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**ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES
AS A BASE FOR MAKING 'SOFT POWER' POLICY
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF PROMOTION
OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION
IN RUSSIAN)¹**

Summary: The article highlights the current trends of social and economic development of Latin American countries, describes the region's position in the world rankings in terms of the promotion of educational programs in Russian language within the federal target program 'Russian language' for 2011-2015. It is proved that in today's complicated geopolitical and economic conditions, Latin America remains a traditional partner of Russia, and cooperation, as well as in education, is expanding. Key countries for the promotion of Russian language and education in Russian were identified using the methodology of multifactorial classification. The major factors, which contribute to the achievement of the objectives efficiently or, on the contrary, provide the restraining impact and create some risks.

Keywords: socio-economic development, multifactorial classification, Russian language, Latin America, education, geopolitics.

JEL Classification: I25, O18, N36.

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1. Setting the research problem

Economic and political instability and increased competition of leading powers complicates the position of the Russian Federation in the world but at the same time, it is a circumstance for extending the use of ‘soft power’ in foreign policy. The Russian education is one of the tools for creating a positive image of Russia in the countries and regions of the world. Thus, it is important to determine which countries are ready to perceive positively the actions aimed at dissemination of the Russian culture, Russian language and education in Russian.

Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Cultural Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) finances projects on popularization of the Russian language and Russian education within the target program [www 4]. The activities contribute to overcoming cultural barriers, negative stereotypes, and other obstacles to the development of international cooperation [Promotion of Russian Language and Russian Education Abroad, 2012].

Identifying the countries where the implementation of the projects would be the most successful is an important scientific task which will help to increase the effectiveness of the projects.

2. Review of existing research works on the theme and methodology

Issues of promotion of the Russian language and analysis of the institutions’ activities on support of its teaching and learning abroad are actual research topic and a significant number of publications on the theme testify to this.

Publications in the journal “Russian Abroad” published by the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute particularly stands out in studying of various aspects of the topic. The articles devoted to improving the status of the Russian language as a whole [Mitrofanova, 2006; Kholina, 2013] and papers with the results of the research of the positions and measures for its promotion in the countries of the world – mostly in East Asia are published here [Ivanova, 2012; Toloraya, 2012].

There are materials on the results of the program “Promotion of the Russian language and the Russian education abroad” carried out within the Russian Language Federal Target Program for 2011-2015 which are published systematically [Promotion of Russian Language and Russian Education Abroad, 2012, 2013]. Besides, there are works which assess the opportunities for promotion of the Russian language through political actions, study the prospects of forming a positive

country's image among foreigners as a component of the policy of soft power of Russia [Ardatova, 2015; Niyazova, 2012].

Nevertheless, there are no any works, which would allow to identify the focus countries for promoting of educational projects taking into account the factors that affect the successful cooperation. Classification and typological studies in the context of regional development became the methodological basis of the present research. Among them are works written by Russian scientists – L.V. Smirnyagin [2005a, 2005b], V.E. Shuvalov [2015], and foreign authors – B. Berry [1958], W. Bunge [1967], T. Czyż [1968], R. Chorly and P. Haggett [1971], P. Haggett [1979, 1991], D. Harvey [1974].

The multifactorial classification, which is based on identification of key indicators of the level and quality of life of the region, their ranking, comparison and analysis of the sum of ranks, is the main tool used by the authors to solve the problem within the research [Kholina, 1995, 2013]. The authors expertly assessed countries' geopolitical situation, stage of political relations with the Russian Federation and intensity of historical and cultural links, intensity of commercial and political relations with Russia. And indicators characterizing the level of socio-economic development and quality of life (GNI per capita, Human Development Index, poverty headcount ratio at \$ 1.90 a day (2011 PPP; % of population)), educational market capacity (population ages 0-24, urban population in %, Internet users per 100 people), development of educational system (government expenditure on education, literacy rate) were quantitatively valued.

While describing the multifactorial classification it is worth to underline that basing on research that focus on willingness of other states to adopt particular culture by other ethnic groups, there is a possibility to formalize the level of unification. In that case it means of course the language and history knowledge. These methods allow to assess level of willingness to unify among different ethnic groups in various contexts. [Bolton, Roland, and Spolaore, 1996; Bolton, Roland, 1997; Anderton, Carter, 2009].

