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Инструменты языковой политики многонационального государства в конструировании национально-государственной идентичности

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Аннотация. Введение. В статье представлено описание методологического подхода к анализу инструментов языковой политики как системообразующего фактора конструирования национально-государственной идентичности на примере Российской Федерации. Авторы обосновывают актуальность исследования принятием новых стратегических документов РФ (2025-2026 гг.), задающих векторы развития языковой сферы. **Цель.** Исследование направлено на выявление и систематизацию инструментов языковой политики, способствующих укреплению общероссийской гражданской идентичности, а также на выделение ключевых проблем и перспектив реализации этой политики в условиях сохранения этнокультурного многообразия. **Материалы и методы.** Исследование построено на анализе нормативно-правовых актов федерального и регионального уровней (Конституция РФ, указы Президента), международных кейсов (Казахстан, Индонезия, Индия, Чехия) и научных публикаций по социолингвистике. Комплекс методов включает документальный анализ, сравнительно-правовой метод и обобщение эмпирических данных. **Результаты и обсуждение.** В ходе работы обнаружено, что языковая политика реализуется через четыре универсальных механизма: институциональный (закрепление статуса языка в нормативных актах), образовательный (изучение языков на уровне школьного, ВУЗовского образования), коммуникативный (регулирование публичной сферы и рекламы) и культурно-символический (через просветительские проекты). Российская модель охарактеризована как многокомпонентная, сочетающая доминирование русского языка с поддержкой языков народов РФ. При этом выявлены острые противоречия между федеральным центром и региональными элитами, а также системная проблема снижения языковой грамотности среди молодёжи. **Заключение.** По итогам проведенного исследования можно сделать вывод о том, что современная языковая политика РФ представляет собой комплексный стратегический ресурс консолидации общества. Наблюдаются институциональные успехи и рост охвата образовательными программами, а дальнейшее развитие политики требует внимания к качеству языкового образования и осторожности.

Ключевые слова: языковая политика, инструменты языковой политики, национально-государственная идентичность, российская модель языковой политики

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Research article

Language policy instruments of a multinational state in the construction of national-state identity

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Abstract. Introduction. The article presents a description of a methodological approach to analyzing language policy instruments as a system-forming factor in the construction of national-state identity, using the Russian Federation as a case study. The author substantiates the relevance of the research by referencing the adoption of new strategic documents in the Russian Federation (2025–2026), which set the development vectors for the language sphere. **Goal.** The research is aimed at identifying and systematizing language policy instruments that contribute to strengthening all-Russian civic identity, as well as highlighting the key challenges and prospects for the implementation of this policy in the context of preserving ethnocultural diversity. **Materials and methods.** The study is based on an analysis of federal and regional normative legal acts (the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Presidential Decrees), international cases (Kazakhstan, Indonesia, India, the Czech Republic), and scholarly publications in sociolinguistics. The methodological framework comprises documentary analysis, a comparative legal method, and the synthesis of empirical data. **Results and discussion.** The study reveals that language policy is implemented through four universal mechanisms: institutional (establishing the legal status of languages in regulatory acts), educational (language learning at the school and higher education levels), communicative (regulating the public sphere and advertising), and cultural-symbolic (through educational and outreach projects). The Russian model is characterized as multi-component, combining the dominance of the Russian language with support for the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation. At the same time, acute contradictions between the federal center and regional elites have been identified, along with a systemic problem of declining language literacy among young people. **Conclusion.** Based on the findings of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the contemporary language policy of the Russian Federation represents a comprehensive strategic resource for societal consolidation. Institutional successes and an expansion of educational program coverage are observed; however, further policy development requires attention to the quality of language education and a cautious approach.

