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**ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AND RUSSIAN ENGLISH IN RUSSIA:  
CLIL AND NON-CLIL STUDENTS' OPINION IN SAINT PETERSBURG  
INGLÊS, RUSSO E RUSSO INGLÊS NA RÚSSIA:  
OPINIÃO DOS ESTUDANTES CLIL E NON-CLIL EM SAINT PETERSBURG**

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*Processo de Avaliação: Double Blind Review*

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**ABSTRACT**

English is a Lingua Franca in the many domains. Its spread is a factor and a result of the Expanding Globalization. The current conflict between Russia and the West initiates a number of increasing concerns towards the fate and the future of the Russian language. To be more exact, they are underdevelopment, pidginization and influx and spread of the English language uncontrolled. The research was carried out at Saint Petersburg University in the period of January 2016. CLIL and non-CLIL students from three Saint Petersburg universities were asked (N=301). The results of the investigations described

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main concerns and the level of adoption of the Russian variety of English (Russian English).

**Keywords:** english is a lingua franca; world englishes; russian english; pidginization.

## RESUMO

O inglês é uma Língua Franca em muitos domínios. A sua propagação é um fator e um resultado da expansão da globalização. O conflito atual entre a Rússia e o Ocidente suscita uma série de preocupações crescentes em relação ao destino e ao futuro da língua russa. Para sermos mais exatos, ela está em subdesenvolvimento, pidginização (língua de contato), e com influxo e disseminação da língua inglesa descontrolados. A pesquisa foi realizada na Universidade de São Petersburgo no período de janeiro de 2016. Os alunos do *CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning<sup>4</sup>)* e não CLIL de três universidades de São Petersburgo foram questionados (N = 301). Os resultados das investigações descreveram as principais preocupações e o nível de adoção da variedade russa de inglês (inglês russo).

**Palavras-chave:** inglês é uma língua franca; inglês do mundo; inglês russo; pidginização.

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<sup>4</sup> AICL – Aprendizagem Integrada de Conteúdos e de Língua.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The postmodern society faced globalization and difficulty of linguistic choice: should we have one international language that will be common to all peoples in the world? The English language can be perceived as a standard of communication. However, it can have some national features (e.g., Chinese English, Spanish English, Indian English etc.). The founder of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Michael Halliday, urged non-English-speaking countries to promote the national variants of English, which could develop a national mentality and culture (HALLIDAY, 2003). As a result, we are aware of the growth in popularity of the World English concept varieties throughout the world. Russia has supported this process. There are very few special studies on this topic (see e.g., PROSHINA, 2006, 2014). At the same time, the reaction on the English language spread out, Russian English can be hardly known, and this gap should be covered.

We will describe opinions of Russian CLIL and non-CLIL students. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) includes both kind of education: professional subjects and language skills (see e.g., DAFOUZ; GUERRINI, 2009; DAFOUZ; LLINARES; MORTON, 2010; DAFOUZ; SMIT, 2014; LLINARES; MORTON, 2010; NIKULA et al., 2016).

The introduction of CLIL into Russian practice has been controversial (PAVENKOV; PAVENKOVA, 2016; RUBTCOVA; PAVENKOV, 2016, 2017). However, the spreading of English in Russia is a natural process (RIVLINA, 2015) and can be assessed as a process of self-organization (EL'MEEV; TARANDO, 1999; RUBTSOVA, 2011). Our objective is aimed to describe the CLIL and non-CLIL students' opinions about the fate of Russian, English and Russian English languages in Russian society and educational system.

## 2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

An educational policy appears as a nationwide system of priorities in education, which should correspond to the socio-economic development of the country (RUBTSOVA, 2016; VOLCHKOVA; PAVENKOVA, 2002;) and should be a manageable process (RUBTSOVA, 2007). In the meantime, the educational policy should also be an instrument to ensure the fundamental rights and provides reliability in government-population relationship (see e.g., KALKAN, 2016; RUBTSOVA; VASILIEVA, 2016).

