

## HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATION IN THE SYSTEM OF RUSSIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS: RESULTS OF RESEARCH WORK

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### ABSTRACT

The relevance of the research problem is as follows: modern Russian-Chinese relations in the field of culture and education are developing rapidly and unprecedented number of joint projects are realized. The aim of this article is to reflect the results of a poll about the relationship between Russia and China in the humanitarian sphere. Leading approach to the study of this problem is the descriptive method; analytical method; comparative and historical-comparative methods, which allowed to fully disclose and analyze the responses and make appropriate conclusions. After the poll the following conclusions were made: despite the successes, there is a certain imbalance in the partnership between Russia and China in the humanitarian sphere, as well as a lack of data about the culture and language of neighboring states. The article may be useful for specialists engaged in the study of international relations, history and politics of Russia and China, academics and teachers of humanitarian disciplines of the universities.

**Keywords:** *humanitarian communication, Russian-Chinese relations, Confucius Institute, Chinese culture, Chinese language, Chinese Language Year in Russia, Year of China in Russia.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the 1990s, Russian-Chinese cooperation goes to a qualitatively new level – starts the implementation of specific large-scale projects: the annual festival of cultures, national languages, close cooperation in the field of sport, tourism, theater and music arts, open centers for the study of Chinese and Russian languages [Kremlin, 2015]. All the activities implemented in the framework of intergovernmental agreements had a political and socio-cultural effect, change the attitudes of nations to each other, increased the quantity and quality of information about the countries that have a positive impact on the image of the states [Ten, 2012]. After the Year of Russia in China and Year of China in Russia the tourist flow and the number of Russians studying in China, and the Chinese receiving education in Russia have significantly increased [Xu, 2011]. Despite the fairly positive official estimates, the Russian and Chinese experts [Davyidov, 2007; Zhou, 2007; Tikhvinskiy, 2008; Galenovich, 2010], the researchers acknowledge that the peoples of the two countries are cautiously to each other. Thus, the situation when “the top is hot, bottom is cold”, i.e. at the government level, relations are developing in a positive direction, but at the level of citizens, the direct participants involved in the process, the relationship is far from clear. The aim of this study was to analyze the results of Russian-Chinese relations in the cultural and educational fields in recent years. To determine the effect of large-scale events held in the framework of the National years of cultures, languages the popularity of the Chinese language in Russia, the image of China.

### METHODS

Internet questioning and traditional questioning among residents of Russia and Kazan in particular were conducted to achieve the goals. Students, scientists, and everyone regardless of whether they are studying the Chinese language or not took part in questioning.

### THE STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUESTIONING

The questioning "China. Chinese language and culture" was based on a free platform Survio.com the address of questionnaire <http://www.survio.com/survey/d/L5T5X7K2Q4T6L9L7S> [Survio, 2016], everybody can fill it. In addition, students and hearers of evening courses of the Confucius Institute of the University of Kazan filled questionnaires in the traditional paper version.

We analyzed the results of the 356 questionnaires. Age of respondents: 13 – 78 years, the bulk of respondents aged 19 – 36 years. The geography of questioning: central part of Russia, Volga Federal District, Ural, Siberia, Far East, almost the entire territory of the Russian Federation. Gender characteristics: questions were answered by 73% of the female population and 27% of the male population of the country. Among the respondents, more than 60% studying Chinese more than one year on a regular basis and they have sufficient level level to give reliable characteristics of Chinese language and culture.

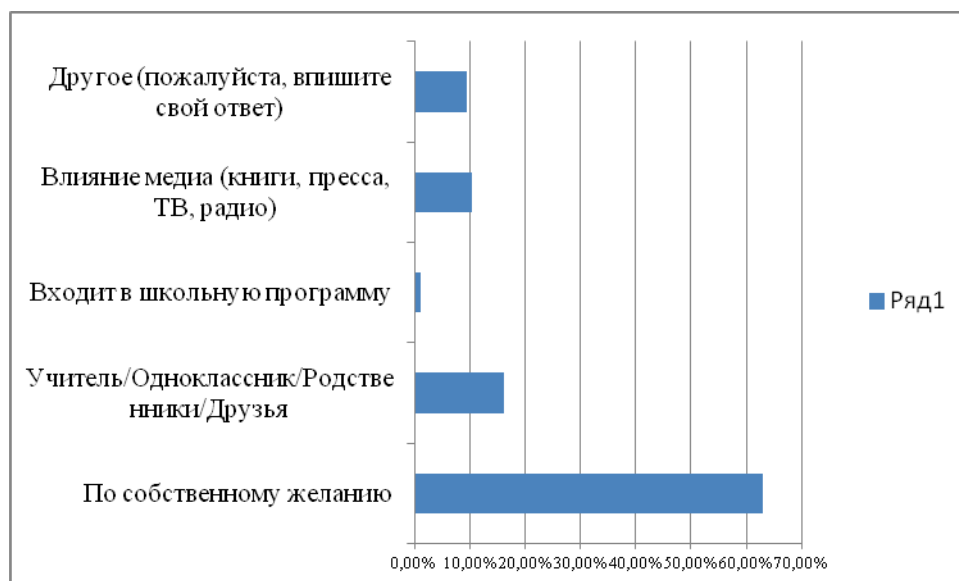
The questionnaire, written in Russian language, has 38 questions consisting of 3 blocks: the influence of Chinese language and culture on the lives of respondents, the activities of the Confucius Institute [Hanban, 2015] and projects in the framework of Russian-Chinese relations. In this study we show as the main problem the results of the survey on Russian-Chinese relations in the humanitarian sphere.

### THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

To the question about what motivated you to study Chinese language and culture, we received answers given in table 1.

Table №1.

What motivated you to study Chinese language and culture?



In "other" respondents answered most often "territorial proximity" and "trip/travel to China". Thus, we can assume that the influence of the media, organization of international events at the state level, the decision on the study of Chinese language is minimal. The majority of survey participants chose a foreign language spontaneously, guided only by such concepts as "fashionable" "cool" "interesting" "characters."

Discussion also the results of a questioning on Chinese culture. For example, the question "What is known to the Chinese of these you know?" received the following results: almost all know Confucius and Mao Zedong, least of all know the iconic Chinese Director Zhang Yimou and the Last Emperor of the Qing Dynasty Pu Yi. Also it could be noted that the percentage among the respondents who know the actor Jacky Chan more than currently President of China Xi Jinping. Also, if a separate questioning of Humanities students of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University (68 of 356) are only two know Pu Yi and five Zhang Yimou, what certifies about low awareness of students about prominent personalities of China. In this case, you can talk about the insufficiently effective work of the Confucius Institute at KFU, which is currently one of the key organizations promoting Chinese culture to the masses. In recent years, there were not organized film festivals or screenings, discussions of iconic Chinese premiers. In addition, students are well aware of the outstanding personalities of ancient and medieval China, but much less known characters of modern history. Accordingly, the department should strengthen the training of students in this direction, knowledge of Chinese history and historical figures is the key to the whole Chinese direction.

To the question "Give the full name of China, 90% of respondents answered correctly, but 7% said "Chinese People's Democratic Republic". Supposedly, 7% were those who have not yet started to learn Chinese language and culture. Beijing was called the capital of China by 99% of the respondents.

Among the respondents the most loved Chinese are Chinese tea (78%), Chinese calligraphy (70%) and Chinese cuisine (70%); the least popular were the Chinese opera (38%) and Chinese poetry (27%), probably due to their unavailability and the complexity of understanding and perception. In order to try Chinese tea or kitchen, to admire the art of calligraphy it is not necessary to go to China, these elements of Chinese culture are widely represented in Russia. But to see, to understand and appreciate Chinese Opera, and especially poetry, you need a deep knowledge of the Chinese language and culture.

Consider the results of the questioning on the Confucius Institutes in Russia. The answers to two questions on the activities of the Confucius Institute are also quite informative and revealing. To the question "Is it necessary to increase the number of Confucius Institutes in your city?" received the following answers: "Yes, please" and 27% "No, this is not necessary" – 33,5%, "No answer" – 35% [see: Renmin Ribao, 2006]. Several respondents chose "other" by writing in the comments that there is no need to open additional CI and KK there, but need to improve already created [Liu, 2012.]

The second question related to the activity of the CI was: "How has your attitude change to China, Chinese language and culture after the opening of the CI/KK in your city?". Half of the respondents said that their attitude changed for the better, over 40% of respondents believe that nothing has changed. In the comments to this question reveal two trends: first, that in some cities, the republics and regions of Russia there is not only Confucius Institutes, but no Chinese areas in universities. So, for example, are referred to the city of Ufa, Sterlitamak (Bashkiriya); Pyatigorsk (Stavropol District); Chelyabinsk (Chelyabinsk District) and other large settlements. Really functioning IR in these regions there, and the next are far enough away. For example, to pass international examinations in the Chinese language HSK (汉语水平考试) those who will be forced to go to other cities, and a lot of financial costs. The second trend is a negative reaction towards the IR. Someone thinks that the Confucian institutes is a committed nonprofit organization, someone accuses them of gathering information in the interests of China, some argue that the management of Confucius Institutes pre-allocates all competition places and awards first place its candidates, gives them expensive gifts.

