Teaching Russian as a Heritage Language in Finland

Ekaterina Protassova, University of Helsinki

Abstract
Originating from many different sources, Russian as a heritage language in Finland displays a spectrum of developmental tendencies: both attrition and maintenance can be observed in various degrees. The Finnish educational system allows for the organization of bilingual pre-schools and schools when there are sufficient numbers of potential pupils. At the very least, children who speak a minority language (anything other than Finnish or Swedish) at home are entitled to ninety minutes of lessons in that language per week. Accommodations are made in higher education as well, such as the special program for Russian heritage learners at the University of Helsinki. Research has shown that bilingual children who grow up without regular instruction in Russian lack higher-level skills in the language, and their Russian is influenced by Finnish or Swedish on every level.

Introduction
Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. While Finnish citizens with Swedish as their first language are the largest linguistic minority in the country, the Russian-speaking population constitutes the largest nonindigenous language group. In the past few decades the older Russian-speaking minority has been joined by large numbers of new immigrants. The long common border and important economic relations between the two countries make it advantageous to promote the use of the Russian language in Finland, but the historical context and heterogeneousness of the Russian-speaking population also present challenges. Furthermore, the racial and political climate in Finland has not always been favorable toward immigrants, and their number is one of the lowest in Europe. Traditionally there have also been rather strong Finnish prejudices against Russians and the Russian language, but these attitudes began to change after World War II, resulting in today's climate of greater tolerance and better understanding (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind & Vesala, 2002; Liebkind, 2000). As a matter of official policy, maintenance of Russian as a mother tongue is now considered a primary tool of integration and is supported on all educational levels in numerous ways.

I. An Overview of Russians in Finland
Russian Orthodox missionaries have been active on the territory of contemporary Finland since the 16th century, and Russian merchants, peasants and soldiers began settling here in the 18th century. Finland was a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire between 1809 and 1917. The first Russian-speaking migrants of the 20th century were refugees after the Bolshevik revolution. Later came Ingrian-Finns, inhabitants of the territory along the Baltic Sea between southern Finland and Estonia, which gradually became part of Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the Soviet period these people started communicating predominantly in Russian after Finnish schools and churches were closed, and they came to feel it was dangerous for their children to speak Finnish in public. In the late 1930s some Ingrian-Finns were interned or conscripted into the Labor Army during Stalin's anti-nationalistic purges. Of these, some were transferred in 1943...
and 1944 to Finland from the Soviet Union as part of the return program during World War II but were subject to repatriation after the war. (Not all returned to the USSR, and those who did were prohibited from resettling in their places of birth.)

Under the so-called "Finlandization" policy during the Presidency of U. K. Kekkonen (1956-81), the Finnish media refrained from criticizing the Soviet Union and many Finns worked in the USSR (Bäckman, 2001). At this time Finns increasingly began to marry Russians who then settled in Finland, and this stream continues to grow. About 10,000 women (but many fewer men) have come to Finland this way, and their bilingual children can be found in all educational institutions. In the 1950s and 1960s some Finns who had gone to the USSR from the USA and Finland in the 1930s to help build the new socialist society (or even to become rich), and who had managed to survive under Stalin’s regime, returned to Finland as competent speakers of Russian with predominantly Russian-speaking children.4 In the early 1990s, the then President of Finland, M. Koivisto, issued an invitation to people of Finnish origin in Russia and to the Ingrian-Finns to settle in Finland. About 20,000 repatriates, belonging to families in which at least one member had a parent or two grandparents of Finnish origin, have since immigrated to Finland under this program.5 The practice of inviting qualified workers (specialists in biology, computer sciences, etc.) has also brought in increasing numbers of Russian speakers from the Commonwealth of Independent States.6

In 1870 Russian speakers constituted 12.1% of the population of Helsinki, in 1880 around 9.6% and in 1900 only 4.7%. According to Finnish national statistics (www.tilastokeskus.fi), in 1900 almost 87% of 2,656,000 citizens spoke Finnish as their first language, almost 13% Swedish, 0.07% Sámi, and less than 0.3% Russian.7 In 1950 the corresponding figures were 91% for Finnish, 9% for Swedish, and just 0.1% for Russian, out of a total population of 4,030,000. By 2004, however, speakers of Finnish constituted 91.9% of the population of 5,237,000, speakers of Swedish 5.5%, and Sámi 0.03%, while speakers of Russian had increased to 0.7%. Today, more than 25% of the 108,300 foreigners living in Finland are native or near-native speakers of Russian. Russian speakers are the largest nonindigenous group (including both permanent and temporary residents) and number 40,000 to 60,000, depending on whether one counts according to passport data or native language (see various reports in Spektr (n.d.) and Finljandskaja asocijacija russkojazyčnych obščestv (n.d.)).(Neither method is completely reliable). The second largest group are Estonians with 12% of the nonnative population, followed by Swedes who are citizens of Sweden (8%) and Somalis (more than 5%).

The Russian speakers are heterogeneous in origin as well as in the quality of their Russian and their command of Finnish and Swedish. The European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (n.d.) considers Russian to be a minority language in Finland. This was a unique case in Europe until 2004, when the Baltic States, with their significant Russian-speaking minorities, joined the European Union.8 The peculiarities of the Old and New Russians’ language and their identity and attitudes have been studied, among others, by Baschmakoff, Leinonen (2001), Harjula, Leinonen, and Ovchinnikova (1993), Horn (1997), Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000), Leisiö (2001) and Protassova (2004).9 Ideally, public policy should not only encourage the language-maintenance efforts of Russian speakers who have lived in Finland for a long time and who often have a
perfect command of either Finnish or Swedish or both, but also address the needs of new immigrants, who must learn one or both official languages in order to integrate into society. It was and still is important for the older Russian-speaking minority, but even more important for new Russian-speaking immigrants and returnees, that the Russian language have some degree of official status. Moreover, the culture of the entire Russian-speaking population, regardless of origins, must be represented in the Finnish educational system, so that newer Russian-speaking minorities do not feel excluded (Laihiala-Kankainen, Lysakova, and Raschetina, 1999; Laihiala-Kankainen, Milovidova, & Rynkänen, 2004; Laihiala-Kankainen & Raschetina, 1997; Mustajoki & Protassova, 2004; Sinisalo-Katajisto, 2004).

