Among the factors that positively affect the competitiveness of the Russian economy, IMD experts note the policy of the Central Bank and a decrease in the concentration of exports per company.

[1]Made on the basis of data from the analytical portal Humanitarian Technologies [52]

Obviously, the WEF and IMD ratings are significantly different from each other.

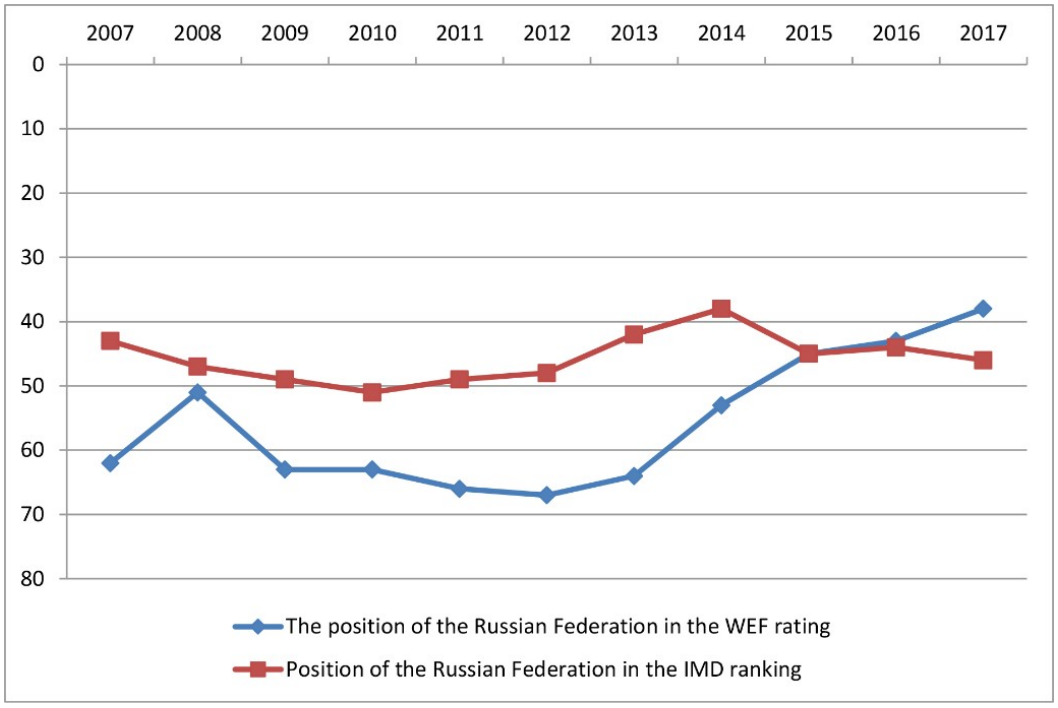


Figure 5. Comparison of Russian Positions in the WEF and IMD Global Competitiveness Ratings by Years[1]

As can be seen from Figure 5, the general trends in the global competitiveness ratings of the WEF and IMD were for the most part almost identical. A significant discrepancy begins in 2015, which is probably closely related to the 2014-2015 currency crisis that befell the Russian Federation and its impact on the country's economy.

In recent years, Russia has made great progress in the Doing Business ranking, but a number of important areas remain that require additional work. Of the 10 indicators, the worst results for Russia are according to the indicators “Obtaining building permits” (Using the indicator “obtaining building permits”, the procedures, time and money spent to complete all the formalities required for the construction of the warehouse, as well as quality control and assurance mechanisms are evaluated security established in the system for issuing building permits - 115th place) “International trade” (Using the indicator “international trade” takes into account the time and money GOVERNMENTAL funds required for the export of products of the comparative advantage of the country, as well as for the import of car parts - 100 place). In both areas, the situation has improved significantly over the past six years,

[1]Made on the basis of data from the analytical portal Humanitarian Technologies [52]

but Russia still lags behind the OECD average in the number of procedures, as well as in the time and money required by entrepreneurs to comply with the law.

3. Results and Discussion

A variety of a language is a form that differs from other forms of the language systematically and coherently (Hudson, 1996). Variety is a wider concept than style of prose or style of language (Spolsky, 2010). Some sociolinguists use the term 'lect', apparently a back-formation from specific terms such as dialect and idiolect (Delgado de Carvalho, 1962).

Varieties such as dialects, idiolects, and sociolects can be distinguished, not only by their vocabulary, but also by differences in grammar, phonology and prosody (Hudson, 1996). For instance, the tonal word accents of Scandinavian languages have differing realizations in many dialects (Trudgill, 2000). As another example, foreign words in different sociolects vary in their degree of adaptation to the basic phonology of the language (ibid.). Certain professional registers such as legalese show a variation in grammar from the standard language (Meyerhoff, 2006). For instance, English journalists or lawyers often use grammatical moods such as subjunctives or conditional mood, which are no longer used frequently by other speakers (Namaziandost, Sabzevari, & Hashemifardnia, 2018). Many registers are simply a specialized set of terms (Spolsky, 2010). Colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions are usually understood as limited to variation of lexicon, and hence of style (Trudgill, 2000). The concept of language varieties in general, and language registers in particular, can be of great help in translating as well as in evaluating translations.

It is one thing to recognize that values vary between cultures, but it is of perhaps greater importance to understand how those values influence culture-specific behavioral patterns, especially communication patterns. These communication patterns have been described in Hymes' (1974) model of SPEAKING. Gumperz (2001) posits that certain linguistic structures serve as clues to interpretation of meaning and inferences based on cultural assumptions of the participants. I will now discuss the variant communication patterns that can bring about misunderstandings or create conflict during Russian—U.S. communicative interactions. My observations are informed by Kasper's (1996) discussion of Politeness Theory. The focus is on those Russian communication patterns that can lead to communicative failures both during the interaction and subsequent to the interaction by eroding a participant's perception of the other.

