

## LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A SOURCE OF SOFT POWER: SURVEY RESULT

### Abstract

In the modern world, countries often compete for labor force, investments, etc., so it is very important for them to create and maintain their positive image. In this new context, soft power – the ability to achieve objectives through attraction and persuasion – is crucial to the effective conduct of foreign policy. Language is traditionally a significant source of interest in the country, soft influence on the international audience. Therefore, the process of teaching a foreign language can intentionally or unintentionally be a source of soft power of a particular state or culture. Moreover, if such activities are carried out online, then they are characterized by a high speed of communication and low cost. In this context (soft power), the activities of international linguistic projects have not been previously analyzed, especially through the prism of communications, which makes the study especially relevant. Modern researchers and authors of soft power ratings of states identify such elements of soft power as the political system, government, business, education, culture, language, digitalization, etc. Through different aspects of the language, the attractiveness of the country can manifest itself. In this research the author conducted a study on an online survey platform to track which format of teaching a foreign language has a great influence on the formation of the image of the country. Questions such as whether soft power elements are present in the language learning process, and if so, which of them have the greatest impact were discussed. As we can see, schools are at the junction of several elements of soft power (education, language, digitalization, culture). Therefore, it is of interest to see to what extent the soft influence of these spheres spreads through such projects, forming the attractiveness of a particular state for different target groups, as well as through what technologies and tools it is implemented. As a result of our research, we were able to find out which elements of soft power are more clearly and vividly expressed in the process of learning a foreign language, as well as to understand in which learning formats these elements are more clearly manifested, these data are presented in the article.

**Keywords:** soft power, foreign language learning, communication technologies, education, digital communications.

On a global scale, rapprochement and fusion of cultures of different states takes place, as a result of globalization, the world becomes less isolated and more dependent on all its subjects. In addition, the result of globalization has been an increase in interest and demand for the study of foreign languages in the scientific and medical community, for example, English – the main one for communication and cooperation at the moment. This also affected specialists from other industries, including businessmen conducting international activities and even ordinary citizens who want to travel to countries without fear of being lost – of course, the increased interest and motivation to learn foreign languages is obvious.

The need to improve education of foreign students in the framework of the policy of soft. Siler such as the latest trends in the world of educational environment, emphasize V. V. Bondarenko, V. V. Saparov and others. S. O. Cerkev, in turn, tried to find out to what extent international relations and the rise of "soft power" of the States affected academic mobility and how it relates to the Bologna process A. Torkunov rightly argues that the success of the international arena is impossible without investment in human potential, this is why many emerging economies spend a significant amount of money on significant part of the budget for education, which may become important a competitive advantage and a tool of "soft power".

The author conducted a study on an online survey platform. Topics such as whether soft power elements are present in the language learning process, and if so, which of them have the greatest impact were discussed. Modern researchers and authors of soft power ratings of states distinguish such elements of soft power as the political system, the activities of state authorities, business, education, culture, language, digitalization, etc. As we can see, educational projects are at the junction of several elements of soft power (education, language, digitalization, culture). Therefore, it is of interest to see to what extent the soft influence of these spheres spreads through such projects, forming

the attractiveness of a particular state for different target groups, as well as through what technologies and tools this is implemented.

The survey was based on online google form, the number of respondents were more than 240 people from different parts of the world. According to the results of the study, the majority of respondents are over 31 years old, 20 % are aged from 26 to 31, and 24.4 % of people are from 19 to 25. The geography of the survey participants is very wide, students from more than 10 cities of Russia took part, and there are also participants from foreign countries. The most popular language to learn, which was noted in our study, is definitely English. The second most popular is German, the third is Spanish, and the fourth is French. However, the respondents' responses even included such languages as Swedish, Latin, Finnish, Hebrew, Tatar, and others. 72.4 % of respondents commented that they have been studying the language for more than 5 years, the rest of the schedule was divided by the answers "from 1 year to 5 years", "from 3 years to 5" and "up to 1 year". Such data about the respondents themselves was obtained in the course of the study, followed by questions that relate directly to the presence of soft power in the learning process. For example, to the question "Why do you study a foreign language?", 89.2 % said that they need it for general development. 40.2 admitted that they study the language for tourism purposes. And in the third place in popularity is the answer "Immigration", which to one degree or another can mean that students were positively influenced, so that they had a desire to become a resident of the country whose language they are studying.

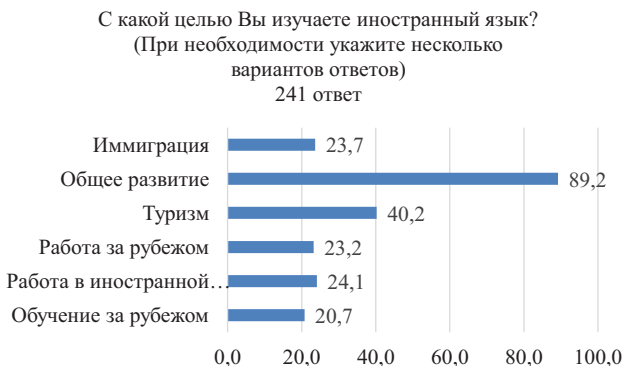


Fig. 1. Causes for learning a foreign language, %

The answers to the following question, which sounds like "Has learning a foreign language affected your interest in the country / countries where the language is spoken?" brings clarity to the above statement. 69.3 % of people wanted to visit the country, 47.7 % expressed a desire to study the history of the country more deeply, and according to the results of the study, 25.7 % of students wanted to move abroad.

