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Evaluation of university students' opinions about learning Russian language

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**Abstract**

Since ancient times foreign language is the most important communication tool for societies to reflect their cultures. In this study, university students' views towards learning Russian language are evaluated. Aim of the study is to research the students' knowledge and how much they have learned Russian languages. The study was conducted on 49 volunteered undergraduate students from the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management at Near East University in Cyprus. During the 2011-2012 Spring term, data was collected by means of a survey developed by Gomeksiz (2002). The survey consists of 15 positive items. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of this scale was 0.95. The data obtained by the survey was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program with the percentage and frequency statistical analysis techniques. According to results from this research finding, the majority of university students believe in the necessity of knowing and learning Russian language. The main reason for this is that it provides a better opportunity to be employed. The students who find that Russian language education provided at universities is insufficient, argues the main reason for this is the weekly Russian language lessons not being enough hours.

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**1. Introduction**

In Today's society, knowing many languages became a requirement. From the beginning of history, sensual messages were translated between societies through foreign languages. Languages are far beyond just being a communication tool. The reason of this is that the languages reflect cultural heritages of cultures. What reflects a society, is how much they know a language. According to Okan (2003), language is a culture's transmitter; the more languages society knows, the more they could spread their culture. The societies which do not know their language and culture can get into identity confusion. The sooner a foreign language education starts in schools, learning becomes easier and permanent (Sevil, 2003; Bas, 2010; Yazdanpanah, Sahragard & Rahimi, 2010). According to Bayhan and Artan (2004), in the houses where two languages are spoken, even 3 year old children can understand and speak these languages. Marcory (2006) observed that both languages can be improved at the same time. There are many studies aiming at revealing personal differences between students in foreign language education. In order to make foreign language educating and teaching more efficient, teachers should apply such methods to reveal personal differences. Although it has been included in the program for many years in our country, the tendency to

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apply one type teaching method to one type student is the most important reason that the foreign language cannot be taught in a short time effectively. The teachers were mostly educated with traditional methods. For that reason, it is observed that those teachers want to continue applying traditional methods of teaching and do not efficiently use technology even if there are many technological tools in their school (Yıldırım, 1998). In Gomleksiz's research (2004), it is defined that university students find foreign language education unsatisfactory, because classes are crowded, methods and techniques the teachers use are insufficient, equipments are not enough and text books are not satisfactory. According to these results, despite the students are interested in learning foreign language, the level of learning is low because they find education unsatisfactory.

## 2. The aim of the research

Aim of the study is to research how much the students know and learn Russian language.

### 2.1. Participants

The study was conducted on 49 volunteered undergraduate students from the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management at Near East University in Cyprus. During the 2011-2012 Spring term.

### 2.2. Instruments

Data was collected by means of a survey developed by Gomleksiz (2002). The survey consisted of 15 positive items. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of this scale was 0.95.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained by the survey was analyzed using the SPSS program with the percentage and frequency statistical analysis techniques.

## 3. Results & Discussion

### 3.1 Necessity of Russian Language Knowing and Learning

As it can be seen from Table 1, 63% of the students responded to questions as "strongly agree" on necessity of Russian language knowing and learning, 30% of them "agree", 4% "neutral" and 3% are "disagree".

Table 1. Distribution of the Necessity of Russian Language Knowing and Learning

Items	f	%
Strongly Agree	31	63
Agree	15	30
Neutral	2	4
Disagree	1	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0

### 3.2 The Reasons of the Necessity of Russian Language Knowing and Learning

As it can be seen from Table 2, 61% of the students expressed their opinion about the main reasons of the necessity of Russian language knowing and learning as providing opportunity to find jobs easier, 20% of the students think about making friendship with foreign people and knowing different cultures, 13% give the reason of doing postgraduate education, and 6% think about going abroad.