Keywords: language policy, language policy instruments, national-state identity, Russian model of language policy

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Introduction. In the context of globalization, increasing migration processes, and growing intercultural interactions, language policy is becoming a key mechanism for governing multinational societies. Language is not simply a means of transmitting information, but the primary bearer of culture and national identity. In multinational states, language policy is designed to balance two conflicting objectives: ensuring national unity through a common language and protecting the rights of linguistic minorities. For the Russian Federation, home to representatives of more than 190 nationalities, the problem of developing a balanced language policy capable of simultaneously strengthening national unity and preserving ethnocultural

diversity is particularly acute [21]. As researchers note, the Russian language has significant potential in shaping the civic identity of Russians and Russian ethnic self-awareness. A number of regulatory documents in recent years have identified the need to preserve and strengthen the position of the Russian language as a key task. At the same time, despite the obvious attention and extensive coverage of language issues in legislative documents, some contradictory aspects are noted [12].

The adoption of new strategic documents on language and national policy in the Russian Federation in 2025–2026 lends particular significance to this topic. Presidential Decree No. 474 of July 11, 2025, approved the Fundamentals of the State Language Policy of the Russian Federation (Decree No. 474, 2025), and Decree No. 858 of November 25, 2025, approved the Strategy for the State National Policy of the Russian Federation through 2036 (Decree No. 858, 2025). These documents set new guidelines for the formation of a pan-Russian civic identity while preserving linguistic diversity.

The aim of the study is to identify and systematize the tools of language policy of a multinational state that contribute to the construction and strengthening of national-state identity (using the example of the Russian Federation).

To achieve this goal, the following tasks are solved:

1. To reveal the theoretical and empirical foundations of the relationship between language policy and national-state identity.
2. To analyze international experience in the application of language policy instruments and, on this basis, to identify universal mechanisms of its influence on identity.
3. To characterize in detail the modern Russian model of language policy in the unity of its institutional, educational, communicative and cultural-symbolic components.
4. To identify key problems and contradictions in the implementation of language policy in the Russian Federation and outline possible ways to overcome them.

Materials and methods. Solving the stated objectives required the use of a set of complementary methods, providing a systematic analysis of language policy instruments and their impact on national and state identity.

The primary empirical basis of the study was federal and regional regulatory legal acts. The analysis was supplemented by research on the specific topic of the relationship between language policy and national identity. The primary methods employed were documentary analysis (to identify the substantive goals and mechanisms enshrined in regulatory legal acts), comparative analysis (to examine regional cases and compare federal and regional levels of language policy implementation), and generalization and systematization of the scientific literature (to clarify conceptual frameworks and model the mechanisms by which language policy influences identity).

The reliability of the obtained results is ensured by relying on official sources, representative sociological data and cross-checking the conclusions against different types of sources.

Results and discussion. In accordance with the Fundamentals of the State Language Policy of the Russian Federation, approved by Presidential Decree No. 474 of July 11, 2025, the state language policy is “a set of measures of a regulatory, organizational, managerial, financial, economic, scientific, personnel and other nature, implemented by federal government bodies, government bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, other government bodies and local government bodies with the participation of civil society institutions” [2]. Its goal is the formation of an all-Russian civic identity, achieved through the preservation, development and support of the Russian language as the state language of the Russian Federation. The scientific community, represented by E. V. Kamenskaya, rightly notes that language policy is part of national policy and cannot be considered in isolation [7]. Thus, in modern Russia it is understood as a comprehensive strategic direction of public administration, inextricably linked with the tasks of national security and civic consolidation.

In academic literature, it is common to distinguish between domestic and foreign language policy. Domestic language policy is aimed at regulating linguistic relations within the country, ensuring the functioning of the state language, and supporting the languages of the peoples living within its territory. Foreign language policy is associated with promoting the language abroad and strengthening its position in the international humanitarian space [13]. Both directions are reflected in the aforementioned Decree No. 474, which lists among its goals both "ensuring the protection, support, and development of the Russian language as the state language of the Russian Federation, as the language of the nation-forming people, and as a native language," and "promoting the Russian language worldwide" [2].