Using the method of multifactorial classification is the only way to achieve the mentioned objectives as assessment of one of chosen indicators can give a distorted picture. So, the countries' selection made for promotion of educational programs based on just political factors can only have a negative impact on the prospects for long-term cooperation and lead to losing the investment in case of changing the governments and geopolitical course (Table 1). On the other hand, analyzing just economic indicators will also give a distorted picture, as there is a possibility that favorable environment for programs' implementation in selected countries is absent [Kholina, 1995, 2013].

Table 1a cont.

<i>I</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
St. Lucia	184	23,6	43	16,5	30	18,5	1,8	0,02	0	195	9915	23	124
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	109	24,9	27	19	21	50,2	1,1	0,01	0	202	10132	22	127
Surinam	538	26,9	146	14,7	79	66,1	9,2	0,1	0,01	159	16600	10	94
Trinidad and Tobago	1354	20,8	280	14,9	202	8,6	43,2	0,46	0,04	111	31300	1	54
Uruguay	3420	21,6	740	15,2	520	95,2	68,1	0,73	0,07	95	19924	8	80
Venezuela	30694	28,2	8710	17,8	5468	88,9	514,2	5,53	0,5	35	16751	9	88
Latin America	626270	26,5	164776	17	106288	79,6	9305,4	100	8,98	–	14858	–	4
World	7260652	26,2	1881296	16,4	1190747	53,4	103635	–	100	–	14274	–	–

Table 1b. Basic indicators of living standards and education development in Latin America (2015)

Country/region	Human Development Index			Government expenditure on education			Internet users, per 100 people	Literacy rate, %	Global Competitiveness Index	
	HDI	Position in the world	Human Development	% of GDP	Constant 2011 international \$ (millions)	Per capita, \$			GCI	Position in the world
<i>I</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	0,774	61	High	2,6	49,2	541	64	99	–	–
Argentina	0,808	49	Very high	6,3	59698,8	1389	65	98	3,79	104
Bahamas	0,789	51	High	–	–	–	77	96	–	–
Barbados	0,776	59	High	5,6	205,5	725	77	100	4,36	55
Belize	0,732	84	High	6,6	191,4	544	39	77	–	–
Bolivia	0,667	113	Medium	6,9	4605,5	436	39	96	3,77	105
Brazil	0,744	79	High	5,8	180600,5	876	58	91	4,34	57
Chile	0,822	41	Very high	4,5	17568,9	989	72	98	4,6	33
Columbia	0,711	98	High	4,4	26796,3	561	53	95	4,23	66
Costa Rica	0,763	68	High	6,3	4265,8	897	49	98	4,42	51
Cuba	0,815	44	Very high	12,8	16448	1445	30	100	–	–
Dominica	0,717	93	High	1,1	7761,8	340	63	94	–	–
Dominican Republic	0,7	102	High	2,2	2896,6	278	50	92	3,82	101
Ecuador	0,711	98	High	4,4	7576,6	476	43	93	–	–
El Salvador	0,662	115	Medium	3,4	1652,5	271	30	87	4,01	84
Grenada	0,737	79	High	3,9	47,3	444	37	96	–	–

Table 1b cont.

<i>I</i>	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Guatemala	0,628	125	Medium	3	3416,6	213	23	77	4,1	78
Guyana	0,638	121	Medium	3,2	168,3	220	37	88	3,65	117
Haiti	0,471	168	Low	—	—	—	11	61	3,14	137
Honduras	0,617	129	Medium	—	—	—	19	87	3,82	100
Jamaica	0,715	96	High	6,1	1470,1	540	41	88	3,98	86
Mexico	0,756	71	High	5,1	104150,5	831	44	94	4,27	61
Nicaragua	0,614	132	Medium	4,6	1298	216	18	83	3,82	99
Panama	0,765	65	High	3,3	2544,2	658	45	95	4,43	48
Paraguay	0,676	111	Medium	4,8	2668,8	407	43	95	3,59	120
Peru	0,737	82	High	2,8	9919,7	320	40	95	4,24	65
St. Kitts and Nevis	0,75	73	High	4,2	49,9	908	65	98	—	—
St. Lucia	0,714	97	High	4,1	74,7	407	51	90	—	—
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0,719	91	High	5,1	56,5	517	56	96	—	—
Surinam	0,705	100	High	—	—	—	40	96	3,71	110
Trinidad and Tobago	0,766	64	High	3,2	1382,4	1021	65	99	3,95	89
Uruguay	0,79	50	High	4,5	3065,9	897	61	98	4,04	80
Venezuela	0,764	67	High	6,9	35476,6	1156	57	96	3,32	131
Latin America	—	—	—	—	—	—	50	—	—	—
World	—	—	—	—	—	—	41	—	—	—

Source: Based on [www 2].