The next set of questions refers to the Russian-Chinese relations in the humanitarian sphere at the present stage. In the framework of the national years, years of national cultures, youth exchanges, etc. the majority of respondents visited the festivals of cultures, traditional celebrations and contests (photo, song, calligraphy). 15% of respondents didn't visit because of their employment or have not heard anything about such events. This statistic suggests that 15% of the respondents belong to the category, which is not studied Chinese language and has little interest in Chinese culture.

To the question "How did your attitude change towards China after the national years, years of cross-cultures, youth exchanges, etc.?" 30% of respondents said that they received a lot of new, useful information and attitude changed for the better, 60% responded that activities were not enough, new information is also not enough, the attitude has not changed. More than half of respondents were dissatisfied with the results of large-scale Russian-Chinese events held with the support of the governments of the two countries, which gives reason to once again review the forms and mechanisms of realization of bilateral relations in the humanitarian sphere.

The next question consisted of a sentence with an open ending "Russian-Chinese relations in the humanitarian sphere...", which had to be added one of the suggested phrases. So, 42% of respondents answered "now continue to develop," 36% of respondents see "huge potential" in bilateral humanitarian relations, a quarter of the participants believe that Russian-Chinese relations in the humanitarian sphere are not sufficiently developed. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that the humanitarian component is of no great interest to the bilateral partnership, and 1% that has reached its maximum.

Quite a discussion the last question was, which was asked to characterize modern Russian-Chinese relations. A large number of comments indicate that our citizens are interested in international cooperation and foreign policy as the relations with China, determine the nature of the entire foreign policy situation in the region. Many, regardless of whether they are studying the Chinese language or not, watch and keep track of new information related to politics and economy of China. In addition, the main role of mediator played by the media, as any news release does not shy away from the Chinese direction. Politics, Economics, business, energy, security, the visits of the heads of the government – only a short list of the main subjects covered in the news. Thus, the citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of age and status become unwitting observers of the development of Russian-Chinese relations at the present stage.

In addition, this section should reflect the answers in the "other" category with the aim of understanding the relationship of respondents to the partnership of Russia and China. Most left comments believe that today China uses natural, intellectual, human and other resources of Russia in their strategic goals, and speaking about strategic partnership, it is one-sided. Part of the review describes bilateral relations as "forced symbiosis" or "forced partnership" and "relationship in which benefit only China." As we see from the questioning results, 6% of the participants characterize the relations of Russia and China as "the relationship of the younger brother to the older, but reviews indicate that today the role of the younger brother went to Russia. Despite the officially recognized status of the modern Russian-Chinese relations as "strategic partnership", the respondents find this phrase a negative connotation, there are the patriotic sentiments and the desire to see Russia as a leader in bilateral relations.

## SUMMARY

Thus, examining the key results of the survey on Russian-Chinese cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, it is necessary to summarize the results and offer recommendations for improvement in the field of culture and education.

1. To involve for work of Russian teachers of Chinese language and culture.

2. To increase the transparency of the preparation and implementation of annual joint programs, as well as individual activities related to Chinese culture and language.
3. To develop clear criteria for the selection of students on grant programs of the Government of the Russian Federation and China, Confucius Institutes, competitions and Olympiads held on the definition of knowledge of Chinese language and culture.
4. To intensify efforts to translate modern literature from Russian into Chinese and vice versa, to create a joint Russian-Chinese projects in the field of cinema and other art forms [Smirnova, 2014].
5. To actively engage regional leaders in organizing exhibitions, festivals, competitions and other events
6. To respect mutual interests in research activities and educational field.
7. Federal and regional media need to pay more attention to the coverage of cultural events to acquaint the citizens of our country with traditional and modern culture, history of China.

## DISCUSSIONS

Questioning is one of the key methods in the study of public opinion, besides giving an independent assessment, which is important for scientific research. It must be emphasized that domestic and foreign [Dai, 2013; Wu, 2013] researchers have repeatedly appealed in his works to the problems of mutual perception of citizens of Russia and China, to the cultural component of their lives. Of a number of works firstly we should pay attention to the monograph [Larin, 2006; Kuznetsov, 2013], article [Alagueva&Vasilyeva, 2007; Baykov, 1999] and dissertation research [Bokova, 2011], which reveals the state of public opinion of citizens of Russia and China, and focuses mainly on the views typical for the Russian citizens living in the Far East [Vladimirova, 2003].

## CONCLUSIONS

This study and the obtained results may not reflect the full picture of the Russian-Chinese cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, but reflect the ratio of direct participants to certain aspects of bilateral cooperation in the field of culture and education. In addition, the questioning does reveal a discrepancy with the official policy of Russia in relation to China and the imbalance in Russian-Chinese partnership in the study area. Thus, it is necessary to take into account the above disadvantages in the further development of Russian-Chinese relations, including the humanitarian sphere and to create favorable conditions for effective cooperation in the field of culture and education.

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