National-state identity is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. V.V. Titov summarizes that it represents "the interconnection of an individual with a national community (both ethnically homogeneous and heterogeneous), represented by the image of "We" as an imaginary community, supported by the institution of the state and the political and cultural tradition of statehood" [15]. That is, in the most general terms, it can be defined as an individual's awareness of their belonging to a particular state and people, sharing its values, history, and cultural traditions. Language, in this case, serves as the primary bearer of the culture and national identity of a people [12]. From the perspective of the subject of this work, it is necessary to note that there is a distinction between political and national identity, but in the context of examining the instruments of state language policy, this distinction will be neglected.

National and political identities are organically and inextricably linked to the level of proficiency in and respect for one's native language. I.A. Vetrenko and V.V. Dubitsky formulate the following definition: political identity is the awareness of belonging to a community of citizens, which is based on a common cultural foundation determined by the level of language proficiency and attitude toward it [4]. This thesis of this interconnection is supported by research that has become classic in modern sociology. Language, according to P. Berger and T. Luckmann, is a component that largely determines identity [26].

Empirical studies confirm the importance of language as an identity marker. Russian, as a marker of pan-Russian civic identity, is significant for almost half of Russians, second only to the common state. Moreover, for ethnic Russians, its role is significantly more significant than for people of other nationalities. This creates certain risks, as the strengthening of the Russian language's position in the legal framework could have a destabilizing effect on interethnic harmony [3].

L.V. Deriglazova and S.A. Akhromenko's study, based on a constructivist approach and discursive practices methodology, analyzed 166 essays by students at a regional university on the topic "What does it mean to be Russian?" for the period 2020-2024 using big data analysis methods. The key identity markers were culture (72.29% of the texts), language (69.88%), positive personal qualities (50.6%), history (38.55%), and the "Russian soul" (31.33%). That is, at the level of laypersons' assessments in the form of free answers, language is noted as the most important part of Russian identity [6].

Analysis shows that science has evolved from a static description of linguistic situations to dynamic modeling. While language policy was previously viewed primarily as an instrument of administrative regulation, today—due to the geopolitical and socio-cultural transformations of the early 21st century—it is understood as a system-forming element of the national brand and a factor of international influence. Language policy, focused on supporting multilingualism and the development of native languages, is a key factor in preserving linguistic diversity and strengthening national identity in the context of globalization. Preserving linguistic diversity is an essential condition for sustainable development and the construction of a harmonious multicultural society where everyone can freely express their identity through language [5].

International experience demonstrates the diversity of tools through which language policy is linked to the formation of national and state identity. A study by the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation (2025) draws attention to post-Soviet practices. Enshrining Russian as the "language of interethnic communication" in

Kazakhstan has enabled its widespread use in education, media, and office work. According to the 2021 census, more than half of the country's population speaks Russian, facilitating integration and the preservation of cultural ties. Similarly, the policy of official bilingualism in Belarus allows for the use of Russian and Belarusian in official documentation and everyday life, which also serves as a tool for identity balancing [25].

Language examinations are a powerful tool influencing the status of a language. In Indonesia, the National Test of Proficiency in Indonesian Language (UKBI) is promoted for use in education, employment, and immigration, reinforcing the role of the state language as the foundation of shared identity [29]. In the Czech Republic, the language examination for citizens from non-EU countries is being analyzed as a tool for managing integration processes, the effectiveness of which is being assessed more than ten years after its implementation [28].

Digital platforms and artificial intelligence technologies are opening up new possibilities. India's example with the BHASHINI platform demonstrates how digital tools can dramatically improve the language situation. BHASHINI, which contains over 350 AI models and has processed over 4 billion language interactions, systematically removes language barriers in governance and service delivery, enabling the inclusion of millions of citizens speaking different languages in the digital economy [27].

The examples provided illustrate that states use legal, assessment (certification), and digital tools both to integrate multiethnic populations and to strengthen the position of the state language as a symbol of shared identity. Moreover, the desire to communicate in a common language is a prerequisite for the comfortable coexistence of both indigenous peoples and migrants in the same territory.

Summarizing theoretical approaches and international practice, we can identify several universal mechanisms through which language policy influences the formation and maintenance of national-state identity.