It should be noted that studying the prospects for promotion of the Russian language and Russian education through assessing the level of socio-economic development of the countries with the usage of multifactorial classification method is carried out for the first time.

3. Challenges of modern stage of economic growth and main landmarks in the development of Latin America

Latin America is a dynamically developing region with large human, natural and economic potential. The region includes 33 sovereign states with the total GNI (PPP) of 9.3 trillion dollars (9% of world GNI) and the total population accounts for 626 million people (8.6% of the world's population). Latin America possesses almost everything needed for autonomous development while the degree of involvement in the international division of labor is high and dependence on the global economy is apparent. A significant part of the world natural resources, including oil (20% of the world reserves), gas (4%), copper (46%), iron (20%), nickel (20%), tin (27%), silver (47%) gold (18%), is focused in the region [www 1; www 3].

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Latin America's economy grew at a brisk pace exceeding the developed countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Indicators (OECD) by average 2 times. However, since 2010, there has been a slowdown (in 2014, the growth rates reached the minimum for the last five years) mostly related to external factors and increasing region's involvement in global processes of the world economy [Kholina, Massarova, 2013]. The slowdown in growth rate of Latin American economies shows the need for structural and qualitative changes that will help to reach a new and higher level of participation in the global economy. A key factor in achieving more dynamic and comprehensive growth is innovative technological transformation of the region's economy, a basis of which should become the developing of the education, obtaining high-quality skills by the population and spreading innovations.

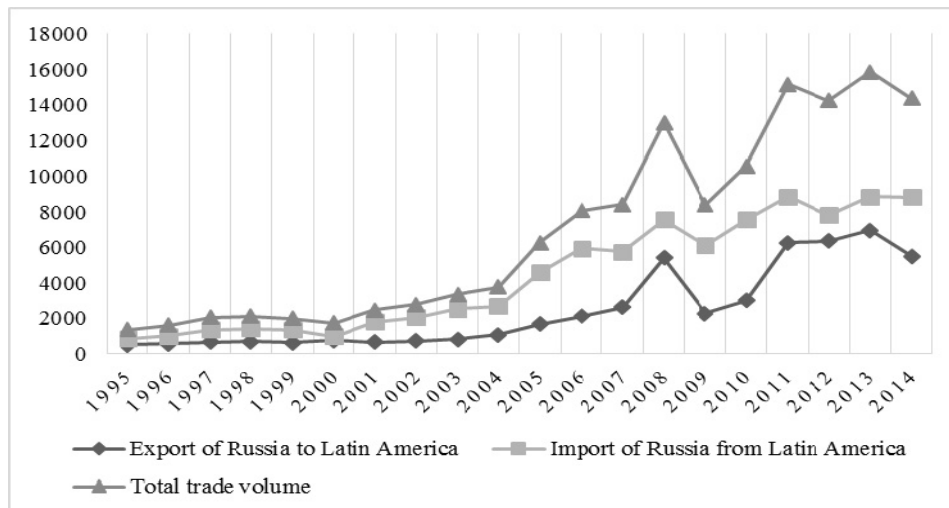
Thus, education is the main reference point of the development in Latin America as increasing its accessibility, diffusion and level will allow to diversify the economy and develop innovative industries with high added value and enlarge the share of high-tech products in exports.

In recent decades, despite the geographical distance, the cooperation of Russia with Latin America is developing successfully, and it is particularly relevant in the conditions of Western economic sanctions against Russia and anti-

-American sentiment in some countries of Latin America. In the long term, the expansion of interstate cooperation will contribute to the reduction of foreign economic and foreign policy risks for the Russian Federation, and many Latin American countries.

In 1995-2014, the trade volume between Russia and Latin America grew by 10 times while the maximum growth rate was in 2007-2008, and though, in crisis year 2009, the trade volume fell by 45%, to a greater extent that happened due to reducing the product import from the Russian Federation. Russian demand for Latin American products remained at higher level in 2009 and, in 2011, the trade volume has exceeded pre-crisis level and amounted to 15 billion dollars. But that was a year when the growth rates of foreign trade figures started to decline due to the global strained political and economic conditions (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Key indicators of foreign trade between Russia and Latin America (1995-2014, millions USD)



Source: Based on [www 2].

Since the 2000s, the efforts of promoting Russian interests in the region are apparent: in 2004, during an official Putin’s visit to Brazil, a target of forming a technological alliance between Brazil and Russia, which would encourage the mutual supply of high-tech products and cooperation to a higher level, was set [www 5].

