

Russia as an Object of Scientific Studies in Kyrgyzstan

Nazgul Dzh. Abalova^{1a}, Yevgeny F. Troitsky^{2b},
Anastasia M. Pogorelskaya^{3c}, Kanybek A. Kudayarov^{4d}

¹Institute of World Languages and International Relations named after Sh.Kadyrova of the I.Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
2,3 Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia

⁴The Center for Russian Studies of J.Balasagyn KNU, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

^anazdil72@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9607-536X>

^beft@rambler.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6489-7193>

^cpogorelskaya@mail.tsu.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3003-4757>

^dkana8306@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8970-8694>

Abstract. The object of the study is scientific social and humanitarian publications devoted to Russia of Kyrgyzstan scientists. These are works in five disciplines: “Russian language and literature”, “political science”, “history”, “economics” and “law”. The purpose of the work is to identify the degree of study and the specificity of research on Russia in Kyrgyzstan in studies on Russian philology, history and political science, and analysis of expert-analytical and scientific-educational materials on economic and legal aspects of research.

Of greatest interest to Kyrgyz researchers is Russian language, which is explained by the status and role of the Russian language in the Kyrgyz Republic and its dominant position in the capital, Bishkek, where all major universities of the republic dealing with Russian topics are located. In the sphere of the other four disciplines, the interests of researchers are limited to historical, political and economic relationships between the two states. The study showed that, in general, the ideological positions of local experts are manifested in a positive or neutral attitude towards Russia, despite individual (single) works that contain a negative interpretation of Kyrgyz-Russian relations.

Keywords: Russia, Kyrgyzstan, science, Russian studies, social and humanitarian sciences, universities, analytical centers

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Introduction

The development of Kyrgyz-Russian relations – both bilaterally and within the framework of international integration formats (EAEU, CSTO, SCO, etc.) – in recent years has led to an increase in scientific and educational contacts between the two states. Since 2019, forums of rectors of universities of Kyrgyzstan and Russia have been held, and since 2022, the Association of Universities of Russia and Kyrgyzstan has been functioning. Kyrgyz-Russian scientific and educational partnership is successfully developing within the framework of network universities of the SCO and the CIS, created to implement joint scientific and scientific-technical projects. Almost any Russian university has experience of cooperation with universities in Kyrgyzstan, many universities in Kyrgyzstan have dozens of agreements with universities in the Russian Federation. The scientific and expert community of Kyrgyzstan is actively studying Kyrgyz-Russian cooperation, as evidenced by numerous publications of scientists and experts from Kyrgyzstan. But there are no publications that would reflect the development of such a direction as Russian studies in Kyrgyzstan, which would allow us to determine the degree of interest of Kyrgyz researchers in the science of Russia. Given the demand for Russian studies in scientific works, an attempt was made to fill the existing gap in such areas as Russian language and literature, history and political science, economics and law.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on the analysis of scientific, educational and expert-analytical literature: articles, monographs, textbooks, dissertations. Much attention is paid to scientific, educational and analytical centers of Kyrgyzstan dealing with the issues under study: the features of the research they conduct and the topics that are of priority for them. The resources of the scientific electronic library “Elibrary”, the database of scientific works of the National Electronic Library of Kyrgyzstan (“neb.kg”), the dissertation library of the information agency “AKIpress” (“Bilim AKIpress”), and materials of the network of academic libraries “Kirlibnet” were used. Articles were downloaded from “Elibrary” based on a thematic selection according to five selected areas of research by Kyrgyz scientists about Russia. Within the first area (Russian philology), 1,545 units were selected. Historical and political science areas – 694 and 372 units. Economics and law – 3,331 and 1,382 articles, respectively. The chronological framework of the study is 2020–2024.

Results

Russian language and literature

The Russian language has official status in Kyrgyzstan and is widely used as a second language. Its role is high in the higher education system of Kyrgyzstan: 54 out of 68 universities in Kyrgyzstan (including branches of Russian universities) have Russian as the only or one of the languages of instruction¹.

Higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan play a key role in preserving and promoting the Russian language. There are four capital universities in Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn, Bishkek State University named after K.Karasayev, Kyrgyz State University named after I.Arabayev, Osh State University) with Russian philology departments, and four more regional universities with philology departments that train specialists in Russian language and literature and translators along with specialists in other foreign languages.