There are several historical periods of state strategies in the foreign language learning were especially remarkable (BOGATYREOVA, 2014). It is possible to create a historical and pedagogical periodization of foreign language education in Russia:

1. The pre-Petrine (pre-university) stage (the X-XVII centuries) is characterized by the emergence of interest in ancient languages - Greek and Latin.
2. Petrovsky reform: Peter I gave the impetus to the development of crafts, arts, commerce, foreign language study
3. The educational stage (the XVII-XX centuries) was marked by close attention to the classical languages of grammar studies, which was identified with logic and human thoughts development. The progress of capitalist relations, the struggle for markets and raw material markets demanded a large number of people with foreign language skills (BOGATYREOVA, 2014).
4. In the Soviet period (1917-1991) the state language policy was aimed at training of highly qualified personnel.
5. The stage of *dialogue of cultures* (1991 – to date) – stabilization of foreign language education (DEIKOVA, 2011).

During these stages Russian linguists created different ideas about foreign language education: the traditional paradigm (conservation of younger generation and transmission of the most significant elements of culture), the rationalist paradigm (focused on learning trails by students) and the humanistic paradigm (considering the student's self-development as a free person), according to Deikova (2011).

English became a foreign language for educational purposes in Russia only in the 1970s (ALPATOV, 2014). German had been the main foreign language before.

English became prestigious quickly and as a result, schools that took English language more seriously in education appeared in all regions of the USSR. Parents considered these schools as ones that could offer a better education. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, English became an extremely popular subject for learning. Many parents enthusiastically gave their children the opportunity to learn English. Parents paid much attention to English even sending their kids to language courses and foreign training. However, no state and regional policies were formulated to support this movement.

The Russian sociological organization, Levada Center, published the results of the Foreign Language Skills Survey (LEVADA CENTER, 2014). The survey took place between April 25 and 28, 2014, and was conducted throughout Russia in both urban and rural settings. The survey was carried out with 1602 people over the age of 18 in 130 localities and in 45 of the country's regions. The Table 1 shows that 70% of the respondents did not speak any foreign language and 11% could speak English with some degree of fluency.

Table 1 Do you speak more or less free in any foreign languages, and if so, on what? Age distribution (multiple answers are possible), Levada Center, Russia, 2014 (%).

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Age</i>			
		18-24 y.o.	25-39 y.o.	40-54 y.o.	55-older y.o.
<b>English</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>
German	2	2	3	3	2
Spanish	2	2	1	1	2
French	<1	1	<1	<1	<1
Chinese	<1	<1	1	<1	<1
Other	2	1	1	2	2
Speak some foreign language, but with great difficulty	13	21	18	10	7
Generally, I do not speak foreign languages	70	49	61	74	83

Source: LEVADA CENTER. *Foreign Language Skills Survey* (2014).

In fact, the Levada Center data looks overtly optimistic against the background of official statistics. According to the official statistics census (2010), not more than

5.48% of Russians think they can speak English. In eight years a very small success was achieved from 4.84% to 5.48% (see Table 2).

Table 2 I can speak... The results of the two official censuses in Russia (2002, 2010), Federal State Statistics Service (2015).

<i>Nº,</i> <i>spread</i>	<i>I can speak...</i> <i>Total, people</i> <i>2002</i>	<i>Group</i> <i>%</i> <i>2002</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>%</i>	<i>I can</i> <i>speak...</i> <i>Total,</i> <i>people</i> <i>2010</i>	<i>Group</i> <i>%</i> <i>2010</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>%</i>	<i>Growth</i> <i>From</i> <i>2002 to</i> <i>2010,</i> <i>%</i>	<i>Growth</i> <i>From</i> <i>2002</i> <i>to</i> <i>2010,</i> <i>people</i>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Rus</b> <b>sian</b>	<b>142,573,285</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>98.21</b>	<b>137,494,8</b> <b>93</b>	<b>99.41</b>	<b>96.2</b> <b>5</b>	<b>-3.56</b>	<b>-5,078,3</b> <b>92</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Eng</b> <b>lish</b>	<b>6,955,315</b>	<b>4.84</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>7,574,303</b>	<b>5.48</b>	<b>5.30</b>	<b>8.90</b>	<b>618,988</b>
4	Ger man	2,895,147	2.01	1.99	2,069,949	1.50	1.45	-28.50	-825,198
11	Fren ch	705,217	0.49	0.49	616,394	0.45	0.43	-12.60	-88,823
31	Spa nish	111,900	0.08	0.08	152,147	0.11	0.11	35.97	40,247

Source: RUSSIA. Federal State Statistics Service. **Census results.** Moscow (2015).