II. Russian as an Immigrant Language
The Russian-speaking community in Finland is served by print media and several different cultural organizations. There are daily news bulletins in Russian on Finnish radio, and half-a-dozen Russian-language newspapers (of which Spektr is the most influential). Digital and satellite TV programs are also available from Russia. Finnish authorities provide Russian-speaking immigrants with information in their mother tongue on various matters of public policy, and Russian-speaking and other immigrant parents are offered sessions in their own language(s) where coordinators or counselors explain the Finnish educational system and the importance of mother-tongue maintenance. Parents can also exchange opinions about different forms of education at meetings with local Russian-speaking activists. The Russian Democratic Cultural Association, the Russian clubs in Tampere and Turku, and the Russian Theater Association all receive government support and subsidies for their activities in supporting minority cultures and combating racism.

The public schools play a major role in both integration and language-maintenance efforts. According to international studies, the Finnish educational system is one of the best in the world, with schoolchildren excelling in mathematics, science, reading and problem-solving (Opetusministeri, n.d.) The Basic Education Act (628/1998) regulates compulsory education for all children in Finland, including nonpermanent residents with a Finnish personal identity number and a residency permit of at least one year. The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and the Reception of Asylum Seekers (1999) obliges municipalities to create an Integration Plan that includes public services for immigrants from early childhood care through higher education. Even if children are born in Finland but their parents speak an immigrant language at home, they are considered L2 speakers of Finnish (or, in Swedish-speaking areas, of both Swedish and Finnish). There are about 40,000 of these speakers in the country; in Helsinki, for example, about 11% of Finnish school pupils were of immigrant origin in 2005 (Finnish National Board of Education, 2006). Research conducted on Russian-speaking children in Finnish schools has shown that the teaching of the mother tongue fosters its continued use as well as the children's cognitive and personal development (Lehtinen, 2002; Vasanen & Voipio, 2003). Schools offer many opportunities for heritage language instruction, although it is not available everywhere, and not all parents are aware of their rights. Special preparatory classes exist for immigrant children and are aimed at the intensive teaching of Finnish or Swedish as a second language and the propaedeutics of other
basic school disciplines; pupils then join the mainstream at a minimum of 450 hours of instruction for six-to-ten year olds and 500 hours for older children. (In appropriate subjects, e.g. sports, music or the arts, children can be mainstreamed earlier.) During this time the mother tongue is used as a tool of explanation and is also taught as a subject itself. Usually a child has the opportunity to study in such state-financed classes for one year, with a maximum of 10 to 12 pupils per group. Afterwards, if a child is still not ready for mainstream education, he or she is eligible for courses conducted by bilingual teachers and paid for by the municipality if the child has lived in Finland for fewer than four years. If the pupil’s knowledge of an official language of Finland is weaker than his/her performance in the mother tongue, then the official language is designated as his/her second language. The study of Finnish or Swedish continues both in regular classes and in separate groups, with the goal of fully integrating foreign children into Finland's pedagogical culture. The National Board of Education provides textbooks, glossaries, and other supplementary materials for Finland's official languages and cultures to these groups (Eurydice, n.d.).

III. Educational Institutions Specializing in the Russian Language
At the end of the 19th century there were numerous primary schools and dozens of secondary schools for the Russian-speaking population in Finland, some operated by the Russian Orthodox Church. Most of the Russian schools were located in Helsingfors (the Swedish name for Helsinki, which was used in Russian at that time) and Vyborg (known in Finnish as Viipuri). By the 1920s and 1930s all the Russian schools were facing great financial problems, and only the Tabunov Primary School and the Russian Secondary School in Helsinki managed to survive until the end of World War II. A new Russian-Finnish private school opened in Helsinki in 1955. It offered a daycare center and both a primary and secondary school. In connection with the comprehensive school reform of 1977, it became a public school supported by the government and called the Finnish-Russian School. The number of native speakers of Russian entering the school decreased, at the same time that the need for specialists with a knowledge of Russian began to increase. The main language of instruction became Finnish, with Russian taught as a foreign language beginning in kindergarten (from the age of 6). English as a second foreign language was introduced in the second grade and Swedish in the seventh grade. (English is now obligatory for all schoolchildren, including teenage immigrants, while an examination in Swedish as a second language is no longer required). Other foreign languages are also offered. With the growing immigration from the Soviet Union and, later, the CIS, the need for instruction in the Russian language increased. The school administration responded, and now, starting with preparatory classes, Finnish-speaking pupils study Russian as a foreign language, and children who speak Russian as their first language (in 2004-05, 150 out of a total of 617) have access to dual instruction provided by native speakers for all subjects in both languages. Bilingual children are assessed and given the opportunity to choose between languages (Suomalais-Venäläinen Koulu, n.d.).

There are no Russian-language schools in Finland to serve the needs of the wider Russian-speaking population. The school at the Russian embassy in Helsinki offers daily classes and correspondence courses, but they require payment. The Finnish-Russian network school of Eastern Finland in Joensuu, Lappeenranta and Imatra provides education to a few hundred
children. The main language of instruction is Finnish. The school is organized mostly in the form of bilingual classrooms, and occasionally as separate classes in either tongue, taught by native speakers of both languages (Itä-Suomen koulu, n.d.) At the primary school in Myllypuro, an area of Helsinki with a large Russian-speaking population, bilingual classes have been organized at all grade levels (Myllypuron ala-aste, n.d.) Two schools in Helsinki, Suomalainen yhteiskoulu (Helsingin Suomalaisen Yhteiskoulun kotisivut, n.d.) and Itkeskuksen peruskoulu (Itkeskuksen peruskoulu, n.d.), provide intensive courses in Russian as a foreign language. Many bilingual children enroll in these classes: nationwide, Russian as a foreign language is taught to almost 3,000 children in primary school and to 3,000-4,000 children in high school. Between 650 and 750 students are examined in Russian every year. The Russian Teachers’ Association in Finland, founded in 1969, promotes and develops the teaching of the Russian language in Finland and has 530 members who teach in schools or institutions of higher education and/or give private lessons (Finnish National Board of Education, n.d.).