The institutional mechanism is the enshrinement of language's status in the constitution and laws, which defines its symbolic role in shaping identity. The Constitution of the Russian Federation (Article 68) establishes Russian as the state language of the Russian Federation throughout its territory and as the language of the constituent people. Republics have the right to establish their own state languages, which are used alongside the state language of the Russian Federation [1].

The educational mechanism is the teaching of the state and native languages in the education system, which fosters linguistic competence and national identity. By 2025, 64 constituent entities of the Russian Federation will implement programs in 75 native languages at all levels of education. The number of Russians studying their native languages increased by 11% compared to 2024, reaching 3.4 million [24]. Of all students, 2.7 million study languages as part of their subjects in educational institutions; more than 38,000 native language teachers work in the system. More than 3 million children are studying their native languages in Russian educational institutions, of which more than 2.5 million are studying them as part of a subject cycle.

The communicative mechanism is the use of language in the public sphere, media, and the digital environment, creating a unified information space. The principles of state language policy provide for the creation of conditions for the dissemination of messages and materials in the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation through the media.

The cultural and symbolic mechanism includes supporting literary tradition, promoting linguistic heritage, and holding cultural events. As a measure to support reading and linguistic culture, it is proposed to launch the "Children's Book Card" program starting in 2026 [22]. Cultural and educational initiatives include supporting literary tradition, promoting linguistic heritage, holding festivals and competitions, and implementing grant programs. Particular attention is paid to promoting the Russian literary language among young people. The State National Policy Strategy to 2036 sets the goal of promoting the use of the Russian literary

language by young people in professional and personal communication and discouraging the excessive use of foreign vocabulary.

In domestic and foreign sociolinguistics, various approaches to the typology of language policy have developed. Based on the criterion of the number of languages with official status, a distinction is made between a single-component model (with one state language), a two-component model (with two state languages), and a multi-component model (with several state languages) [10]. The modern Russian model of language policy can be characterized as multi-component, combining elements of the single-component model (the consolidation of Russian as the state language and the language of the state-forming people) and the multi-component model (recognition of the right of republics to establish their own state languages in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation). This model reflects a complex balance between the need for pan-national integration through a single state language and the desire to preserve linguistic diversity as a national treasure. V. Yu. Mikhachenko provides a detailed analysis of the variations in national language policy in the modern Russian Federation, emphasizing the need for compromise solutions [9].

In accordance with Decree No. 474 of the President of the Russian Federation dated July 11, 2025, the instruments and mechanisms for implementing the state language policy are set out in Section VII of the document. Let's examine them in more detail.

Tools are specific means and methods for achieving goals:

- 1) improvement of legislation;
- 2) adoption and implementation of state programs and other strategic planning documents;
- 3) analysis of international treaties of the Russian Federation for compliance with the goals of language policy with the possibility of making changes to them.

To sum up, we can characterize language policy in Russia today based on the universal types of mechanisms identified above.

Firstly, from an institutional perspective, the status of the Russian language is enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation as the language of the constituent people [1]. It is the state language of the Russian Federation and serves as the language of interethnic communication. At the regional level, constituent entities of the Russian Federation may establish their own official languages.

Secondly, in terms of educational and cultural-enlightenment mechanisms, projects are being actively implemented that include the creation of the "Russian World" foundation, the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo, the reference and information portal "Gramota.ru", the annual "Total Dictation" campaign, and the publication of specialized magazines and radio broadcasts. These tools work both for the domestic audience, to preserve the purity of the language and improve literacy, and for the external audience, to popularize the Russian language abroad [16]. The President of the Russian Federation proposed making the Russian language the core of higher education, emphasizing that, despite the country's unique ethnocultural and religious diversity, it is the Russian language that largely determines spiritual and national identity. From September 1, 2027, schoolchildren will begin studying Russian using unified state textbooks: in the first stage, the new editions will be available for grades 5-7 and 10-11, and the remaining grades will switch to them from 2028 [19]. A special block is made up of mechanisms for promoting the Russian language abroad – holding annual events dedicated to the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture and the Day of the Russian Language.

