



## THE ROLE OF FRENCH IN THE WORLD

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### Abstract

This article discusses the role of the French language in the world. Despite the fact that today the French language is being pushed back more and more from the leading position, internationally it firmly takes the place of the brilliant second "brilliant second". French is spoken by only 80-100 million people, but the quantitative figure includes not only people for whom this language is native, but also those with whom it is possible to communicate in this language. Therefore, they distinguish between francophones with a native French language (locuteurs à titre maternel) and francophones with a second French language (locuteurs à titre secondaire). The ratio between the second number and the first is the prevalence index (indice de diffusion) of the given language. This ratio testifies to the social significance and international prestige of this language.

**Keywords:** French language, international prestige, modern world, relevance, demand, internationally, significance.

The role of the French language in the world is very great. For several centuries, it has played one of the key roles in international communications and interaction. In many countries, it is the second official language. People communicate in French on five continents: Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. It ranks 12th in terms of prevalence in the world, behind English, Spanish, Chinese and other languages. However, in terms of the popularity of learning as a second foreign language, it has firmly established itself in an honorable second place. This global trend is fully reflected in the Russian education system. In all cities and large settlements of the Republic of Uzbekistan there are a number of schools specializing in in-depth study of the French language. To study French as a second foreign language, several series of teaching materials have been developed, designed for the full teaching of this subject, starting from the 5th or 11th grade. In many schools in our country, French is studied, for example, in the textbook by M.M. Juraeva and Z.I. Abdushukurova, the French language "Libre opinion" is intended for students of the 11th grade of general education and specialized schools, academic lyceums, professional colleges, as well as for bachelor students of higher educational institutions. The study of French is aimed





at developing communication skills, listening and understanding, reading, speaking and writing, integrated teaching of grammar, phonetics and vocabulary at level B 1. The textbook complies with international standards CECR B1, B1 + levels aimed at teaching French in high school based on the first foreign language - English.

French is one of the 6 official languages of the UN. At numerous international scientific congresses and symposiums on philosophy, psychology, law and medicine, French is used. It is the official working language of almost all international organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, ILO, WHO, UPU, EU, NATO, Council of Europe, etc. And in the Universal Postal Union, it is the only working language. French is also the official language of major non-governmental organizations, notably the Olympic Games and FIFA.

French is one of the official languages of Switzerland, Luxembourg, Canada and Belgium. However, only two states speak only French - in France and in Monaco. It is also spoken by residents of the states: Democratic Republic of the Congo (42% of the population), Mali (52%), Niger (15%), Senegal (62.5%), Burkina Faso (10%), Côte d'Ivoire (80 %), Guinea (10%), Togo (40%), Benin (31%), Gabon (80.5%), Canada (Quebec - 91%), Belgium (39%), Switzerland (19%), Luxembourg (98%). In many African countries, French is the second official language. For example, in Tunisia, 95% of the population speaks Arabic, but education in schools in all major subjects is in French. In Tunisia, compulsory public primary and secondary education, so almost the entire population of the country can be safely called bilinguals, people who speak 2 languages. The situation is approximately the same in Cameroon, Djibouti, Algeria, Morocco, Cameroon, Algeria, Rwanda, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea. French is the official language on the islands: Madagascar, Comorras, Seychelles, Mauritius. French plays an important role in Laos and Vietnam, in the Dominican Republic. This spread of the French language in the world is explained by the fact that in the XVII-XIX centuries France waged wars of conquest, as a result of which it became one of the largest colonial powers along with Great Britain, Spain and Portugal. The spread of the French language in Africa is a legacy of the colonial past. For a long time, French culture, a way of life, religious views, and a system of values were planted in them. Even after gaining independence, these states did not abandon the use of the language of the metropolis and retained the closest political, economic and cultural ties with Paris.

Today in the world the total number of people using the French language is at least 500 million people. French retains a fairly strong position as the language of international communication. The popularity of this language is explained very simply. The French language is incredibly beautiful and melodic. And it is not





surprising that the French language has always been and remains the language of culture and art, free and unconstrained and, as a rule, cultural communication. Indeed, in any European language you will find a lot of borrowings from the French language related to architecture, painting, culture, theater, dance, cooking and fashion.

French is the language of great philosophers (Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Sartre and Camus), eminent scientists (Dequatre, Pierre and Marie Curie, Pasteur) and great writers (Maupassant, Victor Hugo, Emile Zola, Jules Verne, Alexandre Dumas, Molière). In addition, it is the language of humanistic ideals, formulated by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, which contributed to the spread of the concept of human rights around the world. In 1631, the first daily printed newspaper, La Gazette, was published, and in 1665, the first scientific journal, the Journal des savants. In 1635, on the initiative of Cardinal Richelieu, the French Academy was created, whose task was to create a dictionary, grammar, rhetoric and poetics. The first dictionary of the Academy was published in 1694. Once the Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin, suggested that if English remains the language of international communication, then French will forever remain the language of the elite.

The French themselves are extremely respectful and careful about their language, considering it a part of culture and national history. They are proud of their language, showing a fair amount of patriotism in this aspect. The French are much more sympathetic to tourists who speak broken French than to those visitors to the country who speak perfect English. Throughout the history of France, the authorities and the public have paid great attention to the position and development of their language, what the French today define by the term "linguistic arrangement". For a better understanding, we should dwell on the main stages of linguistic legislation.