A number of private Russian or Finnish-Russian daycare centers exist in the capital district: “Kalinka” (84 children) in central Helsinki and “Teremok” (20 children) and “Matrjoshka” (24 children) in Vantaa, all established and maintained by the Society for the Support of the Finnish-Russian School, “Mishka” (16 children), “Antoshka” (15 children) and several daycare centers owned by a cooperative called “Idelia” (45 children) (Päiväkoti Kalinka, n.d.). Operated under an agreement with the city for the provision of daycare, they are partially subsidized by the municipal government and also charge private fees; financial assistance for the latter is available to low-income parents. There are also Russian kindergartens in Turku, Joensuu and Kotka. “Kalinka” is known for its innovative teaching methods, such as paradigmatic and syntactic language games, role-playing, and the introduction of new lexical items and grammatical structures in natural and imaginary contexts to increase combinatory possibilities and contexts of usage. These serve as a model for many other bilingual institutions in Finland, Russia, and elsewhere in Europe (see Protassova, 1991, 1992, 1996; Protassova & Miettinen, 1992; Protassova & Rodina, 2005). Materials for multicultural education in daycare centers include support and guidelines for maintaining Russian as a mother tongue (Kumpumäki, Kollanus, Martynova, & Protassova, 1996).

Legislation allows for the creation of full-time education in the minority language, but this right is usually not exercised; most Russian-speaking parents want their children to be integrated into the mainstream as quickly as possible. However, like all schoolchildren in Finland whose mother tongue is not Finnish or Swedish, Russian-speaking pupils are entitled to lessons in their native language two hours per week, as long as a group of four pupils close in age can be formed at the beginning of the school year (even if they are drawn from adjacent school districts or municipalities). In 2004, Russian as a heritage language was taught in 57 municipalities to 3,012 children of primary- and high-school age (about half of all Russian-speaking schoolchildren). Moreover, training for teachers of immigrant languages and cultures is subsidized by the government and can be conducted in the respective languages, native language instruction for immigrants was provided in 49 different languages to 10,907 pupils in 74 municipalities (Opetushallitus, 2006). The Russian Orthodox Church has a long history in Finland, and Orthodox religious instruction may also be provided in Russian if the parents and the child so
desire and it is financially possible. Recently some new Orthodox churches have been built in regions with large Russian-speaking populations, and this type of instruction has become increasingly common.

A new national core curriculum for basic education took effect in August 2006. It establishes standards for the teaching of immigrant pupils in the form of study plans and targeted achievement levels of eight on a ten-point scale. A working group of Russian-language teachers has developed a model for Russian. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is now focusing on increasing the study of Russian in general. In higher vocational training and even at the university, it is possible to fulfill coursework in Russian with content parallel to that in Finnish. Intensive Finnish language instruction is also available, as well as slower-paced regular instruction. International and inter-European cooperation has been initiated at many schools that Russian-speaking children attend (Eurolog, n.d.); various summer schools and children's camps specialize in the maintenance of Russian as a mother tongue, the study of Russian culture, the establishment of cross-border contacts and/or the study of other foreign languages.

Russian is taught at nine universities in Finland. The University of Helsinki offers a specific program for students with Russian as a heritage language. Slavonic Studies at the University of Helsinki has a rich tradition. The first permanent professorship in Russian was created in 1828, and distinguished scholars such as J. K. Grot, J. J. Mikkola and V. Kiparsky have worked there at various times. Admission to the program is highly competitive, and only about 20% of applicants are accepted. A combination of academic disciplines provides the basis for a rigorous program of education and research in all areas of Russian philology. The curriculum is subdivided into two separate tracks, one for Finnish-speaking and one for Russian-speaking students (Baran, Gladrow, Klaudy, Locher, Toivakka, & Moitus, 2000).

The Finnish Institute for Russian and East European Studies, a state institution subordinate to the Ministry of Education, is responsible for the support of the languages and cultures of Russian and East European immigrants in Finland. The Institute maintains a library and information services, engages in communication and publishing, provides expert services in the field, and sustains and enhances communication and collaboration with Finnish and international institutions and specialists in the field (Venjäja Ä Itä-Euroopan Instituutti, n.d.) It also publishes an internet journal, “Finljandskie tetradi”, in which the history and current concerns of the Russian-speaking population of Finland are addressed.

Convenient transportation to Russia, a tradition of educational cooperation between the two countries, and an expanded network of Russian organizations all help maintain Russian as a heritage language in Finland. The integration of immigrants, however, requires not only respect for and promotion of the Russian language and culture, but also high proficiency in one or both of the official national languages to minimize the risk of social exclusion. While there are still problems to be overcome, the programs described above seek to expand educational opportunities for immigrants and to provide a more balanced development for immigrant children both at home and in the majority languages.
IV. The Challenges and How to Meet Them

I have long investigated the everyday linguistic practices of bilingual Russian-immigrant families in Finland, with a particular focus on the discourse and language input of children. I have also distributed questionnaires to compare the stated strategies of teaching Russian as a heritage language with the actual practices of parents and other caregivers. Most adults declare that they want their children to attain a high level of proficiency in both languages, but they often fail to realize that passive listening alone does not provide sufficient reinforcement. In a longitudinal study of approximately ten years, I have analyzed the linguistic behavior of families in which one or both parents are bilingual (sometimes even trilingual) and have attempted to determine the underlying causes of successful versus unsuccessful outcomes in bilingual development. An important component is the acquisition of bilingual sociocultural competence, i.e. specific features that characterize the communicative behavior of competent representatives of each society. I have come to the conclusion that children need constant support in these aspects of both languages in order to achieve a high degree of bilingual proficiency.

The material below focuses on language attitudes among Russian-speaking parents and on the linguistic behavior of bilingual children. The latter descriptions are not exhaustive but are intended to provide typical illustrations of the challenges involved in teaching younger children with significant gaps in their Russian (Illustration 1) and in bringing older, more competent speakers to a level of native or near-native literacy (Illustration 2). All of these factors affect our ultimate success in maintaining and teaching Russian as a heritage language in Finland.