Table 2. Distribution of the Necessity of Russian Language Knowing and Learning

Items	f	%
providing opportunity to find job easier	30	61
making friendship with Russian people and knowing different cultures	10	20

doing postgraduate education	6	13
going abroad	3	6
watching occupational broadcasts	0	0

### 3.3 The Sufficiency of Learning Russian Language Applied in Universities

As it can be seen from Table 3, Majority of students find the sufficiency of learning Russian language applied in universities satisfactory (14% very sufficient, %36 sufficient). The rest of the students find it partially sufficient.

Table 3. Distribution of the Sufficiency of Learning Russian Language Applied in Universities

Items	f	%
I find very sufficient	7	14
I find sufficient	18	36
I find partially sufficient	14	28
I find slightly sufficient	4	9
I find insufficient	6	13

### 3.4 The Reasons of Insufficiency in Learning Russian Language

As it can be seen from Table 4, 61% of students think about the main reasons of insufficiency in learning Russian language is that weekly Russian language lesson hours are short. 20% of them think that it is disadvantageous to not have Russian language lessons in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. On the other hand, 13% of the students find methods and techniques insufficient. And small amount of the students expressed their opinion as the class rooms are very crowded. The students find equipments in classrooms sufficient.

Table 4. Distribution of the Reasons of Insufficiency in Learning Russian Language

Items	f	%
weekly Russian language lesson hours are short	30	61
not having Russian language lessons in 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> grades	10	20
methods and techniques are insufficient	6	13
class rooms are very crowded	3	6
lack of equipments in classrooms	0	0

### 3.5 Opinions about Text Books

As it can be seen from Table 5, 38% of the students present their opinions about text books that the level of the books is difficult. On the other hand, 57% find the books appropriate according to their levels. Only 5% group of student's state that the text book level is very easy.

Table 5. Distribution of the Opinion About Text Books

Items	f	%
Very difficult according to my level	19	38
Appropriate to my level	28	57
Very easy according to my level	2	5

### 3.6 Situation of Study Russian Language Lesson

As it can be seen from Table 6, 27% of the students always study Russian language lessons, 31% generally study, and 5% of them stated that they never study.

Table 6. Distribution of the Situation of Study to Russian Language Lesson

Items	f	%
Always	13	27
Generally	18	37
Sometimes	15	31
Never	3	5

### 3.7 The Reasons not to Study Russian Language Lesson

As it can be seen from Table 7, 66% of the students do not know how to study Russian language lesson, therefore they stated that they do not study. On the other hand, 16% of the students stated that Russian language is not a major study and studying conditions are not appropriate. And 2% of the students believe that Russian language is not necessary, that's why they do not study.

Table 7. Distribution of the Reasons not to Study Russian Language Lesson

Items	f	%
Does not know how to study	32	66
Russian language is not a major study	8	16
Studying conditions are not appropriate	8	16
Learning Russian language is not necessary	1	2

### 3.8 Frequency of Giving Homework for Russian Language Lesson

As it can be seen from Table 8, 29% of the students stated that homework is always given, 43% of them responded as generally. 25% of the students indicated that homework sometimes is given, on the other hand 3% of them gave an answer as homework is never given.

Table 8. Distribution of the Frequency of Giving Homework for Russian Language Lesson

Items	f	%
Always	14	29
Generally	21	43
Sometimes	12	25
Rarely	0	0
Never	2	3

### 3.9 Situation of Doing Homework for Russian Language Lesson

As it can be seen from Table 9, 45% of the students stated that they always do homework given at Russian language lesson, %33 responded as generally, 14% of the students gave an answer as they sometimes do homework, 6% of them indicated that they rarely do homework, on the other hand 2% of them never do homework given in Russian language lesson.

Table 9. Distribution of the Situation of Doing Homework for Russian Language Lesson

Items	f	%
Always	22	45
Generally	16	33
Sometimes	7	14
Rarely	3	6
Never	1	2

### 3.10 The Reasons for not Doing Given Homework

As it can be seen from Table 10, 37% of the students stated the reasons for not doing the given homework is that the level of homework is more advanced than their levels. On the other hand, 33% of the students indicated that level of home work is lower than their levels. Beside this, 20% of the students think that homework given is not suitable for the purpose of the lesson and 10% of them stated that there are not enough sources in the library.