A special role is also played by the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N.Yeltsin, whose humanities faculty offers master's programs in "Russian as a Foreign Language"² and "Russian Literature". Since 2020, the Institute of the Russian Language has been operating within it as a platform for the implementation of scientific, methodological, informational, analytical, cultural and educational activities aimed at preserving and strengthening the position of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan. For example, in April 2024, the Institute's staff conducted field sociolinguistic research in the regions of Kyrgyzstan in order to study the language situation and monitor the status of the Russian language. The data obtained is currently being processed, which will be included in the content of a monograph being developed under the supervision of Doctor of Philological Sciences M.Dzh.Tagayev.

Research and dissertations on the Russian language, literature and methods of teaching the Russian language³ contribute to the preservation and support of the Russian language as an important part of Russia's cultural heritage, the development of academic interest in Russian philology, the improvement of specialists' qualifications and the deepening of intercultural interaction. An analysis of the dissertations topics shows that scientific research on Russian philology in Kyrgyzstan is more concerned with comparative linguistics in the Kyrgyz and Russian languages. An important part are dissertations on the theory and methodology of teaching, but topics directly related to Russian literature and language are not so popular.

Political science

The Kyrgyz political science expert community is represented both within the framework of analytical centers specializing in international relations and foreign policy (the National Institute

¹ National Erasmus+. Office in Kyrgyzstan: official website. Bishkek. Available from: <https://erasmusplus.kg/wp-content/uploads/%D0%A1%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D0%92%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2.pdf>

² Кыргызско-Российский Славянский университет: официальный сайт. Бишкек. Available from: <https://krsu.edu.kg/sveden/education/programs/russkiy-yazyk-kak-inostrannyi-45.04.01.html>

³ Over the past five years, 9 dissertations have been written in these specialties.

for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Institute for Political Studies at the T.Usualiev Foundation, the Polis Asia Center), and within the framework of specialized divisions, faculties and departments of universities (the Center for Eurasian Studies and the Institute for Strategic Analysis and Forecasting at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan, the Osh Humanitarian and Pedagogical University, the Ala-Too International University, etc.).

Political science research by Kyrgyz experts on Russia is scientific, educational and expert-analytical work on the topics of:

- bilateral Kyrgyz-Russian relations;
- the place and role of Russia in the geopolitical space of Central Asia (in the past and present);
- Russian foreign policy concepts and strategies implemented in relation to the region, and Kyrgyzstan in particular, in which an important place is given to the position of Russian compatriots, their role in the implementation of Russia's "soft power" in the Central Asian republics.

Much attention is paid to integration within the framework of interaction between Russia and Kyrgyzstan (as well as other former Soviet republics) in the CIS, EAEU and CSTO. The topic of geopolitical confrontation between the countries of the collective West and Russia is important, against the background of which there was an intensification of Russian economic, scientific and educational policy in Kyrgyzstan and in the post-Soviet space as a whole.

Political analysis reveals Kyrgyzstan's commitment to the ideas of Eurasian integration. The only exception is the analytical center "Center Polis Asia", whose projects focus on negative moments in the common history of Kyrgyzstan and Russia (victims of Stalin's repressions, dispossession, victims of concentration camps, etc.), promoting the concept of decolonization of the consciousness of the citizens of Kyrgyzstan.

History

In the historical science of Kyrgyzstan, much attention is paid to the coverage of Kyrgyz-Russian relations, which is confirmed by the number of scientific publications (based on the RSCI) published in 2020-2024. The peculiarity of the reviewed works is that they mainly present not history, but historical periods that were directly related to Kyrgyz history, had a direct impact on the development of the Kyrgyz people and Kyrgyz statehood, and contributed to its comprehensive development.

Most of these works are articles in periodicals at higher educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan and Russia, in collections of articles and conference materials held in the two states.

The authors of the studied works represent at least 16 scientific and scientific-educational centers of Kyrgyzstan. The overwhelming majority of the authors are employees of the relevant (specialized) university departments⁴. The largest number of works are presented by authors from the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, the Kyrgyz State University named after I.Arabaev, and the Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn.

⁴ The universities established on the basis of intergovernmental agreements include: Kyrgyz-Turkish University "Manas" and Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N.Yeltsin.