Parental Language Attitudes. Parents from approximately 40 Russian-speaking families in the capital area (the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo, Sipoo) responded to my 2003 questionnaire on priorities and goals for their children's education. In general, there was a high degree of support not only for native-language maintenance, but also for integration into Finnish society and overall educational advancement. Half of the respondents thought that their children could learn Russian to a degree typical of Russians in Russia, and one third cited near-native proficiency. Only 17% were more pessimistic, predicting 50% knowledge of Russian or less. Parents’ aspirations concerning their children's mastery of Finnish were as follows: at the highest possible level, 39%; at a near-native level, about 22%; at a median level, 19%. (The remaining 20% were unsure or chose not to answer this question.) Many parents also wanted their children to learn perfect (36%) or near-perfect (17%) English, and 33% hoped for a median level; only 16% considered this factor irrelevant. About 36% wanted their children to attend a bilingual Finnish-Russian school, while 56% preferred a Finnish school where Russian is taught as a heritage language; the remaining 8% felt that regular school support of the home language was unimportant. Parents listed numerous activities in both languages that they organized for their children. Half of them also wanted their children to study not only Russian language, but also Russian literature (this subject ranked mostly highly), history, mathematics, and science, at home, and/or in special clubs. Overall, such attitudes bode well for the future of Russian as a heritage language in Finland.

As illustrations of the problems and peculiarities of Russian as a heritage language in Finland, I offer below some samples of spontaneous communication by Russian-speaking children. These
examples, as well as many others, were collected from the various families mentioned above. I have discussed these data with teachers of Russian as a heritage language, parents of bilingual children, activists in civic organizations and Finnish officials at several well-attended seminars in locations throughout the country.

Illustration 1. How do children of Russian-speaking background communicate with one another? I have analyzed verbal interactions during many hours of children's play. Pairs of children were left with a running digital recorder set up by their parents. Six sessions with different children at different times were recorded for this purpose. Play between children was conducted in both languages; below are some specific examples:

1. A Russian boy is playing with a Russian-Estonian boy (both are 11 years old); both have lived in Finland for about six years. When they first met, most of their play was in mixed language, but now they prefer to converse in Finnish. At the home of the Russian boy, play begins in Russian; the farewell is also in Russian. In the course of forty minutes, they twice say in English “We are the champions” and “Rich man, rich man”, they sing part of the Russian national anthem and the song “Katjuša”, and they utter two phrases in Russian: “Vot otsjuda poprobuj zapul'ni” ('Try to shoot from here') and “Ja, slušaj, tol’ko za rogatkoj sxožu” ('I'll just go and get the slingshot'). Some exclamations seem not to be in any language.

2. Two six-year-old girls, both born to Russian families in Finland, attended a Finnish daycare center and are now at a Finnish school. When they meet and play, they converse in Russian if no Finnish child is present; otherwise, they speak Finnish. During a twenty-minute play session at one family’s home, the only Finnish was the phrase “ei vielä” ('not yet') and a Finnish song.

3. A six-year-old bilingual boy (his father is a Finn, his mother is Russian) and an eight-year-old girl from a Russian family are playing in both languages. During a period of approximately five hours, there are sequences predominantly in Russian, predominantly in Finnish, and in both languages. For the boy, mixed language is the norm; for the girl, mixed language is a spontaneous means of showing the boy that she understands that he has lacunae in his Russian, and she tries to help him by using Finnish elements. Often a Finnish word introduces a series of insertions. From the girl’s discourse:
These texts clearly illustrate the importance of songs, games and role-playing in the bilingual behavior of younger children. “Kiddie-language” and onomatopoeia are usually associated with the mother tongue and the heritage culture; on the other hand, in these play sessions they are often adapted to the dominant environment. An analysis of these phenomena can help determine a child’s respective skills in each language and how best to incorporate such activities into teaching methodologies.

Psychologists and teachers of Russian as a heritage language in Finland strongly recommend against language mixing at the early stages of acquisition, because each linguistic system should be formed as completely as possible before it comes into contact with another language. However, the ‘one person – one language’ strategy may not always work in bilingual communities. To some extent, code-switching can be used as a second-language learning or teaching tool, making transitions and translations from one language to the other easier and more understandable, and also helping to create varieties of language games and play that enrich the child’s bilingual life. The third text here shows this process occurring spontaneously. As this text illustrates, and according to other research I have conducted (Protassova, 1991, 1992, 1996), bilingual children often have a sense for code-switching phenomena and are able to choose their own strategies when using them. On the other hand, if bilingual learners are not provided with the necessary input, they might later have gaps in their Russian, as in Illustration 2 below.

**Illustration 2.** The following two compositions were written by a young girl whose Russian mother divorced her Russian father, married a Finn and immigrated to Finland when the girl was six. My analysis of this material aims to demonstrate the need for mother-tongue instruction among bilinguals who complete their high-school education in Finnish. The texts are interesting.
for their content, orthography, grammar, logic, text structure and the influence of Finnish and English on the written Russian. This eighteen-year-old girl is clearly intelligent and well adjusted, and she has done well in school, but her written Russian shows that she has lacked formal instruction in it on a regular basis. Indeed, she did not take courses in Russian as a heritage language, and her case is an example of naïve or spontaneous literacy. In my commentary below, I attempt to identify the particular mistakes and lacunae that are most important to address in the teaching of Russian literacy to Finnish-dominant bilinguals who have nevertheless retained a relatively good oral command of Russian. Many of these mistakes are typical of monolingual Russian children acquiring literacy at ages 5 to 7, but here they occur at a much later stage of personality development. I have subdivided the errors into those caused by the oral nature of the girl’s language proficiency, lexical attrition, unfamiliarity with standard-Russian punctuation, grammatical lacunae, nonnative stylistics, and Finnish, or sometimes even English, influences. Of course, occasionally some or all of these factors are present at the same time.

