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## Peculiarities of Intercultural Communication of Russian-Speaking Migrants in Korea: Linguistic and Cultural Adaptation Strategies

### Abstract

In recent decades, the Republic of Korea has undergone significant sociocultural changes associated with increasing migration flows and the formation of a multicultural social environment. Among various migrant groups, Russian-speaking migrants represent a distinct community whose communicative practices and cultural norms differ considerably from those of Korean society. These differences often lead to communicative difficulties and complicate the process of sociocultural adaptation. This article examines the features of intercultural communication of Russian-speaking migrants in Korea, focusing on linguistic and cultural adaptation strategies. The study is based on the theoretical frameworks of intercultural communication, linguoculturology, and migration adaptation psychology. Particular attention is paid to differences in communicative styles, politeness systems, degrees of directness in speech, and hierarchical interaction models. The analysis demonstrates that Russian-speaking migrants encounter various linguistic and cultural barriers in educational, professional, and everyday contexts. In response to these challenges, migrants develop a range of adaptation strategies, including linguistic accommodation, code-switching, observational strategies, and selective adaptation. These strategies help reduce communicative tension, prevent misunderstandings, and enhance interaction with representatives of the host culture. The study highlights the crucial role of Korean language proficiency and intercultural competence in the successful sociocultural integration of Russian-speaking migrants.

**Keywords:** *intercultural communication, Russian-speaking migrants, linguistic adaptation, cultural adaptation, Korean language, sociocultural integration*

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## Koreyada rusdilli miqrantların mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyətinin xüsusiyyətləri: Dil və mədəni uyğunlaşma strategiyaları

### Xülasə

Son on illiklərdə Koreya Respublikası miqrasiya axınlarının artması və çoxmədəniyyətli cəmiyyətin formallaşması ilə bağlı mühüm sosial-mədəni dəyişikliklərə məruz qalmışdır. Müxtəlif miqrant qrupları arasında rusdilli miqrantlar kommunikativ davranışları və mədəni normaları Koreya cəmiyyətindən əhəmiyyətli dərəcədə fərqlənən xüsusi bir qrup təşkil edir. Bu cür fərqliliklər çox zaman ünsiyyət çətinliklərinə və sosial-mədəni adaptasiya prosesinin mürəkkəbləşməsinə səbəb olur. Bu tədqiqatda Koreyada yaşayan rusdilli miqrantların mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyət xüsusiyyətləri və onların dil və mədəni adaptasiya strategiyaları araşdırılır. Tədqiqat mədəniyyətlərarası kommunikasiya, linqvokulturologiya və miqrant adaptasiyası psixologiyasının nəzəri yanaşmalarına əsaslanır.

Ünsiyyət üslubları, nəzakət sistemləri, nitqin dolayı və ya birbaşa xarakteri, eləcə də iyerarxik münasibətlər xüsusi diqqət mərkəzində saxlanılır. Araşdırma göstərir ki, rusdilli miqrantlar təhsil, peşəkar və gündəlik mühitlərdə müxtəlif dil və mədəni maneələrlə üzləşirlər. Bu çətinliklərin aradan qaldırılması üçün onlar dil uyğunlaşması, kod dəyişməsi, müşahidə strategiyası və selektiv adaptasiya kimi strategiyalardan istifadə edirlər. Koreya dilini bilmək və mədəniyyətlərarası kompetensiyanın formalasdırılması uğurlu sosial-mədəni integrasiyanın əsas şərtləri kimi müəyyən edilir. Tədqiqat rusdilli miqrantların uğurlu sosial-mədəni integrasiyasında Koreya dili biliyinin və mədəniyyətlərarası səriştəliliyin mühüm rolunu vurğulayır. Bu tədqiqatın nəticələri mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyət sahəsində sonrakı tədqiqatlar, eləcə də Koreya dilinin xarici dil kimi tədrisində praktik tətbiqlər üçün faydalı ola bilər.

*Açar sözlər: mədəniyyətlərarası kommunikasiya, rusdilli miqrantlar, dil adaptasiyası, mədəni adaptasiya, Koreya dili, sosial-mədəni integrasiya*

## Introduction

In recent decades, the Republic of Korea has transformed from a predominantly monoethnic society into a multicultural space characterized by active interaction among representatives of different cultures and languages. The growing number of migrants, including those from the post-Soviet countries, has contributed to increased scholarly interest in issues related to their adaptation and integration into Korean society. In this context, intercultural communication becomes a central mechanism ensuring the successful inclusion of migrants in a new sociocultural environment.