The main subject areas of research include:

1) in the pre-Soviet period: cultural and historical ties of the Kyrgyz with the peoples of Russia [14, 20] (for example, with the population of Altai and Buryatia); ties of the Kyrgyz of the Tien Shan and Yenisei; the policy of the Russian Empire in Central Asia (including the Stolypin reform in the region); coverage of various aspects of the 1916 uprising;

2) in the Soviet period: the fight against Basmachi; the formation of Kyrgyz statehood in the Soviet period; the history of the creation and development of specialized government bodies (various ministries and departments in the Kyrgyz SSR); the history of the formation of various cities of Kyrgyzstan; the role of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan; development of science, education and culture in the KSSR⁵; the role of various historical figures in the formation of Kyrgyz statehood; the emergence and development of the Kyrgyz intelligentsia; Stalin's repressions, political repressions in the Kyrgyz SSR in 1937–1938; the contribution of Russian scientists to the development of Kyrgyz studies; the Great Patriotic War and Kyrgyzstan's contribution to the common victory; the economy and socio-economic development of the Kyrgyz SSR during the Great Patriotic War; educational work in the Kyrgyz SSR during the Great Patriotic War; the government of the Kyrgyz SSR during the Great Patriotic War; deportation of various peoples of Russia to the Kyrgyz SSR;

3) in the post-Soviet period: various aspects of Eurasian integration, etc. [9–12].

In its works, the historical community of Kyrgyzstan as a whole quite positively evaluates the common history of the Kyrgyz and Russian peoples, the role of Russian civilization in the formation of Kyrgyzstan as a modern state with a developed society. At the same time, there are also controversial, problematic issues, including:

- the uprising of the Kyrgyz of the Semirechye region of the Turkestan Governorate-General in 1916, which is the subject of a large number of publications;
- the period of Stalin's repressions [1, 2, 5, 6].

Economy

There are several analytical centers in Kyrgyzstan that deal with the topic of Eurasian integration and Kyrgyzstan's position in these projects, partly – other Central Asian states, and only very superficially – Russia. These include the National Institute for Strategic Studies, the

⁵ “The Scientific Heritage of A.N.Bernshtam in the Collections of the Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic”, in which the author asserts that A.N.Bernshtam's conclusion about the mass migration of the Yenisei Kyrgyz to the Tien Shan in the 9th-10th centuries, who subsequently formed the Kyrgyz ethnic group and finally prevailed in the post-Mongol period, is undoubtedly of great importance in the concept of ethnogenesis and stages of the ethnic history of the Kyrgyz people). Among other equally significant works concerning Bernshtam's scientific research, it is worth noting “The Scientific Activity of A.N.Bernshtam in Kyrgyzstan in Post-Soviet Historiography”; “Manas in the Research of A.N.Bernshtam” and other works written at the Kyrgyz National University. Of great importance are the works exploring the “legacy” of N.A.Aristov: Turgunbaeva A.S. N.A.Aristov and his contribution to the development of source studies of the history of the Kyrgyz people. Bulletin of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. Series: “Culture and Cultural Studies”. 2014. Vol. 14; 3:80–83; N.A.Aristov on the meaning of clan names and tamgas as indicators of the ethnic composition of the Kyrgyz tribes. Bulletin of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. Series: Historical Sciences. 2018. Vol. 18; 5:36–40 and others; Madaliev N.A. V.V.Bartold and the Turkestan Circle of Archeology Lovers. Bulletin of the branch of the Russian State Social University in Osh, Kyrgyz Republic. 2011; 9:62–65 and others.

Institute for Strategic Analysis and Forecasting, and the Analytical Center for Economic and Demographic Research at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. The centers are relatively large – they employ 15 or more specialists. The Analytical Center for Economic and Demographic Research developed the topic of industrial policy and technological sovereignty, which is in line with Russian priorities. In the “Bulletin of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic named after K.Dikambaev” publishes articles on Eurasian integration, which also concern the state of the Russian economy. Works on economic integration in the format of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as trade and economic cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Russia, are also published by the Kyrgyz Economic University named after M.Ryskulbekov⁶.