In addition, thanks to our survey, we found out that culture is the main element that attracts attention during the study of a foreign language, it is about it that students learned the most. The main source of knowledge about the language remains paper textbooks, there are also those who use educational films, get knowledge in internships or student exchanges.

Ваш интерес к языку возник до или после посещения страны (стран)?

241 ответ

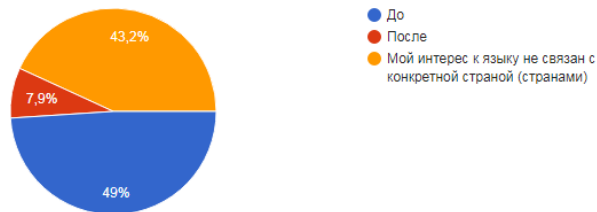


Fig. 2. Your interest in the country evoked before of after the country visit?

Each research question became a reason for a separate conclusion in our study. An important discovery in understanding how much influence soft power through offline and online learning has become was hidden in the question "Did learning a foreign language affect your interest in the country / countries where a given language is spoken?", the results in percentages show that the prevailing majority of people changed their opinion about the country where this language is spoken and they wanted to move there. Based on this, we conclude that the manifestation of soft power of foreign states through the process of learning the language is high.

By studying the answers to the question "How much did you learn about the country (countries) where this language is spoken during the study of a foreign language?" we were able to prove that 41.9 % increased the boundaries of their knowledge of the country (countries), and 32 % claim that learning a foreign language opened up the country for them from a new side. This is another confirmation that the manifestation of soft power has a lot of influence and manifests itself in the learning process, even to the extent that some respondents may change their opinion about the country and its constituent elements to the exact opposite.

The analysis of the answers to the question "How did you get information about the country (countries) in the process of learning the language?" indicates that foreign language learners take most of the information and knowledge from the classical textbooks of a foreign language, this has become the main source of soft power, which could affect the respondents, they were chosen by 67.2 %. We can draw similar conclusions, taking into account the fact that only 26.1 % of respondents have ever visited the country of the language being studied and could be exposed to the influence of soft power through possible events that occurred directly in this country.

Some users of foreign books and any training courses may not assume what kind of soft power of the country they broadcast to their students, but as the study showed, soft power can be expressed in many forms.

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Л. Ф. Исхакова

## ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ЯЗЫКА КАК ИСТОЧНИК МЯГКОЙ СИЛЫ: РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ОПРОСА

### Аннотация

В современном мире страны часто конкурируют за рабочую силу, инвестиции и т. д., поэтому для них очень важно создавать и поддерживать свой положительный имидж.

В этом контексте мягкая сила – способность достигать целей путем привлечения и убеждения – имеет решающее значение для эффективного проведения внешней политики. Язык традиционно является значительным источником интереса к стране, мягкого влияния на международную аудиторию. Поэтому процесс обучения иностранному языку может намеренно или непреднамеренно быть источником мягкой силы конкретного государства или культуры. Более того, если такие мероприятия проводятся онлайн, то они характеризуются высокой скоростью связи и низкой стоимостью. В этом контексте (мягкая сила) деятельность международных лингвистических проектов ранее не анализировалась, особенно через призму коммуникаций, что делает исследование особенно актуальным. Современные исследователи и авторы рейтингов мягкой силы государств выделяют такие элементы мягкой силы, как политическая система, правительство, бизнес, образование, культура, язык, цифровизация и др. Через различные аспекты языка может проявляться привлекательность страны. Автор провел исследование на платформе онлайн-опроса, чтобы отследить, какой формат обучения иностранному языку оказывает большое влияние на формирование имиджа страны. Обсуждались такие вопросы, как наличие элементов мягкой силы в процессе изучения языка, и если да, то какие из них оказывают наибольшее влияние. Как мы видим, школы находятся на стыке нескольких элементов мягкой силы (образование, язык, цифровизация, культура). Поэтому интересно посмотреть, в какой степени мягкое влияние этих сфер распространяется через такие проекты, формируя привлекательность того или иного государства для различных целевых групп, а также с помощью каких технологий и инструментов оно реализуется. В результате нашего исследования нам удалось выяснить, какие элементы мягкой силы более ярко выражены в процессе изучения иностранного языка, а также понять, в каких форматах обучения эти элементы проявляются.

**Ключевые слова:** мягкая сила, процесс обучения иностранному языку, коммуникационные технологии, образование, цифровые коммуникации.

S. Mafos

## THE IMAGE OF NIGERIA IN THE MEDIA DISCOURSE OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

### Abstract

Nigeria had been an agri-based economy before the discovery of oil. The discovery and exploration of oil made Nigeria a center of attraction for international investors. Unfortunately, in 1980s, there was a decrease in oil revenue of Nigeria as a result of low demand which was caused by surplus production of oil at the global level. As a consequence, the nation's global influence also began to diminish. The result of this was a change in demography as more people began to immigrate. The article through the Push-Pull theory reveals that these are the driving forces for Nigerians to immigrate to Europe. It explains the image of Nigeria in the media discourse of Great Britain as an economy characterized by corruption, insecurity, unemployment, underemployment, socio-economic and political instabilities, food security, inflation, etc. The article claims that the political and socio-economic instabilities of Nigeria are the main reasons or driving forces why most Nigerians migrate to Europe. As a conclusion several recommendations are proposed on how to manage the high rate of immigration and restore the global reputation of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** media discourse, image of the country, Nigeria, international migration.