### Research

Russian-speaking migrants in Korea form a distinct social and cultural group. They originate from a cultural space that differs significantly from Korean culture in terms of communicative norms, behavioral models, and value orientations. These differences often lead to communicative barriers and misunderstandings, which complicate the process of adaptation. Korean communicative culture is traditionally characterized by indirectness, hierarchical relationships, and a strong emphasis on politeness and contextual cues, whereas Russian communicative practices tend to be more explicit and direct (Hall, 1976; Ter-Minasova, 2000).

Despite these challenges, many Russian-speaking migrants develop their own interaction strategies based on the conscious acquisition of cultural codes, adaptation of speech behavior, and the development of intercultural competence. The relevance of this study lies in the need for a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and cultural aspects of adaptation experienced by Russian-speaking migrants in Korea. Analyzing this process makes it possible not only to better understand the mechanisms of intercultural communication but also to identify factors that contribute to successful integration into the host society. This study is based on analytical and observational data.

The aim of this study is to identify the specific features of intercultural communication among Russian-speaking migrants in Korea and to determine the main strategies of their linguistic and cultural adaptation.

*To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:*

1. To examine the key difficulties arising in communication between Russian-speaking migrants and Koreans.
2. To identify typical linguistic and cultural barriers.
3. To analyze adaptation strategies employed by Russian-speaking migrants to ensure effective interaction in a new cultural environment.
4. To characterize the role of the Korean language as a tool of integration and the formation of a new sociocultural identity.

### 1. Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Intercultural communication is a complex and multilayered process of interaction between representatives of different cultures, in which the exchange of information is accompanied by the interpretation and reinterpretation of cultural meanings. According to E. Hall, each culture possesses

its own “communication context,” which determines how much meaning is transmitted explicitly through language and how much is conveyed implicitly through non-verbal cues and shared cultural background (Hall, 1976). Korean culture is traditionally classified as a high-context culture, where great importance is attached to non-verbal signals, intonation, hierarchical relationships, and politeness strategies. In contrast, Russian communicative culture is characterized by greater directness and explicitness, which often becomes a source of misunderstanding in intercultural interactions.

A significant contribution to intercultural communication theory was made by G. Hofstede, who proposed the model of cultural dimensions. According to his framework, Korea belongs to cultures with a high level of collectivism, strong respect for hierarchy, and a pronounced power distance, whereas Russian culture demonstrates intermediate characteristics combining elements of collectivism and individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010). These cultural differences manifest themselves in speech behavior, norms of address, and perceptions of acceptable ways of expressing opinions, particularly in professional and educational settings.

In Russian academic scholarship, issues of intercultural communication have been extensively examined in the works of Yu. E. Prokhorov, V. V. Krasnykh, I. I. Khaleeva, and other researchers. Special attention has been given to the concept of intercultural competence, defined as the ability to understand culturally conditioned differences, correctly interpret communicative intentions, and select appropriate speech strategies (Prokhorov, 2009; Khaleeva, 1999). From this perspective, the intercultural competence of Russian-speaking migrants in Korea becomes a key factor in their successful adaptation.

From the standpoint of linguistic and cultural studies, represented by scholars such as A. Wierzbicka, V. A. Maslova, E. M. Vereshchagin, and V. G. Kostomarov, language is viewed not merely as a means of communication but also as a repository of cultural values and worldviews (Wierzbicka, 1996; Maslova, 2001). Learning a new language is therefore inevitably associated with the acquisition of a new worldview and a system of norms regulating speech behavior. For Russian-speaking migrants learning Korean, this process involves not only mastering grammar and vocabulary but also restructuring communicative habits, including forms of address, expressions of politeness, emotional display, and degrees of directness.

An important component of adaptation is the development of intercultural interaction strategies. These include accommodation (adjustment to the norms of the host culture), code-switching (alternation between languages and cultural codes depending on the communicative situation), observational strategies (careful analysis and imitation of local communicative behavior), and selective adaptation (adopting only those elements of the new culture that do not contradict one's own values). Such strategies help migrants minimize communicative breakdowns, reduce stress, and increase the effectiveness of interaction within Korean society (Berry, 1997).