An analysis of publications by researchers from Kyrgyzstan included in the RSCI database for the period 2020–2024 shows that relatively common research topics that are related to the Russian economy in one way or another are:

- labor migration issues (both from Kyrgyzstan to Russia and around the world);
- analysis of the features and consequences of Eurasian integration (primarily in the EAEU format) – in the financial, tax sphere, digitalization, and functioning of the single labor market;
- security issues (food, economic, demographic, technological, etc.);
- ways to develop tourism.

There are relatively few publications on bilateral relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan. They are most often devoted to the socio-economic consequences of cooperation and labor migration, in particular, cooperation in personnel training. There are few comparative studies of Russia and Kyrgyzstan in the field of economics.

There are also few publications on the specifics of the Russian economy or Russia's foreign economic relations (with the exception of the EAEU), except for several collective works.

Among the dissertations on economics in Kyrgyzstan, there is not a single one that is devoted to Russia. Many works, especially monographs, are written by authors from Kyrgyzstan together with Russian colleagues, but most often they characterize the Russian economy, trade and economic relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, and Eurasian integration in a neutral-descriptive manner or with a touch of constructive criticism. Labor migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia is critically analyzed, often emphasizing its “forced” nature and the difficulties that labor migrants have to face in Russia.

Legal law

Research on Russian law in Kyrgyzstan is carried out by a limited number of centers and a few researchers. There are no research centers in Kyrgyzstan whose main subject of activity

⁶ For example: Elebesov A.J. The role and importance of the EAEU in the development of the economies of states. M. Ryskulbekov Atyndagy Kyrgyz Economics University of Kabarlary. 2024; 1(62):19–24; Satylganova E.Sh., Elebesov A.D. Problems, ways to solve the calculation and collection of customs duties in the EAEU. M. Ryskulbekov Atyndagy Kyrgyz Economics University of Kabarlary. 2023; 3(60):9–12; Bekov T.N. Ensuring food security in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. M. Ryskulbekov Atyndagy Kyrgyz Economics University of Kabarlary. 2022; 4(57):95–98.; Arakelyan A.A. Dynamics of foreign trade relations between Kyrgyzstan and Russia. M. Ryskulbekov Atyndagy Kyrgyz Economics University of Kabarlary. 2024; 1(62):9–11, etc.

would be the study of the Russian legal system; only certain aspects of the evolution of Russian law fall into the field of view of Kyrgyz researchers. The points of concentration of researchers who show a stable interest in Russian law and legal studies are the law faculties of leading state universities, especially the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N.Yeltsin and the Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn.

Analyzing the works of Kyrgyz legal scholars touching upon the issues of comparative law and the evolution of the Russian legal system, it can be noted:

1) the greatest interest is aroused by the issues of convergence of national legislations in the EAEU, ensuring labor and social rights of citizens of Kyrgyzstan in the Russian Federation, legal aspects of countering terrorism and extremism, as well as issues of the general Russian (Soviet) and Kyrgyz history of the state and law. Publications devoted to the evolution of Russian law and the analysis of Russian legal norms are very rare.

2) the following prevail in most works:

- recognition of the importance of developing comparative legal studies in Kyrgyzstan, including studying the experience of Russia and other CIS countries, the similarity of many elements of the legal system of Kyrgyzstan with the Russian one (for example, budget legislation);
- positive assessments of the EAEU, especially progress in the field of forming common labor and pension legislation, developing the regulatory framework for international cooperation of the EAEU;
- interest in the prospects for forming a common legal field of the SCO;
- interest in the joint history of the state and law, recognition of the important, system-forming influence of the Russian (Soviet) state and law on the modern state and legal development of Kyrgyzstan. This influence, as a rule, is assessed positively (for example, the “strategically important significance of the creation of the Kyrgyz SSR” for the formation of Kyrgyz statehood is recognized, a positive assessment is given to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz SSR of 1978) [3, 8]. Some works substantiate the thesis on the progressiveness of the legal norms of the Russian Empire in comparison with the previously existing norms of customary law⁷.