With expansion of trade relations diversification between Russia and Latin America, the number of representative offices of Russian companies in the region is rising. So, the realization of contracts for the supply of helicopters to

Mexico led to the opening of representative offices “Aviazapchast” in the country. Subsidiaries of large Russian corporations (Gazprom, Lukoil and Rusal) are created in those countries where Russian business implements long-term projects related to the development of mineral resources, construction of electric power facilities and industrial infrastructure (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Guyana).

A step forward in the international information activities of Russian high-tech business was the creation of Argentine-Russian center of scientific and technological cooperation (CENTAR), whose target is to promote Russian achievements into the country’s market. The CENTAR organized the first workshop-exhibition of Russian high-tech companies in Buenos Aires in May 2006.

Russia and Venezuela made significant steps to cooperate in many areas including education and culture. In 2001, the act on the establishment of the Intergovernmental High-Level Commission (CIAN), which operates on a regular basis between two countries and elaborate comprehensive proposals on cooperation in the sphere of politics, economy, trade, science, culture and education, was signed. The meetings of the Commission are held since 2004 alternately in Russia and Venezuela and are productive for bilateral relations.

Cooperation of Russia and Venezuela as oil-producing countries is also developing: an important role in the establishment of economic relations plays the activity of Russian company Rosneft in Venezuela (participation in the development of oil Venezuelan fields since 2013).

In 2010, Russian President D. Medvedev, during his official visit to Argentina, noted that Russia was back in South America and made it vigorously, and now it is actively developing relations with Latin American partners [Kholina, Massarova, 2013].

All this create favorable conditions for the intensification of cooperation in the field of education including the promotion of the Russian language.

4. Classification of Latin American countries by effectiveness of educational programs: Recommendations for promotion of the Russian language and education in Russian

As a result of the analysis, 33 Latin American countries were divided into 5 groups: countries with high and low potential for promotion the Russian language and educational programs in Russian, countries with upper-middle and lower-middle potential and countries without potential for promotion.

The group with a high potential for promotion of the educational programs includes the key populous countries of the region (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile) with high and average indicators of education, intensively developing scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with Russia. These countries can be considered as a sub-regional base for creation of specialized centers of studying the Russian language and supporting the education in Russian.

Specific recommendations have been developed for this category of countries. Among them is the opening of the Russian language centers and it will be more economically expedient in populous countries. For example, in Mexico, it is proposed to establish a sub-regional center for the Russian language studying working with distance learning opportunities in the Caribbean which are very attractive for Russian tourists and where Russian individuals and legal entities own or manage offshore companies.

The main directions of expansion of cooperation between Russia and Brazil in promoting the educational programs may be the creation of Russian language centers in the leading universities of Brazil, the development of the Slavonic Cultural Center in Rio de Janeiro, which is the largest Russian language school by the number of students in Latin America. Also among the directions it may be noted the following: formation of new programs within the Slavonic Cultural Center in Rio de Janeiro (organization of training internship, exchange of students, etc.), activation of students reception on undergraduate programs in Russian universities, creation of joint Master's degree programs, distance learning development.

An important factor for the selection of Argentina is the largest community of Russian emigrants and growing in terms of mutual economic sanctions of the West and Russia trade in agricultural products. On the one hand, Venezuela is an important partner of Russia among the countries of the region, especially taking into account the large number of projects in oil sector. On the other hand, the relatively low level of socio-economic development and instability of political conditions may adversely affect the sustainable development of cooperation in the sphere of education.

The large number of students from Chile was studying in Russia in 1970-1980s, who, however, did not return to their homeland after the fall of the Pinochet dictatorship; actually lost their connections with Chile.

Image advertising in the media, cooperation with the leading universities and creation on their base of joint Bachelor and Master programs, Russian language courses including distance learning, advertising and promotion of education in Russia – all these are the recommendations for realizing within the coop-

eration of Russia with the countries with high potential for promotion the Russian language and educational programs in Russian. It is also important to create the schools with intensive study of the Russian language with further focus of the graduates on education in Russia.

The group of countries with an upper-middle potential to promote the educational programs consists of Colombia, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Peru, and Uruguay. The features of geographical location and socio-economic development of these countries contribute to reaching the target. In the sphere of Argentina's influence may enter relatively neighboring sparsely populated Uruguay (3.4 million of people), where there are children and grandchildren of Russian compatriots, who arrived at the beginning of 20st century. Besides studying the Russian language, advertising the education in Russian universities can be important and efficient for this category of population.