So we can see a controversial situation. In the 1960s foreign language education in Russia was declared as the necessary measure for increasing quality of students' knowledge and personality. The Government Regulation ruled this task: *About Improvement of Foreign Languages Studying* in May 27, 1961. The document lays down new methodological aims in foreign languages training and a new educational paradigm which points that foreign languages knowledge for specialists of the different fields of science, technology and culture, and broad circles of the country is of particular importance. (POSTANOVLENIE, 1961).

At the same time, we can see in Tables 1 and 2 that Russian population still has a very low level of foreign language skills. In the 1990s there was a reduction in foreign languages training hours in school curricula. Social, politic and economic situation changes claims the knowledge of foreign languages as a tool for everyday

communication but the population is not prepared for it (USIAEVA et al., 2016) and that might have some negative psychological consequences (SHMELEV, 2015).

According to the President Putin Decree of May 7, 2012, n. 599 *On Measures to Implement in the Field of Education and Science of Public Policy*, it has been established the task of ensuring the entrance of several Russian universities in the first hundred leading universities according to the world ranking of universities before 2020. The solution to this issue will contribute to action plan implementation for the leading universities development in providing their competitiveness among the world's leading scientific and educational centers, approved by the Federal Government of October 29, 2012, n. 2006 (VASILIEVA; RUBTCOVA, 2015). Certain key indicators was set before universities:

- to build research capacity;
- to create educational programmes and intellectual products to the world level;
- to integrate university innovation in vocational training, to develop a general and further education, to popularize science among children and young people, to encourage them in creative activities;
- to have a staff of at least 10% of foreign teachers and to attract at least 15% of foreign students.

Universities are assessed by formal parameters: publicity and citations (h-index), the number of Nobel laureates, reputation (academic community and employers opinion about the university), proportion of foreign students and teachers, operations income, research – volume and revenue (PROJECT 5-100, 2012).

A common challenge for all participating universities was a requirement to improve the Citation Index of the employees. Quotes depend on many factors. In many respects, this figure hinders the quality of translation into English, which printed most of the world's scientific papers. Another important criterion: the low share of articles in cooperation with foreign scientists. It is directly connected to the Russian tradition in distinguishing science in academic, industry and universities, whereas in America and Europe, science is concentrated in the universities. Thus, despite the fact that English language teaching was not stated among the tasks, teachers and students suddenly faced high-level English requirements.



Therefore, we can draw conclusions on how the Russian language and educational policy influence bilingual programme implementation at the university level. In general, we see that serious support at the federal (state) level is impossible due to emphasis on Russian language in teaching and education. At the same time, the requirements of world university ranking cannot be done without high English proficiency. Universities can use autonomy and academic freedom, and the introduction of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes can be considered as their personal choice. In Chart 1 we give a summary of opportunities and limits for adapting CLIL conception to the Russian conditions in universities (see Chart 1).

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Limits</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Universities have the opportunity to make recommendations for the English language development to the public authorities.	The state has no interest in spreading English language itself but it does require achievements, which need English proficiency.
Universities can organize work with employers whose requirements are considered as very essential.	Employers declare the needs of English, but personnel mostly do not use English in real working communications.
Relative freedom in drawing up curricula.	State standards do not pay attention to English, and it does not appear in the list of competences in most specialties. FGOS-3 only creates its possibility.
Strengthening of international integration of universities.	The international integration of universities can be limited to the geopolitical strategy of Russia and its results. There can be difficulties with visas and legislation from both sides, the high cost of projects due to the lack of grants and other financial resources.
Universities can strengthen work with matriculants and their parents on the mutual	The quality of English-language CLIL programmes is not controlled.

promotion of English-language CLIL programmes and dual-degree programmes.	
Introduction of raised tuition fee for the English-language CLIL programmes for foreign experts involvement purpose and improvement of programmes' quality.	The market of English-language CLIL programmes is highly competitive. Universities of such countries as Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain, etc. can make the essential competition in the market of English-language programmes.