At the same time, Kyrgyz lawyers are concerned about:

- the existence of problems and gaps in the legal regulation of the status of Kyrgyz labor migrants in Russia (for example, the problem of dual citizenship, the problem of transferring funds, excessive requirements for medical examination of labor migrants);
- the persistence of discrepancies in the national labor law systems of the EAEU countries that impede the full functioning of the common labor market.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of scientific literature devoted to Russian topics, a number of general and specific recommendations have been developed. General recommendations

⁷ For example: Sopubekova N.T. Judicial system of Kyrgyzstan during the period of its being part of the Kokand Khanate and the Russian Empire (19th – early 20th centuries). *Bulletin of Science and Practice*. 2020; Vol. 6. 3:338–345.

concerning the joint work of the academic communities of the two countries are as follows:

1. Expanding financial mechanisms to support joint educational projects in the field of history and the humanities, educational events, exchange programs and internships based at Russian universities aimed at the youth of Kyrgyzstan. For example, attracting postgraduate students from the CIS countries to internships under the programs of the Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences and in Russian scientific and educational organizations. The ongoing generational change in Kyrgyz universities requires significant investments in personnel training/advanced training/retraining of the teaching staff, in which Russia could take direct part.

2. Holding competitions for joint research by research teams from Russia and Kyrgyzstan based on the Russian Science Foundation or another financial mechanism, supporting Russian research by students and postgraduate students of Kyrgyzstan, as well as joint research by students and postgraduate students of the two countries.

Recommendations for the direction “Russian language and literature”:

1. Introducing a mandatory requirement for textbooks on Russian language and literature to include experts from two countries in the author’s team (at least one author from Russia and one from Kyrgyzstan) in order to take into account national characteristics.

2. Encouraging teachers who prepare schoolchildren for district, regional, republican and international Olympiads in Russian language and literature.

3. Launching academic mobility programs for students studying Russian language and literature, providing for study at Russian universities for at least 1 semester (similar to the Erasmus + programs).

4. Conducting special events to support and motivate students studying Russian (for example, such a practice is developed for the Korean / Chinese languages: a recitation competition, a competition for knowledge of the culture of the country of the studied language).

5. Providing the opportunity to receive a one-time grant for those who defended a dissertation in Russian philology (as motivation for young scientists).

6. Organization of guest lectures by Russian specialists in Russian language and literature on a permanent basis at the faculties of Russian philology in Kyrgyzstan.

Recommendation for the fields of History and Political Science:

To initiate the creation of associations of political scientists, internationalists and historians of Russia and Kyrgyzstan, and other forms of interaction between the academic communities of the two countries by the Russian Association of Political Sciences, the Russian Association of International Studies, the Russian Historical Society and/or leading Russian universities.

Conclusions

Summarizing the development of five areas of research devoted to Russia, we formulate the following conclusions:

1. Taking into account the status and role of the Russian language, the strongest positions in comparison with other sciences in Kyrgyzstan are held by the area of “Russian Language and Philology”.

2. Political scientists, historians, and economists in Kyrgyzstan mainly study those aspects that are related to the politics, history, and economy of Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz people. The study of Russia is limited and fragmentary.

3. The key role is played by the capital's universities of Kyrgyzstan, primarily the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N.Yeltsin, the Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn, and the Kyrgyz State University named after I.Arabaev. The role of regional universities and research centers is less.

4. Despite the fact that in the work of individual centers and researchers there is a negative assessment of the history, politics, economy of Russia, and the ties between Kyrgyzstan and Russia, in general the ideological positions of researchers are positive or neutral.

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About the authors

Nazgul Zh. ABALOVA. DSc. (Philos.) (PhD). Acting Associate Professor at the Institute of World Languages and International Relations n.a. Sh.Kadyrova of the I.Arabaev Kyrgyz State University/ <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9607-536X>. Address: 51A, Razzakov str., Bishkek, 720026 Kyrgyz Republic. nazdil72@mail.ru

Evgeny F. TROITSKY. DSc. (Hist.). Professor of the Department of World Politics of Tomsk State University. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6489-7193>. Address: 36, Lenin Ave., Tomsk, 634050, Russia. eftroitskiy@yandex.ru

Anastasia M. POGORELSKAYA. CandSc. (Hist.). Associate Professor of the Department of World Politics at Tomsk State University. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3003-4757>. Address: 36, Lenin Ave., Tomsk, 634050, Russia. pogorelskaya@mail.tsu.ru

Kanybek A. KUDAYAROV. CandSc. (Hist.), Chief Specialist of the Center for Russian Studies of the J.Balasagyn National University. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8970-8694>. Address: 547, Frunze str., Bishkek, 720033, Kyrgyz Republic. kana8306@mail.ru

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