An Example of Incomplete Russian Literacy

Original Text

Самые счастливые воспоминания детства (8.10.2004)

Я считаю что самое счастливое воспоминания моего детства это то, что я довольно много помню о своего детства. Я жила до шести лет в России и многие удивляются как я в штота могу помнить с тех временах. Но я помню это всё как вчерашней день. Я не могу обезательно сказать каторые были самые счастливые случаи, потому что я как и все помню только хорошие случаи. И их так много мне осталось в памети что я думаю можно спакойна сказать что я провела очень даже счастливое детство, что мне приносить большое удовольства. А то в конце концов я-бы не была тот человек который я сейчас есть без моих замечательных радителей и

Translation

The Happiest Memories of My Childhood

I think that the happiest memory of my childhood is that I remember quite a bit about my childhood. I lived in Russia till I was six, and many people are surprised that I can remember anything from those times. But I remember everything like yesterday. I can't say for sure what my happiest experiences were, because like everybody I remember only the good things. And so many of them remain in my memory that I think it could easily be said that I had a truly very happy childhood, and I'm really glad about that. Otherwise in the end I wouldn't be the person that I am now, without my wonderful parents and the environment they provided for me in my childhood. That was childhood…
из тех условиях которые они мне устроили в детстве. Это было детства…

Есть конечно маленькие случаи которые стоит рассказать. Мы жили с мамой и с папой в Москве, но каждое лето я провадила в деревне у бабушки с дедушкой с моим двоюродным братом, Сергеем. Он был моим самым лутщем другом, и мы с ним всегда всё вместе делоли. В детстве мы очень много путешествовали. В основном по России, но где мы только там не побывали! Санкт-Петербург, Алматы, Казахстан, Сотчи, Сибериа…Всё даже не помню. Большее всего я конечно любила Сотчи. Мы туда ездили каждый год, и я обажала там играть в море на агромных волнах, ловить медуз и собирать ракушки.

Воспоминания конечно все хороши сами по сибе, по их слишком много чтобе все написать. За то во время когда я училась в гимназие психологии, нам было задона буквально за два месяца написать биографию своего детства и сделать психологический анализ про всё детства. Это был один из моих любимых проектов в школе и я действительно написала чело книгу куда я включила всё что я только могла вспомнить. И досехпор храню книгу с гордостью.

There are of course some small things that are worth telling. I lived with my mom and dad in Moscow, but I spent every summer in the country with my grandparents and my cousin Sergej. He was my best friend, and we did everything together. When I was a child, we did a lot of traveling. Mostly in Russia, but all over the place! St Petersburg, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Sochi, Siberia I can't even remember it all. Best of all, of course, I liked Sochi. We went there every year, and I just loved playing there in the sea in the big waves, catching jellyfish and collecting shells.

Of course, the memories are all good as such, but there are too many of them to write down. When I took psychology in high school, we had a two-month assignment to write a biography of our childhood and to make a psychological analysis of our entire childhood. That was one of my favorite projects in school, and I truly wrote a whole book and included everything at all that I could remember. And to this day I still proudly keep this book.
Original Text

Что значит для меня русский язык (26.11.04)

Русский язык это для меня первый язык на котором я научилась разговаривать. И в то время он был единственным языком которым я знала.

Сейчас реч уже другая. Русский язык для меня это свой мир. Это взгляд в штоть совсем уникальное, это взгляд в русскую душу. Общаться с русскими на русском языке это как находиться в другом мире. И я думаю что это могут понять только те кто находились когда-нибудь в разном окружение и самое главное, его челиком ищё понимая. Переходя с одного языка на другова, человек также меняять свою персональность. Свое знание, отношение, повидение, реч раздвора. И эта разниться больше всего показываеться именно в русском языке.

Можно сказать у меня есть две персональности: Русское и Финское. Я не могу сказать которое мне больше нраветься, потому што я люблю быть и Финкай и Русскай. Но кажем так, что иногда мне нраветься больше общатса с Русскими из-за причинь что они гараздо больше знают и их раздвор интересней и хюмор смешней.

Translation

What the Russian Language Means to Me

For me the Russian language is the first language that I learned to speak. And at that time it was the only language I knew.

Now it's already different. The Russian language is its own world for me. It's a glimpse into something completely unique, it's a glimpse into the Russian soul. To communicate with Russian people in the Russian language, it's like being in a different world. And I think that only people who have been in a different environment at some point can understand this, and most importantly, can understand it completely. When people go from one language to another, they also change their personality. Their knowledge, attitude(s), behavior, speech. And [for me] this difference really comes out in Russian.

You could say I have two personalities, the Russian and the Finnish. I can't say which one I like better, because I like being both a Finn and a Russian. But let's say that sometimes I prefer to communicate with Russians for the reason that they know a lot more and their conversation is more interesting and their humor is funnier. And not even only that --
И даже не только это, самы отношение с рисским человеком более открытые, более тёплые и чюствительные. Но в краинем мире я всётаки довольна тем что у меня есть и русские и финские отношение. Они как-то балансируют друг друга и тем именении делают друг друга более интересным.22

the relationship itself with a Russian person is more open, warmer and more sensitive. But in the final analysis, I'm still happy that I have both Russian and Finnish relationships. They somehow balance each other and in just that way make each other more interesting.

Commentary23

Phonetic Spelling of Texts24

• -ц [šč] instead of сч [sč], e.g. щитою [ščitaju] instead of считаюто [sčitaju] ('consider', 1st pers. sg.)
• ш [š] for ч [č] when anomalously pronounced as ш [š], e.g. што [što] instead of что [čto] ('what'), конечно [konečno] instead of конечно [konečno] ('of course')
• тыц [tšč] for чи [či], e.g., луто [lutšče] instead of лучше [lučše]
• unstressed о [o] written as а, [a], e.g. довольнo [davol'no] instead of довольно [dovol'no] ('rather')
• unstressed -е [e] written as -и [i], e.g. по сибе [po sebe] instead of по себе [po sebe] ('as such')
• wrong generalizations or hypercorrections of unstressed vowels, where а is written as о, e.g. нoписат [nopisat'] instead of написать [napisat'] ('to write')
• -и written as е, e.g. ездели [ezdeli] instead of ездил [ezdili] ('took trips');
• -и and у, e.g. самы [samy] versus сами [sami] ('themselves'), а and у are confused, e.g. случаи [slučija] for случаи [slučai] ('events')
• -чо written instead of чу, e.g. чюствительные [čuvstvit'nye] for чувствительные [čuvstvit'nye] ('sensitive')
• -soft consonants are marked by a soft sign, not by the following vowel, e.g., в памяти [v pamjati] instead of в памяти [v pamjati] ('in someone's memory')
• hard and soft consonants are sometimes wrongly marked or not marked, e.g. бес [bes'] instead of без [bez] ('without'); больше [bolše] for больше [bol'se] ('more')
• some swallowed sounds do not appear at all in surface letters, e.g. штоть [štot'] instead of что-то [štoto; pronounced što-to] ('something')
• voiceless consonants may be replaced by voiced consonants and vice versa, e.g. взгляда [vzgljad] instead of взгляд [vzgljad] ['view']; сделать [zdelať] instead of сделать [zdelat'] ('to make')
• confusion between и [i] and ё [j], e.g. моих [moix] instead of моих [moix] ('my'-gen./prep.plural); when two и come one after the other, the second becomes ё, or vice versa, e.g. Русский [russkii] instead of Русский [russkij] ('Russian')
two forms of the same word written with a different root vowel (as in в конце концов [v konce koncov] ('finally'));