Thus, the theoretical framework of this study draws upon concepts from intercultural communication theory (Hall, 1976; Hofstede et al., 2010), linguistic and cultural studies (Wierzbicka, 1996; Maslova, 2001), and migration adaptation psychology (Berry, 1997). The integration of these approaches allows for a comprehensive analysis of the adaptation of Russian-speaking migrants in Korea as a multifaceted process involving not only language acquisition but also the transformation of communicative and cultural behavior patterns.

## 2. Practical Analysis: Communicative Difficulties and Adaptation Strategies of Russian-Speaking Migrants in Korea

The practical part of the study is based on the analysis of observational data, personal communicative experiences of Russian-speaking migrants, and the generalization of typical situations of intercultural interaction in educational, professional, and everyday contexts in the Republic of Korea. This approach makes it possible to identify the most common communicative difficulties and adaptation strategies employed by migrants in real-life conditions.

One of the key problems of intercultural communication is the difference in norms of linguistic politeness. The Korean language system presupposes strict adherence to hierarchy and social

distance, which is reflected in the choice of politeness levels, forms of address, and grammatical constructions. For Russian-speaking migrants, who are not accustomed to such a detailed and rigid system of linguistic etiquette, this often becomes a source of communicative tension. Errors in selecting the appropriate speech level may be perceived by Korean interlocutors as rudeness or disrespect, even in the absence of such intentions.

Another significant difficulty concerns differences in the degree of directness in speech. Russian communicative tradition allows for relatively open expression of opinions, disagreement, and emotions. In contrast, Korean culture favors indirect speech, mitigated formulations, and the avoidance of explicit refusals. As a result, Russian-speaking migrants may experience difficulties both in interpreting the intentions of Korean interlocutors and in adjusting their own speech behavior to prevent communicative conflicts.

In the process of adaptation, Russian-speaking migrants develop various intercultural interaction strategies. One of the most common is linguistic accommodation, which involves the conscious simplification of speech, the use of standardized politeness formulas, and memorized communicative patterns. This strategy is particularly typical at the initial stage of adaptation and helps reduce the risk of communicative errors.

Code-switching is also widely used and manifests itself in alternating between Russian and Korean depending on the communicative situation. This strategy serves as a compensatory mechanism for linguistic gaps and facilitates communication, especially in informal settings or interactions with bilingual interlocutors (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997).

Special attention should be paid to the observational strategy, whereby migrants deliberately analyze the behavior of Korean interlocutors, patterns of verbal interaction, and non-verbal signals, gradually adopting the most effective communicative practices. This approach contributes to the development of intercultural competence and reduces the level of cultural shock.

In some cases, selective adaptation can be observed, in which Russian-speaking migrants adopt only those elements of Korean communicative culture that do not contradict their own value system. This strategy allows migrants to preserve their cultural identity while ensuring functional communicative effectiveness.

Overall, practical analysis demonstrates that the intercultural adaptation of Russian-speaking migrants in Korea is a dynamic process involving the overcoming of linguistic and cultural barriers and the active search for individual communication strategies. In this context, proficiency in the Korean language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as an important factor in successful sociocultural integration.

## Conclusion

The present study has examined the features of intercultural communication among Russian-speaking migrants in the Republic of Korea in the context of their linguistic and cultural adaptation. The analysis of theoretical sources and practical material has revealed a number of communicative difficulties resulting from differences in speech norms, politeness systems, and cultural interaction models. It has been established that the most significant factors influencing intercultural communication include differences in the degree of directness of speech, the hierarchical nature of Korean communicative culture, and the specificity of linguistic etiquette. These features require Russian-speaking migrants to adapt their speech behavior and reconsider habitual communicative strategies. As a result of the analysis, the main intercultural adaptation strategies were identified, including linguistic accommodation, code-switching, observational strategies, and selective adaptation. The application of these strategies contributes to reducing communicative barriers and increasing the effectiveness of interaction with representatives of the host culture.

Thus, proficiency in the Korean language and the development of intercultural competence form essential conditions for the successful sociocultural integration of Russian-speaking migrants into Korean society. The results of this study may be used in further research on intercultural communication as well as in the practice of teaching Korean as a foreign language.

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