Chart 1 Adaptation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to the Russian conditions in universities: opportunities and limits.

As we can see, CLIL programmes are faced with big challenges. Low level of English proficiency (see Tables 1 and 2) cannot help to achieve ambitious goals that are established by the president and the market. Therefore, discussion about Russian English can be an important tool to understand possibilities and improve chances to success.

### 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Considering our objective, the conducted research was based on the data gathered from questionnaire. It set a goal to interpret and apprehend students' opinion about the conception of Russian English. Therefore, the small-scale research addressed the following research question: How do students perceive the concept of Russian English?

The research was performed at Saint Petersburg University in the period January 2016. In order to conduct the research there were respondents: CLIL and non-CLIL students from three universities of Saint Petersburg. CLIL students study some subjects in English and non-CLIL students have 100% subjects in Russian. The students were roomed in specially equipped classrooms, they were requested to enter responses into on-line questionnaire using personal computers, mobile phones, and others digital devices. As a result, CLIL students provided 151 full answers and non-CLIL students provided 150 full answers. In total, 301 students gave full answers.

#### **4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Russian Society of Sociologists (RSS) in compliance with the Professional Ethical Code of Sociologists carried out the studies. As anonymity requirements are intended to ensure that the participants' identity in survey completion remains hidden, so there is no need in signing a Participant Consent Agreement.

All the respondents who gave their consent to participate in the study were informed about the primary objectives of the research. They were assured about the anonymity of their responses; the respondents were asked to provide their personal nicknames while submitting the report results. The participants were either provided with strong privacy guarantees on exchanging the gained data. The consent obtained made data available for the research purposes.

#### **5. RESULTS**

The survey implicitly introduces Russian English as a language that reflects national identity and culture. The survey results express a strong concern related to the lack of actions taken to preserve the Russian language and cultural attractions. 70.2% of CLIL-students respondents fully or partially agree with the statement that the quality of Russian language is gradually getting worse while 75.77% of non-CLIL-students think so (see Table 3). 76.82% of CLIL-students respondents fully or partially agree that special measures have to be undertaken for the purpose to support the Russian language and defend speakers of the Russian language. 79.82% of non-CLIL students think the same (see Table 4).



Table 3 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The quality of Russian language is gradually getting worse?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
CLIL Students	5.96%	13.91%	9.93%	44.37%	25.83%
Non-CLIL Students	6.27%	11.18%	6.78%	37.57%	38.20%

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

Table 4 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Special measures have to be undertaken for the purpose to support the Russian language and defend speakers of the Russian language?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
CLIL Students	4.64%	5.30%	13.25%	41.72%	35.10%
Non-CLIL Students	1.29%	7.14%	11.75%	34.42%	45.40%

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

As we can see in Tables 3 and 4 there are no significant differences between CLIL and non-CLIL students' answers. Both groups have a serious concern about the preservation of the Russian language as a cultural heritage. Table 5 shows respondents' opinion about classes with English language instructions. Here we can see some differences. 58.94 % of CLIL-students respondents fully or partially agree that replacement of language from Russian into English in academic environment (providing

classes with English language instructions) may lead to the crisis of Russian identity; they may lose historical and cultural achievements, and 75.53% of non-CLIL students think the same (see Table 5). However, it is a little bit surprising that 58.94 % of CLL-students become tense about studying in English, despite the choice of a programme with English language instructions.

Table 5 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Replacement of language from Russian into English in academic environment (providing classes with English language instructions) may lead to the crisis of Russian identity; we may lose historical and cultural achievements?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
CLIL Students	6.62%	13.91%	20.53%	33.11%	25.83%
Non-CLIL Students	4.12%	8.17%	12.18%	33.24%	42.29%

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

Table 6 shows a link between language choice and politics. 45.34% of CLIL-students respondents think that due to adoption of the English language as a language for academic purposes (instead of Russian) they could suffer serious political consequence. 62.91% of non-CLIL students respondents fully or partially agree with this sentence (see Table 6).