misrepresentation of soft consonant + vowel or j + vowel, as in храню [xraniju] versus храню [xranju] ('keep'-1st pers. sg.), гординстю instead of гординство [gordost'ju] ('pride'-inst. case)

in сами отношение, it remains unclear whether the writer wanted to say сами отношения [sami otnošenija] ('relationships themselves') or само отношение [samo otnošenie] ('relationship itself'), because the oral variants are almost the same

the affricate Ѳ [c] spelled тыс [i's], e.g. месяться [meset'ja] instead of месяца [mesjaca] ('month'-gen. case), разниться [raznit'ja] instead of разница [raznica] ('difference').

Lexicon

- use of colloquial words in a formal writing assignment, e.g. даже [daže] ('even'), а то [a to] ('or else'), мы с мамой и папой [my s mamoj i papoj] ('mama and papa and I'; literally: 'we with mama and papa')
- wrong aspectual choice: побили [pobyli] instead of побывали [pobyvali] ('visited')
- персональность [personal'nost'] (a nonce formation in which the adjectival suffix of персональный [personal'nyj] 'personal, individual' has been replaced with an abstract nominal suffix) instead of личность [ličnost'] ('personality')
- вчерашнишей [včerašniščej] instead of вчерашний [včerašnij] ('yesterday's), with an added syllable because of the influence of сегодняшний [segodnjašnij] ('today's')
- отношение [otnosenie] ('relationship') instead of связи [svjazi] ('connections'), родственники [rodstvenniki] ('relatives') in the phrase что я имею отношение и к России, и к Финляндии [čto ja imeju otnošenie i k Rossii, i k Flinljandii] ('that I have a relationship/connections both to Russia and to Finland').
Punctuation

- absence of commas before что [čto], который [kotoryj] ('who', 'which') etc.;
- no markers of parenthetical expressions, obligatory in written Russian., e.g. Есть конечно маленькие [Est' konešno malen'kie] … instead of Есть, конечно, маленькие … [Est', konešno, malen'kie …]

Grammatical Errors (a result of phonetic misunderstandings, incomplete acquisition of the grammatical system, or both)

- mixing of case forms: из тех условий [iz [governs gen. case] tex [gen. pl. or prep. pl. case] uslovijax [prep. pl. case]] ('from these conditions');
- inconsistencies in grammatical endings: они мне устроили, делали [oni mne ustroile, delali] instead of они мне устроили, делали [oni mne ustroili, delali] ('they created, made for me'). These inconsistencies are also related to the phonetic spellings discussed above.
- grammatical gender is not perceived and verbal agreement therefore lacking: было детства [bylo-neut sg. detstva-fem. sg.] instead of было детство [bylo detstvo-neut. sg.] ('it was childhood'), было задано [bylo-neut. sg zadona-fem. sg.] instead of было задано [bylo zadano-neut. sg.] ('was assigned')
- incorrect use of case, e.g. с одного языка на другого [s odnogo jazyka na drugoga-gen. sg.] instead of с одного языка на другого [odnogo jazyka na drugoj-acc. sg.] ('from one language to another')
- incomplete acquisition of conjugation: балансируют [balansirovajut] for балансируют [balansirujut] ('they balance').

Influence of Finnish or English

- use of capital letters for adjectives of nationality, e.g. Русское и Финское [Russkoe i Finskoe] instead of русское и финское ('Russian and Finnish')
- convergence of Latin and Cyrillic letters in written and printed form: small n [n] instead of н [n], e.g. по [po] instead of но [no] ('but'), и instead of y, e.g. рisskim [risskim]
instead of русским [russkim] ('Russian'-instr. case); д [d] instead of ę [g], e.g. раздовора [razdavora] instead of разговора ('conversation'-gen. case)

• confusion of щ [č], щ [c], e.g. психологический [psixologiceskij] for психологический [psixologiceskij], целую [čelaju] for целую [celju-acc. case] ('whole'), целиком [celikom] for целиком (celikom) ('entirely'). The absence of the sounds [č] or [c] in Finnish may mean that they are difficult to distinguish when heard.

• Finnish usage: из тех условий [iz tex uslovijach-prep.pl.] ('from those conditions'). tex uslovij is the object of the preposition bez ('without') (standard spelling: bez moix zamečatel'nyx roditel'j i iz tex uslovij ...) ('without my wonderful parents and those conditions ...'). iz ('from'), which is unnecessary here, is often used by Russian speakers to translate the elative case in Finnish.