All this allows us to say that in general Russia has a good development and deservedly takes its position in the middle peasant group. At the same time, for further sustainable development of the country it is necessary to focus on leaders, from whom the country is still very far away. There are many factors that impede the growth of competitiveness of the Russian Federation, and the fight against them becomes an

important task not only in terms of increasing the competitiveness of the state, but also in terms of improving economic growth and human well-being. An additional factor contributing to the improvement of Russia's position in the ranking was the further improvement of the reform implementation process. It is important to note that the Doing Business report is based on information provided by enterprises, as for most indicators of improving the legislation it is not enough - new standards must be implemented in order for enterprises to see improvements in practice.

4. Conclusion

All in all, language is an important aspect in human interaction. Sociolinguistics is a branch of science that tries to study the link between sociology and linguistics. If linguistic choices are made in accordance with the orderings of society, then every choice carries social information about the speaker/writer. Consequently, some linguists reason that the communication of social information presupposes the existence of regular relationships between language usage and social structure. In short, sociolinguistics has added a lot to the field of the social study of the language.

Thus, the Russian economy has a raw material orientation, which is rightly considered to be its main weakness: it is very dependent on commodity prices on the global market, and their sharp decline can provoke a serious economic crisis, since it is raw materials that are the basis of the country's exports. A rich resource base should serve as the basis for strengthening the position of the national economy on the world stage, increasing the level of well-being of the population and the development of high-tech industries, which is important on the threshold of the Fourth Industrial Revolution predicted by many experts. Countries investing in the development of innovations and high-tech production are likely to have a serious competitive advantage in the future over those that focused only on trade in raw materials.

For Russians, expressing the way you feel (both good and bad) and attention to what other people say about their feelings is favorably considered in a wide variety of contexts. From this, it is clear that for Russians relationships are more important than the contextual reality.This cultural feature can be observed in language strategies such as heavy use of “culturally loaded words” like dusha—‘soul’, which signals the importance of the inner world, and in the abundance and great variety of active emotional verbs (as if emotions emerge on their own and are not just experienced) – volnovat'sja, pechalit'sja, udivljat'sja, radovat'sja—as compared to names for emotional states be glad, be sad, be angry, be happy. In the realm of proper names, Russia is famous for having lots of nicknames (expressive derivation), not only towards children as in English (e.g., Teddy, Tommy) but towards adults without distinction of age or gender. These are used in a variety of contexts to express the extremely important role of closeness and intimacy and to communicate the minute

aspects of feelings between individuals and the subtle shades of their relations—In other words, the ability to express solidarity politeness by minimizing social distance.

It should be noted that the Russian Federation has good potential for increasing national competitiveness, but does not use it in full. Having such rich natural resources, the Russian Federation needs an inflow of investments for the development of processing industries, without which further economic development of the country is simply impossible. One of the tasks of paramount importance is the establishment of production within the country, based on the use of existing competitive advantages, building up scientific potential. These and a number of other factors noted above can become an impetus for the transition of Russia from the export-raw material orientation of the economy to innovative and industrial, which will allow it to continue to adequately accept the new challenges of a changing global world.

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

References

Abedi, P., Namaziandost, E., & Akbari, S. (2019). The impact of flipped classroom instruction on Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing skill. *English Literature and Language Review, 5*(9), 164-172.

Bell, R.T. (1976). *Sociolinguistics: Goals, Approaches, and Problems*. London: Batsford.

Delgado de Carvalho, C. M. (1962). The geography of language*s*. In Wagner, P.L. & Mikesell, M.W.(eds.), *Readings in cultural geography* (pp 75-93). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Expert analytical portal. Center for Humanitarian Technologies. Retrieved from http://gtmarket.ru/, free.

Federal State Statistics Service [Electronic Resource] / Federal State Statistics Service - Official Site of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation. - access mode: http://www.gks.ru/, free.

Gumperz, J. J. (2001). Interactional sociolinguistics: A personal perspective. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H.E. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 215-228). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ivanov, M. E., & Galeevab, G. M. (2016). Diversification of sources of external financing the real economy in terms of institutional transformation. *Journal of Economics and Economic Education Research*, *17*, 415-421.

Kasper, G. (1996). *Politeness*. Handbook of pragmatics. Amsterdam: Verschueren.

Meyerhoff, M. (2006). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. England: Routledge.

Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation [Electronic resource] - Official website of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation. - access mode: http://www.minpromtorg.gov.ru/, free.

Namaziandost, E., Sabzevari, A., & Hashemifardnia, A. (2018). The effect of cultural materials on listening comprehension among Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners: In reference to gender. *Cogent Education,5*(1), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1560601.

Persikova, T. (2002). *Mezhkul'turnaja kommunikatsija i korporativnaja kul'tura*. Moskva: Logos.

Shakibaei, G., Shahamat, F., & Namaziandost, E. (2019). The effect of using authentic texts on Iranian EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning: The case of English newspaper. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT), 2*(5), 422-432

Shmeliov, A. (2002). *Russkaja jazykovaja model' mira: Materialy k slovarju*. Moskva: jazyki slavjanskoj kul'tury.

Spolsky, B. (2010). *Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*. England: Penguin Books.

Wierzbicka, A. (1992). *Semantics, culture, and cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations*. New York: Oxford University Press.