Table 6 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Due to adoption of the English language as a language for academic purposes (instead of Russian) we could suffer serious political consequences.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>CLIL</b>					
Students	9.94%	21.12%	18.63%	22.98%	22.36%
<b>Non-CLIL</b>					
Students	7.18%	18.12%	11.73%	23.88%	39.09%

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

Referring to secondary school education the participants of the research support very conservative position: 80.12% of CLIL and 84.62% of non-CLIL students strongly or partially agree that public school education should be conducted in Russian and regional languages, but not in English (see Table 7). We can verify again that differences in answers between CLIL and non-CLIL students are not large.

Table 7 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Public school education in Russia should be conducted in Russian and regional languages, but not in English.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>CLIL</b>					
Students	4.97%	4.97%	9.94%	21.12%	59.00%
<b>Non-CLIL</b>					
Students	2.03%	7.17%	6.18%	25.49%	59.13%

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

It is interesting that 48.35% of CLIL students believe that English for academic purposes in higher education curriculum would negatively affect the development of the Russian academic language and almost the same amount (48.87%) of non-CLIL students think the same (see Table 8).

Table 8 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: English for academic purposes in higher education curriculum would negatively affect the development and evolution of the Russian academic language.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
CLIL					
Students	13.25%	23.18%	15.23%	29.14%	19.21%
Non-CLIL	11.81%	12.78%	26.54%	25.14%	23.73%
Students					

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

The next question that investigated Russian English as a reflection of Russian culture and mentality was asked: “The national and regional varieties of the English language are actively spreading around the world. To what extent do you agree that there are several motivations to develop and enrich the Russian version of the English language (Russian English), which can reflect the Russian culture and mentality?” According to the results: 52.98% CLIL and 51.42% non-CLIL students give the positive responses (see Table 9). As we can see in Table 9, half of both groups are loyal to Russian English.

Table 9 The national and regional varieties of the English language are actively spreading around the world. To what extent do you agree that there are several motivations to develop and enrich the Russian version of the English language (Russian English), which can reflect the Russian culture and mentality?

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Partially disagree</b>	<b>It is difficult to say</b>	<b>Partially agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
CLIL					
Students	15.23%	11.92%	19.87%	30.46%	22.52%
Non-CLIL	9.12%	11.62%	27.84%	24.01%	27.41%
Students					

Source: RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF SOCIOLOGISTS (RSS) SURVEY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CODE OF SOCIOLOGISTS, Jan 2016.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With regard to our objective, the respondents were asked to share their attitudes about the needs and measures to defend and preserve the Russian language and cultural attractions; the reasonableness of teaching school subjects and university subject courses in English. To sum up, most of the respondents have expressed strong concern towards the fate and the future of the Russian language. The warnings were expressed pointing that the adoption of English in academic environment and classroom interaction including instructions in English could have a negative impact on Russian identity and political stability. To be more precise, teaching school subjects in English have not met clear support.

According to the students' views, studying English on the one hand, could bring economic benefits and financial sustainability; on the other hand, could harm the cultural values. Thus, the amount of English discourse should be reduced. Consequently, learning English could be assessed as beneficial only from the angle of economic success and development: for example, while looking for employment, having to migrate from the country or looking to expand business, educational or employment opportunities. The conception of Global identity is seen as socially and





politically dangerous for Russia. The conceptions of Russian English and multilingualism considering English as the working language have partially been supported.

The conceptual change has affected the amount of the participants who have chosen the options “It's hard to say” and “Disagree”. On the other hand, the amount of respondents who gave approval to the implementation of Russian English has remained stable. In whole, it should be noted that the conception of Russian English deserves further development and meets a certain support on the part of the students' community. Moreover, the evident benefit is that the adoption of Russian English can reduce concerns and eliminate dissatisfaction expressed by CLIL and ESL teachers. In addition, the assertion of Russian English may not allow Anglo-Saxon culture absorb and demolish Russian culture and identity. Experts, in return, can subconsciously receive performance advantages, as Russian English may reduce and weaken requirements to the language proficiency, standard of pronunciation, and availability of spoken language. Introduction of Russian English will equal the level of foreign language proficiency to the level achieved by CLIL and ESL teachers.

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