

# *Development of Russian Education in Kyrgyzstan*

**Dayong Li, Lina Kang**

*Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China*

**Keywords:** Kyrgyzstan, Russian education, Russian, Development

**Abstract:** The development of Kyrgyzstan education system is closely related to Russia. Since the independence of Kyrgyzstan, the educational cause has undergone great changes, and it is faced with many difficulties in all aspects. However, the development situation of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan is optimistic, which is not only related to the importance of the Kyrgyzstan and Russian, but also inseparable from the harmonious development of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Based on the formation of Kyrgyz education system before independence, this paper tries to analyze the development status and reasons of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan after independence.

## **1. Introduction**

Russian education has taken root in Kyrgyzstan since the Russian conquest of the region in the mid-to-late 19th century. The Russian government gradually replaced the local traditional family education with modern education and opened Russian-language schools. After the October Revolution, the Soviet government launched a literacy campaign in the region and vigorously developed modern education, and finally established a relatively perfect modern education system. After the early period of independence, Kyrgyzstan's domestic political turmoil, economic depression, high national sentiment, Russian education fell into a state of "stagnation", but soon the Kyrgyzstan government realized the importance of developing Russian education and actively promoted its development. It took the lead in co-founding the first university in Central Asia with the Russian side --- Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. In addition to higher education, Russia's primary, secondary vocational and technical education have also developed.

## **2. Formation of the education system before independence**

Since ancient times, the Kyrgyz people have been dominated by family education. By the second half of the 19th century, Kyrgyz education was lagging behind. The vast majority of Kyrgyz residents were illiterate. But with the arrival of the first Russian immigrants, the Russian government began to open Russian language schools, the first of which was opened in Karakul in 1876, and Mixed primary schools were followed.

In the early days of the Soviet Union, the vast majority of Kyrgyz residents were illiterate. The Soviet government first carried out the literacy campaign and the reform of the written word. The proportion of the literate population rose to 60% in 1935 and to 70% in 1939. At the same time, the Arabic alphabet was officially revised and promulgated in 1924. In 1928, the new alphabet based on the Latin alphabet was used. In 1941, the new alphabet based on the Kirill alphabet was used.

Secondly, the Soviet government made great efforts to develop the basic education in the region. In 1930, the Soviet Union promulgated the law of compulsory education in primary and secondary schools. Within three years after the founding of the Soviet Union, the number of local students increased sevenfold.[1] Thirdly, higher education started in the 1930s and got great development. In 1933, the first regular higher education institution Kyrgyz Veterinary College was established. By 1991, there were 9 higher education institutions in the whole country.

In short, after the formation and development of education in Russian empire and Soviet Union, schools got rid of the restriction of the church, private schools were abolished, and a unified modern education system was finally established. It can be seen that before independence, the educational undertakings in Kyrgyz region have achieved rapid development.

### **3. Development situation of Russian education after independence**

At the early stage of independence, despite the grim domestic situation, the government still attached importance to the education, and the development of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan was in a good situation. Kyrgyzstan is the first to recognize Russian as the official language and inter-ethnic communication language of the CIS, up to now, the constitution still stipulates Russian as the official language of the country, all educational institutions must learn Kyrgyz and Russian.

#### **3.1. Increase in the number of Russian schools and students**

At the beginning of independence, the Kyrgyzstan government focused on national education planning and tended to teach in Kyrgyzstan, but Russian still played a leading role in the whole preschool education stage. However, the situation of primary and secondary education is very different. In the early days of independence, the government of Kyrgyzstan formulated an education reform plan to limit the length of Russian teaching and reduce the number of Russian schools, which led to a large number of Russian teachers moving away. Since 2000 "Language law" stipulated Russian as the official language of Kyrgyzstan after the use of Russian environment turned good, Russian schools increased significantly. Despite this, there is still a shortage of Russian teachers, and most of the teaching level is low.

#### **3.2. Development of higher education institutions**

After independence, the Kyrgyzstan government attached great importance to higher education and adopted a series of measures to accelerate its development. In the past 20 years, higher education has developed rapidly, and almost all colleges and universities, except the Kyrgyz language department, mainly use Russian for teaching. According to statistics, there are 52 colleges and universities in Kyrgyzstan, including 32 national universities and 20 non-national universities.[2] Among the non-state universities, more than a dozen are co-established with other countries, firstly as higher education institutions jointly established by Kyrgyzstan and Russia. In addition to Slavic University, there are also 9 branches of universities of the Russian Federation, the Kyrgyz-Russian Academy of Education and the Russian Language Center.