It was in France in 813 that the first linguistic decree in Europe was adopted. The Church Council in the city of Tours decided that from now on, sermons in churches will not be read in Latin, a dead language incomprehensible to the common people, but in the "folk Romance language". This fact indisputably testifies to the birth of the French language, to its full and full-fledged perception separately from Latin. The establishment of French as the language of written communication dates back to 842. In this memorable year for French linguistics, the Oath of Strasbourg was drawn up, a document that sealed the political alliance between the grandchildren of Charlemagne. The second important historical stage was the reign of Francis 1. This period is characterized by the development, strengthening and centralization of monarchical power and the expansion of the territorial possessions of the king. In 1539, the king issued a decree according to which all official documents of business





correspondence and legal proceedings would henceforth be drawn up in "native French and nothing else." Ile-de-France was recognized as the standard of the French language. French becomes the official state language of the country.

Throughout history, France has pursued a policy of linguistic centralization - the spread of a single language and a single language norm throughout the country. Government and legal institutions, church and school were the conductors of this policy. As for the "external arrangement", in the XVII-XIX centuries, the accession of each new foreign-speaking province was accompanied by a government edict on the mandatory use of the French language. Such edicts appeared with the annexation of Flanders (1684), Alsace (1685), Roussillon (1700), German Lorraine (1748), Corsica (1768). Thus, France became a multi-ethnic state, while remaining monolingual, since only one language was recognized in the public sphere across the state. The position of the French language was further strengthened during the French Revolution. At the direction of the Constituent Assembly, in 1790, Abbe Grégoire carried out the first language census in the history of Europe, sending out a sociolinguistic questionnaire to all departments. It turned out that out of 28 million inhabitants of the country, 12 million do not speak French and speak dialects.

The commitment of France to the French language, as the only state language, was constant and consistent both in the days of the monarchy and in the days of the republic. In the XVII century, the French government took up the "internal arrangement" of the language. This important event included several stages and areas of work: the normalization of the language, the formation of various functional styles, the development of a special oral-colloquial type of speech. Linguistic arrangement has two interconnected aspects: external - the definition of the functions of the language in society and internal - the improvement of the language, its enrichment, the development of a language norm, and the streamlining of spellings. French language legislation has been and remains one of the most consistent and active in the world. The most important language authority in France is the Supreme Council of the French Language, headed by the President of the Council of Ministers. He considers issues related to the use of the language in France, its distribution abroad, is responsible for ensuring the protection of the French language in the world. Practical activities are carried out by the General Delegation for the French language. Top-level meetings of French-speaking countries are held regularly.

Internationally, the role of the French language is being strengthened through the activities of intergovernmental and public organizations. First of all, we are talking about a very specific and interesting international organization - the Francophonie. It is an association of fifty French-speaking states. It is noteworthy that this association







did not originate in France, but abroad. The very word "La Francophonie" was coined in 1880 by the French geographer Onesime Reclus (1837-1916). He decided to classify the inhabitants of the planet according to the language used in everyday and social life. Then this term came into use again in 1962, slightly changing its meaning. Now the term "La Francophonie" has come to be used to refer to the spread of French in the world. In the 1960s, foreign leaders: Senegalese President Leopold Sédar Senghor (part-time writer), Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia, Hamani Diori of Nigeria, and Charles Ellou, head of the Christian community in Lebanon, developed the principles of Francophonie. They saw this as a way to fight for the preservation of their cultures and the development of relations between states. The main lever of the Francophonie is the solidarity of the French-speaking countries. At the time of its inception, this solidarity was expressed in the unity of people tied to language and culture, now the range of interests and field of activity has expanded significantly, and has become an arena for cooperation in the field of economics and politics. Francophonie is based on legitimacy and development. France is the main center of the Francophonie, but its role within the organization excludes the methods of political pressure, and even more so the policy of colonialism. Increasing interest in the French language among new generations remains an important task.

Today, the use of French in international organizations is declining. Although the French language retains a positive opinion about itself in the world, it is still less and less used. In the United Nations, the Francophonie Agency has had observer status since 1995. Of the 185 member countries of the UN, 36 are members of the Francophonie, and most of them ask the UN secretariat to communicate with them in French. Despite the fact that today the French language is pushed more and more from the position of the leading one, in the international plan it firmly takes the place of the second language.

In the EU, French is the official language. The future of the French language depends on its place in a changing EU. The accession to the EU of Finland, Austria, Sweden further weakened the position of French, since these countries use English as a means of communication. The enlargement of the EU leads to the impossibility of complying with the Treaty of Rome that the languages of all member countries are the official languages of the EU.

In conclusion, it should be noted that Francophonie is a certain way of perceiving the world, a cultural alliance that is a support for a political alliance. Its unity is based on a linguistic community and serves to preserve peace, solidarity, respect for human rights, and respect for its fundamental freedoms. The Francophone space is open to





dialogue, cooperation and partnership. French, no less than English, is the language of modernity, and, no doubt, it has a bright future.

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