In the Dominican Republic, the Russian language center was founded on the basis of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo within inter-university cooperation agreements with the People's Friendship University of Russia. Cuba, which was under geopolitical influence of the USSR in 1960-1990, may enter in the sphere of influence of the Russian language center situated in the Dominican Republic.

An important factor in the promotion of the Russian language in these countries should become intramural events (round tables, various competitions), distance education.

In Columbia, the basis for the promotion of the Russian language is the department of the Russian language in the National University of Colombia and the Tolstoy Institute of Russian culture.

The group of countries with a lower-middle potential to promote the educational programs includes Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Panama – these are the countries with medium and low education levels (or low capacity of potential market of consumers). States of Central America (Costa Rica and Panama) may enter in the sphere of influence of sub-regional the Russian language center in the Dominican Republic. Ecuador and Bolivia may get in the sphere of influence of the center, created in Colombia, and Paraguay, which possesses the significant number of the descendants of Russian immigrants – in the sphere of influence of the sub-regional center in Argentina.

A positive factor in the promotion of the Russian language in Ecuador is the active work of the Association of Ecuadorian-Russian Friendship (the Association of Russian University Graduates) – specifically the cooperation with the Graduate School of Engineering 'Littoral' in Guayaquil city and the Central University of Ecuador with the lectures who have received education in the USSR and Russia.

In Costa Rica and Panama, an interest in studying the Russian language has increased in recent years, so it is planned to create a Russian language courses in the context of bilateral business development. The Russian language courses, including the distance teaching, should be organized in the national universities of these countries.

The days of the Russian culture and language, organization of events for students of the key universities show high results in reaching the set targets.

The group of countries with a low potential for promotion includes countries with small population size (insignificant volume of consumer market), low level of the education including literacy and spread of the Internet. This group consists of the Central American countries – Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the Caribbean countries – Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana. Despite the fact that some of these countries had close ties with the Soviet Union and Russia (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras; Guyana whose president in 1999-2011 was a graduate of the Faculty of Economics of the RUDN University – Bharrat Jagdeo), the indicators of socio-economic development of the countries are the constraint conditions for promotion of educational programs in Russian and increase the potential financial costs of their implementation.

The countries with no prospects for promoting the Russian language and education in Russian, according to our estimates, have small population size (the Caribbean Island States) and high per capita income and Human Development Index, but they do not have any historical ties with Russia (Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Belize).

Conclusions

The level of socio-economic development measured through a system of macroeconomic indicators together with expert estimates of geopolitical situation and intensity of trade and economic relations with Russian Federation is a determining thing in composing the rating of countries representing the greatest interest for the effective promotion of the Russian language and education in Russian.

It was revealed that in the context of today's strained geopolitical environment, the top priority of the development in Latin America is enhancing the level of educational quality, and this, in turn, is a favorable condition and additional stimulus for intensification of cooperation in the field of education. It is important to use efficiently the modern situation for creating a positive image and strong brand with positioning Russia as a center which possesses and exports high-quality educational services.

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**OCENA SPOŁECZNO-EKONOMICZNEGO ROZWOJU PAŃSTW
AMERYKI ŁACIŃSKIEJ JAKO PODSTAWA DO TWORZENIA
POLITYKI „MIĘKKIEJ SIŁY” (NA PRZYKŁADZIE PROMOCJI
JĘZYKA ROSYJSKIEGO I EDUKACJI W JĘZYKU ROSYJSKIM)**

Streszczenie: Artykuł naświetla obecne trendy społecznego i ekonomicznego rozwoju państw Ameryki Łacińskiej, opisuje pozycje regionu w rankingach światowych ze względu na promocję programów edukacyjnych w języku rosyjskim w ramach programu federalnego „Język rosyjski” w latach 2011-2015. Udowodniono, że w dzisiejszych skomplikowanych warunkach geopolitycznych i ekonomicznych, Ameryka Łacińska pozostaje tradycyjnym partnerem Rosji, a współpraca, tak samo jak edukacja, jest rozszerzana. Zostały zidentyfikowane kluczowe kraje dla promocji języka rosyjskiego i edukacji w języku rosyjskim z użyciem metodologii klasyfikacji wielokryterialnej. Główne czynniki przyczyniają się do skutecznego osiągnięcia celów, ale też stanowią uciążliwe skutki i stwarzają pewne zagrożenia.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój społeczno-ekonomiczny, klasyfikacja wielokryterialna, język rosyjski, Ameryka Łacińska, edukacja, geopolityka.