#### **3.3. Diversification of educational training activities**

In recent years, the Russian government has carried out a series of training activities for the language learning and teaching training of Russian teachers in Kyrgyzstan. In addition to vocational skills training sessions, the Russian Language Center of the "Russian World" Foundation also provides teaching assistance. In March 2012, the Russian Science, Technology and Culture Center

of Bishkek held a vocational skills training session entitled "New Thinking for Russian Teachers", more than 150 teachers attended the training. With the support of the Academy of Educational Sciences, Kyrgyzstan has published a professional journal on teaching methods --- Russian Language in Kyrgyzstan, which is also strongly supported by the Russian side and distributed free of charge to 539 schools by the Russian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan.[1] In recent years, the Russian side for Kyrgyzstan 1/3 of the citizens to work in Russia labor migration and specially established training institutions. In 2011, the training class for Russian immigrants was formally established, which in addition to labor immigration, there are a large number of hope to learn and improve the level of Russian people also to participate in the training. The establishment of this kind of training institutions can not only improve the Russian level of labor immigrants, but also increase their income, improve their quality of life, more can drive the social and economic development of Kyrgyzstan, for Russia, can also take this to alleviate the pressure of labor market shortage, promote the economic development of Russia.

#### **4. Russian education development reasons**

Relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan have developed well in recent years, especially in the field of education. The reasons for the development of Russian education are as follows:

First of all, Russian education development has a long history. Since the second half of the 19th century, after the Russian empire invaded Central Asia, Russian education has been formed in Kyrgyzstan, and then in the Soviet Union, it was carried out completely according to the unified model of the Soviet Union, and finally formed the modern national education system, which laid a solid foundation for the development of education in Kyrgyzstan after independence. At present, the Kyrgyzstan government attaches great importance to the cause of education, and the relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Russia is harmonious. Therefore, the current situation of Russian education development is good.

Second, the quality of Russian education is high. Due to the development of education in Kyrgyz since the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, the foundation of Russian education is solid, and the quality of education is also very good. After independence, although the government has been committed to the development of national education, but due to its uneven foundation, the quality of education is much criticized. In contrast, Russian schools have a good teaching basis and, more importantly, high teaching quality. So now more parents in Kyrgyzstan are more willing to send their children to study in Russian schools. And higher education is even more so, considering the material economic conditions and language basis, Russian education is more competitive and attractive.

Third, Russian is the booster of the development of Russian education. At present, because of the narrow scope of use of Kyrgyz language, and only through Russian, can the world science, culture, technology and other aspects of knowledge to understand and learn. At present, although Kyrgyz language has been widely used and Russian has been "excluded" to a certain extent, it is still the most important language tool for Kyrgyz citizens to obtain information in the current Internet era. It can be seen that the Russian language still plays an important role in the development of the country's economy, culture, education, science and technology. In September 2013, organized by Slavic university and founded the first Russian long-range education of primary and secondary schools, not only for all expectations of accepting Russian education provides a platform, and create conditions for popularizing the Russian education in Kyrgyzstan.

The fourth, traditional advantages of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan education space. In recent years, due to the important strategic position and rich resources in Central Asia, Russia, the United States and Turkey have been competing in various fields in this region. At present, Russia, the

United States and Turkey are the most prominent in the field of education.[3-4] The Slavic University, the American University of Central Asia and Manas University founded by these three countries are authoritative and influential. From the traditional sense, Slavic University has the greatest influence. But the American University of Central Asia and Manas University are not to be outdone. The University of Central Asia is a university that adopts the international standard credit system in accordance with the American teaching model, and its reputation and degree are recognized by the world. Manas University has also attracted a large number of students to study there because of various preferential policies offered to students from Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the competition for education space in Kyrgyzstan is fierce at present. So, how to stay in the area of education on the Russian side edge must face some pressure and challenges, but since June 2013 kyrgyzstan after the claims of the agreement to abolish the renting the Manas airbase, The Ministry of Science and Education has also announced the increase in the number of Russian schools and students, which shows that the current Russian Education in the country still has considerable advantages.

## 5. Conclusion

Comprehensive Russian education in Kyrgyzstan's development background, situation and reasons, can be considered that the development of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan is more optimistic, it is expected that in the future for a period of time, the form of foreign education in Kyrgyzstan is still mainly Russian education. At present, both Kyrgyzstan and Russia should pay more attention to the development prospects of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan. However, it should also be noted that since independence, the Kyrgyzstan government has been committed to the construction of the main ethnic culture, and the tendency of "De-Russification" tends to be obvious, which seriously restricts the development of Russian education in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan and Russian governments should strengthen educational cooperation between the two countries and devote themselves to building a Central Asia-Russia Educational Community.

## References

- [1] Arefiev A. I. *Trends in export of Russian education. M.: Center for social forecasting and marketing, 2010. 222 p.*
- [2] Arefiev A. I. *Russian language at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Moscow, 2012. 482 p.*
- [3] Zharkynbaeva R. S., Volkova O. A. *Russian language in the regulatory and sociocultural space of modern central Asian states // NOMOTHETIKA: Philosophy. Sociology. Law. 2017, UDC 325(470), pp.12 -21.*
- [4] Fierman W. *Russian Language in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Persistence in Prestige Domains // WestnicRUDN. Series of Educational Issues: languages and specialties. 2015. № 5. pp. 56-63.*