Thirdly, the communication mechanism requires special attention in light of recent events. With regard to communication in the public sphere, everything is logical and obvious. Russian is the official language. However, we will separately address the topic of advertising as a form of public communication. In 2023, the Law "On the Official Language of the Russian Federation" (Article 3) established a rule: advertising and information for consumers must be in Russian; when using a foreign word, a translation is required. On March 1, 2026, amendments to the Law of the Russian Federation of February 7, 1992, No. 2300-1 "On the Protection of

Consumer Rights" (as amended by Federal Law of January 9, 1996, No. 2-FZ) [21] came into full force. Now, by law, all public dialogue with consumers in Russia must be conducted in Russian, which undoubtedly strengthens the position of the Russian language in the media sphere and public consciousness.

An analysis of the current language policy of the Russian Federation allows us to identify some problems and contradictions.

There is a significant and long-standing conflict between the federal center and the regions. Conflicting interests between the federal center, regional elites, and ethnic groups give rise to language policy dilemmas that require a compromise solution [11]. Case studies of regional practices show that federal center measures, in particular the transition to voluntary study of regional languages in schools, are encountering some resistance from regional ethnonational elites, who oppose the erosion of regional identities, which occurs, in part, through language policy mechanisms.

Tatarstan has updated its program through 2036, aimed at preserving the unity of the republic's multinational population and strengthening national civic consciousness. Priorities include supporting Russian as the national language and developing Tatar as the republic's official and native language [17].

The unjustified use of foreign words with commonly used Russian equivalents in official communication is considered a risk. Attempts to restrict the use of the Russian language abroad can also be considered a major threat.

There are discussions regarding the exclusion of the term "native language" from regulatory documents, which, according to a number of experts, contradicts Article 68 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation [12].

Insufficient linguistic competence in the state language (Russian) is observed among schoolchildren and students. Teachers have identified frequent errors in the use of terms, as well as typical orthoepic and grammatical errors in oral and written professional speech [14]. Russian universities are increasingly recording an alarming trend: student literacy levels are steadily declining, and this problem has become systemic.

Conclusion. The analysis confirms that the language policy of a multinational state is not a narrowly linguistic matter, but a comprehensive strategic activity aimed at regulating linguistic relations, ensuring citizens' linguistic rights, and, ultimately, shaping a pan-Russian civic identity. The relationship between language policy and national-state identity is realized through four universal mechanisms: institutional, educational, communicative, and cultural-symbolic.

Institutionally, the status of the Russian language is enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation as the language of the constituent people and simultaneously the state language of the Russian Federation. The educational mechanism demonstrates significant reach: in 2025, more than 3.4 million people are studying 75 native languages, and the transition to unified state textbooks on the Russian language is planned for 2027. In addition to traditional media and the digital environment, the communication mechanism has been strengthened in recent years by legislative norms mandating public dialogue with consumers and advertising communications in Russian, which objectively strengthens its position in the media space and in the public consciousness. The cultural and symbolic mechanism is implemented through large-scale educational projects (the Russkiy Mir Foundation, Total Dictation, the Gramota.ru portal), the Children's Book Card program, and a system of events promoting the Russian language abroad.

The current Russian language policy model faces a number of contradictions. The tension between the federal center and the regions remains particularly acute. Risks associated with the unjustified use of foreign vocabulary in official communication, as well as attempts to restrict the Russian language abroad, persist. Furthermore, despite large-scale institutional efforts, a disturbing trend has been observed: a decline in the level of actual language proficiency among schoolchildren and students, manifested in frequent spelling, grammar, and terminological errors.

Thus, the Russian Federation's language policy, structured as a balance between the integrative role of the Russian language and support for linguistic diversity, remains a tool for strengthening national and state identity. Language is an important part of civic self-awareness, both at the level of the average citizen and at the level of government. It is encouraging that creative and institutionally entrenched methods are being adopted in Russia to preserve and strengthen the position of the Russian language. Further improvement of language policy must take into account both internal and external challenges, so that language continues to serve as a reliable foundation for nationwide civic consolidation.

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