• loan transcription of geographic places: Алматы [(then) Alma-Ata; (now) Almaty], Казахстан [Kazakstan], Сочи [Sotči], Сибири [Siberia] instead of Сибирь [Sibir'] ('Siberia')

• incorrect use of case: Всё даже не помню [Vsë daţe ne pomnju] instead of Всего даже не помню [Vsego daţe ne pomnju] ('I don't even remember it all')

• incompatible combination of chosen verbal form and government: когда я училась в гимназии [kogda ja učila v gimnazii] instead of когда я училась в гимназии психологию [kogda ja učila v gimnazi psychologiju] ('when I studied psychology at the gymnasium')


Non-standard Phrase Construction

• из-за причины что... [iz-za pričiny čto] (standard phrase по причине того, что [po pričine togo, čto] ('for the reason that') or из-за того, что [iz-za togo, čto] ('because of the fact that'), их раздовор интереснее [ix razdavor interesnej] (standard spelling их разговор интереснее) ('their conversation is more interesting') instead of разговаривать с ними интереснее [razgovarivat' s nimi interesnee] ('talking with them is more interesting'); их слишком много чтобы все написать [ix sliškom mnogo čtoby (čtoby)] vse napisat'] ('there are too many of them to write down') instead of их слишком много, чтобы обо всём написать [ix sliškom mnogo, čtoby obo vsëm napisat]; Сейчас реч уже другая [Sejčas reć uže drugaja] instead of Сейчас речь уже о другом [Sejčas reć' uže o drugom] ('now it's another story'); находились когда-нибудь в разном окружении [naxodiles' kogda-nibud' v raznom okruženje] instead of находились когда-нибудь в другом окружении [naxodilis' kogda-nibud' v drugom okru]

As the above speech samples illustrate, heritage learners in Finland are influenced by the Finnish and English (and maybe other) languages on all levels of proficiency. In addition to lexical
lacunae, they substitute Finnish cases and/or prepositions for analogous Russian ones; they fail to distinguish between different grammatical forms in Russian and/or confuse them; they use Finnish word order; they directly translate Finnish idioms, etc. When learning to write, they often imagine how a Russian word would be spelled or pronounced in Finnish and then transliterate it. Although native Finnish students may also make errors of these types, the difference is a matter of degree and awareness. For non-heritage learners L1 and L2 remain separate and distinct. Heritage learners, on the other hand, tend to conflate the two because the order in which they have acquired the languages usually conflicts with their relative mastery of each. Therefore, their problems may persist even after a considerable amount of formal instruction. In any case, common errors among Russian heritage learners in Finland need further study. Similar problems have been described among Russian heritage learners in other countries (cf. Bermel & Kagan, 2000), and future cross-cultural comparisons would also be desirable.

V. Conclusion
Educational opportunities in the mother tongue and formal instruction to improve existing language skills enhance not only the intellectual and personal growth of bilingual children, but also help raise their self-esteem. However, a command of Finnish or Swedish at a level close to that of native speakers is necessary for successful integration into this welcoming society. For that reason the emphasis in Finland is on functional bilingualism, a goal that requires support on many levels. As documented above, the Finnish school system affords various rights and opportunities to minority-language children, but these are not always welcomed by parents. The largest remaining problem is the resistance of families of low socioeconomic status, who are afraid that their children will become wholly dependent upon Russian-speaking society. In other families one or both parents may oppose teaching the Russian language and culture to their children for personal reasons. These usually involve the projection of national identity, and positive versus negative associations with it, onto language practices. Teachers of Russian as a heritage language in Finland must continue to address these problems. While the schools and society at large can provide additional opportunities and encouragement, the initial responsibility for the formation of fully functional bilingualism lies with the family.

For the most part the various methods of teaching the Russian language and culture in Finland described in this article have been rather successful. Still, we must develop more suitable teaching materials for the specific needs and requirements of heritage learners. According to directives of the Ministry of Education, bilingual children should be drawn into both languages and encouraged to use them in their daily life. The authorities recommend training children in the practical use of language in all its functions, promoting linguistic variation and vocabulary growth, and combining authentic Russian materials with those created in Finland. These methods have much in common with those used by Kagan, Akishina and Robin in their textbook Russian for Russians (2003), aimed at the American heritage learner. I am currently part of a team (with Anna Golubeva, Vadim Levin, Irina Majboroda and Natalia Rodina) at the Zlatoust Publishing House in St. Petersburg working on a series of teaching materials for Russian heritage learners abroad. I hope that some of our efforts will help fill the specific gaps we now have in Finland.
The well-known variables in individual heritage-speaker profiles, e.g. age; background; motivation; exposure to the heritage language; productive and/or receptive skills; gaps in acquisition (Brecht & Ingold, 1998) certainly apply to the heritage learner in Finland. What is perhaps unique for the Russian language in Finland is the country’s sociocultural history. The bilingual Swedish-speaking population and the “Old Russians,” who have retained the mother tongue while also acquiring native-like proficiency in Finnish and/or Swedish, are positive examples of multiculturalism that reinforce societal respect for minority languages. This, in turn, helps support multiculturalism and native-language maintenance in the “New Russian” community.

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References
Bäckman, J. B. (Ed.) (2001). Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia [What if there were more Russians? The new history of ‘Finlandazation’.] Helsinki: WSOY.


**Notes**

1. Finland was ruled by Sweden from the 12th to the beginning of the 19th century, by Russia from 1809 to 1917, and then became independent. In predominantly Swedish-speaking areas, children whose first language is Russian must master Swedish, and in urban areas these children are usually trilingual, i.e. they also learn Finnish. For more on Finland’s linguistic situation, see Johansson and Pyykkö (2005), Raento and Husso (2002), or the website *Virtual Finland* (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, n.d.)

2. For more on the positive and negative aspects of Russia’s influence on the formation of the Finnish national identity, see Vihavainen 2004. For mass surveys on the attitudes of Finnish citizens toward immigrants of Estonian, Finnish, and Russian backgrounds, see Liebkind, et al. (2004).

3. We will describe the many different educational opportunities for Russian speakers, from kindergarten through university, later in this article. For demographic data on Russian and other linguistic minorities, see Section 2.

4. For specific figures and migration streams, see Engman (2005) and The Institute of Migration (Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 2005).

5. For details, see Miettinen (2004), and Teinonen and Virtanen (1999).

6. For the role of labor migration and the corresponding figures, see Forsander (2002).

7. However confusing it may seem, given that many people presumably spoke both Finnish, Swedish, and perhaps other languages, the Finnish civil register allows for the designation of only one mother tongue.


9. The “Old Russians” are the offspring of several immigration waves: Orthodox clergy from the 17th century; serfs relocated from Russia to Karelia in the beginning of the 18th century; merchants, military and civil servants in the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland; and the White emigration. (Most of the last joined the Swedish-speaking Finns.) There has been considerable cross-border migration in both directions in the 20th century, particularly during and immediately after World War II. The term “New Russians” refers to Russian-speaking immigrants who have come to Finland since the early 1990s. For a discussion of these groups, see Protassova (2005).
10. By “some degree of official status” I imply the recognition of Russian as the largest non-indigenous language of Finland by government agencies, educational institutions, business and society at large, not coequal status with Finnish or Swedish.