Table 10. Distribution of the Reasons not Doing Homework Given

Items	f	%
Homework being more advanced than our levels	18	37
Homework being lower than our levels	16	33
Homework given is not suitable for our purpose	10	20
not enough sources in the library	5	10

### 3.11 The Level Of Interest in Learning Russian Language

As it can be seen from Table 11, 32% of students have a very high level interest of learning Russian language, 39% high and 25% average. Only 4% of these students had no interest of learning a Russian language.

Table 11. Distribution of the Level Of Interest in Learning Russian Language

Items	f	%
Very high	16	32
High	19	39
Average	12	25
Low	0	0
Very low	0	0
No interest	2	4

### 3.12 The Reasons Behind The Low Level Of Interest in Learning Russian Language

As it can be seen from Table 12, 41% of students stated that the reasons behind the low level of interest in learning Russian language is related to the low level of Russian language knowledge in secondary education. 29% percent of the students responded as they study unplanned and disorganized, on the other hand 16% thinks that they do not have enough motivation, and 14% of the students cannot communicate with teachers

Table 12. Distribution of the Reasons Behind the Low Level of Interest in Learning Russian Language

Items	f	%
Low level of Russian language knowledge in secondary education	20	41
Studying unplanned and disorganised	14	29
Not having enough motivation	8	16
Because I cannot communicate with teacher	7	14

### 3.13 The Ways of Solving Problems Related with Russian Language Lesson

As it can be seen from Table 13, 51% of students stated that they consult their teacher to solve problems related with Russian language lesson, %16 consult their family and people around them, % 13 attending private lessons, and 20% refer to supplementary resources.

Table 13. Distribution of the Ways of Solving Problems Related with Russian Language Lesson

<b>Items</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Consulting their teacher	25	51
Consulting their family and people with knowledge around	8	16
Attending private lessons	6	13
Referring to supplementary resources	10	20

### 3.14 Thoughts about What Type of Language Skills will be Improved with Russian Language Education in Faculty

As it can be seen from Table 14, 33% of students stated that they can understand Russian language but cannot talk with the Russian language education given in a faculty, on the other hand 16% can translate professional publications through dictionary.

Table 14. Distribution of the Thoughts about What Type of Language Skills Will be Improved with Russian Language Education in Faculty

<b>Items</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
I can understand verbally	16	33
I can understand but cannot talk	16	33
I can translate professional publications through dictionary	8	16
All of them	4	8
None of them	4	8
I can write what is explained, I can understand what I read	1	2

### 3.15 Thoughts about How Russian Language Lessons Should Be Taught

As it can be seen from Table 15, 43% of students think that it is necessary to focus on speaking skills in Russian language lessons, 23% of them thinks that it is necessary to make a lot of translation, 18% necessary to focus on reading and try to understand professional publications, 12% focus on basic grammar knowledge, and 4% stated that it is necessary to concentrate on writing .

Table 15. Distribution of the Thoughts about How Russian Language Lessons Should Be Taught

<b>Items</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Should focus on speaking skills	21	43
Should focus on making a lot translation	11	23
Should focus on reading and understanding professional publications	9	18
Should focus on basic grammar knowledge	6	12
Should focus on writing	2	4

#### 4. Conclusion

According to the results of research findings, majority of university students believe in necessity of knowing and learning Russian language. The main reason of this is to provide an opportunity to find a job easier. The students, who find Russian language education sufficient in university, think that the main reason of insufficiency in learning Russian language is from weekly Russian language lesson hours not being enough. When students first start to learn a Russian language usually they believe that text books are difficult in comparison to their level, and also they do not know how to study Russian language lessons. The students stated that they always try to do homework given, but the homework are more difficult than their levels. According to the students, the main reasons of low level of interest for learning Russian language is that the Russian language level knowledge is low in secondary education, and also they study unplanned and disorganized. When students try to learn a Russian language, their teacher is the person they trust the most. They think that they can understand verbally with Russian language lessons in faculty, but they cannot talk. Therefore, speaking skills should be focused on in Russian language lessons, and the students think that it is necessary to do a lot of translation.

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