11. Since 2001 preschool education has started at the age of 6 and provides preparatory instruction for basic education. At this level immigrant children do not have special teachers in their mother tongues, but if the financial situation allows, the pedagogical staff sometimes includes a speaker of their language (Finnish National Board of Education, n.d.)

12. See also Sjöholm (2004).

13. I am thankful to Merja Värtö, Svetlana Kirichenko, Elena Sulasalmi, Maria Baronova and Anita Novitsky for their support of this study.

14. Finnish-Russian bilinguals are especially susceptible to the influence of English, an obligatory school subject from the early grades. English, of course, is closer to Russian as an Indo-European language (Finnish is Finno-Ugric), although some features of the Balto-Slavic Sprachbund are common to Russian and Finnish. It is difficult to determine which of these is more important at the high-school level, when many English-language textbooks are used. A fuller discussion of the issue is beyond the scope of this article and merits its own investigation.

15. The girl had recently returned from the USA, where she had spent a year, and at the time she had an English-speaking boyfriend. While she acquired Russian first and spoke it at home with her mother, Finnish remained her dominant language.

16. Editor's Note: Each paragraph is transliterated separately, with all deviations from the standard preserved, in Notes 18-22.

17. Editor's note: In the English translation we attempt to remain as close as possible to the Russian as well as to convey the colloquial register of the original text, but without replication of its many nonstandard features.

18. Transliteration:

Samye ščastlivye vospominanija detstva
Ja ščitaju čto samoe ščastlivoe vospominanija moego detstva čto to što ja davol'no mnogo pomnju o svoego detsva. Ja žila do šisti let v Rossii i mnogie udevljajutsja kak ja štota mogu pomnit' s tex vremenax. No ja pomnju čto vsjė kak včerašniščej den'. Ja ne mogu obezatel'no skazat' katorye byli samye ščastlivye slučija, potomušto ja kak i vsč pomnu toľko xarošie slučija. I ix tak mnogo mne ostalos' v pamet'ji što ja dumajo možno spakojna skazat' što ja provela očen daže ščastlivoe detsvo, čto mne primosit' bolš udavol'stva. A to v kance koncov ja-by ne byla tot čelovek kotoryj ja sejčas est' bes' mojx zomečatel'nyx raditelej i iz tex uslovijax kotorye oni mne ustroile v detstve. Ėto bylo detstva …

19. Transliteration:
Est' konešno malen'kie slučija kotorye stoet raskazat'. My žili s mamoj i s papoj v Moskve, no každoe leto ja provadila v derevne u babuške s deduškoj i mojm dvajurodnom bratam, Sergeem. Ono byl mojm samym lutščem drugom, i my s nim vsegda všte vnest deloli. V detstve my očen mnogo putešestvovali. Vosnavnom po Rossii, no gde my tol'ko tam ne pobyl! Sankt-Peterburg, Almata, Kazakhstan, Sotči, Siberia... Vše daže ne pomju. Bolše vsego ja konešno ljubila Sotči. My tuda ezdeli každý každý god, i ja obažala tam igrať v more na agromnyx volnax, lovit' meduzy i sobret' rakuški.

20. Transliteration:

Vospominanija konešno vse xoroši sami po sibe, po ix sliškom mnogo čtobe vse napisat'. Za to vo vremja kogda ja učilas' v gimnazie psixologiju, nam bylo zadona bukvalno za dva meset'sja nopisat' biografiju svoего detstvo i zdelat' psixologiceskij analizys pro vsě detstva. Ėto byl odin iz mojx ljubimyx proektov v škole i ja deistvitel'no napisala čelaju knigu kuda ja vključila vše čto ja tolok mogla vspomnit'. I dosexpolor xranju knigu s gordostju.

21. Transliteration:

Čto značit dlja menja russkij jazyk
Russkii jazyk ěto dlja menja pervyj jazyk na katorym ja naučilas' razgovarevat'. I vto vremja on byl idinstvennym jazykom katoryj ja znal.

Sejčas reč uže drugaja. Russkij jazyk dlja menja ěto svoj mir. Ėto vzgljat v štot' sovsem unikaľ'noe, ěto vzgljat v russkuju dušu. Obščatsja s russkimi na russkom jazyke ěto kak noxodit'sja v drugom mire. I ja dumaju ěto ěto mogut ponjať toł'ko te kto noxodil's kogda-nibud' v raznom okruženie i sameo glavnoe, ego čelikom iščë ponimaja.

Perexodja s odnogo jazyka na drugova, čelovek takže menjajet' svoju personal'nost'. Svoē znanie, otnašenie, povidenie, reč razdavora. I ďa raznītsja bol'she vsego pokazyvaet'sja imeno v russkom jazyke.

22. Transliteration:

Možno skazat' u menja est' dve personal'nosti: Russkoe i finskoe. Ja ne mogu skazat' kotoroe mne bol'she nравit'sja, potomu što ja ljublju byt' i Finskaj i Russkaj. No skazažem tak, čto inogda mne nравetsja bol'she obščatsa s Russkimi iz⁻ža pričiny čto oni garazdo bol'she znajut i ix razdavor interes'nej i xhumor smešnej. I daže ne toł'ko ěto, samy otnašenie s risskim čelovekom bolee otkryьте, bolee těplye i čujustvit'nye. No v krainem mire ja vsečak davol'na tem čto u menja est' i russkii i finskii otnašenie. Oni kak—to balansirovajut drug druga i tem imenii delajut drug druga bolee interesnym.

23. It is impossible to note individually each and every nonstandard form.
24. Editor's Note: Russian spelling does not reflect regular patterns of vowel reduction in unstressed syllables or various types of consonant assimilations in specific phonetic environments. There are also several arbitrary spelling rules governing the choice of vowel symbols after velar and sibilant consonants. A full discussion is beyond the scope of this article.

25. The first has been already published (Protassova & Rodina, 2006).