Aims of the corpus

Our overarching aim in this corpus of selected primary sources and introductory essays on them is to create a broad picture of the history of the use of French in pre-revolutionary Russia from the early eighteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Our more specific aims are to:

- illustrate the functional range of the French language in pre-revolutionary Russia;

- examine the social distribution of the phenomenon of *francophonie* there;

- consider the social and cultural effects of the phenomenon;

- describe and explain Russian pre-revolutionary attitudes towards language use, relating them to social, cultural and political factors;

- trace changes in language use and perceptions of it in Russia over the period studied;

- throw light, through examination of the Russian case, on such political, social, cultural and linguistic phenomena as enlightened absolutism, nationalism, noble identity, social mobility, civility and sociability, bilingualism, multilingualism, linguistic purism and code-switching;

- lay foundations for the broad scholarly findings which will emerge from the project and which we shall in due course publish in various printed forms.

The components of the corpus

The texts

The corpus of texts represents a selection of the enormous amount of material housed in archives and libraries, in Russia and elsewhere, that pertains to the use of French by Russians. Most of the material we have selected is in French, but we shall also include material in Russian and possibly other languages which relates to the effects that French had on Russian, the effects that *francophonie* had on Russian society and culture, and Russian attitudes towards language use.

Most of the material in this corpus is published here for the first time. However, we also include some material of relevance to our project which has previously been published but which has not hitherto been used, as far as we are aware, to illuminate the history of language use in Russia. Some of this previously published material, moreover, was published so long ago or in works with such small print runs that it is virtually unknown. The proportion of material in the corpus that has previously been published will at all stages in the development of this resource be considerably smaller than the proportion that has not yet been published.

We supply brief explanatory notes on the texts, as well as details of the location of each source. The purpose of these notes is not to analyse the content of the text (this is done in the introductory essays) but to provide factual information that the reader may need.

Each text or set of texts that we reproduce in the corpus is accompanied by an essay in which we aim to:

- inform readers about the author of the text;

- establish the historical, political, social or cultural context in which the text was written;

- explain the social, political, cultural and intellectual nuances contained in the text;

- comment on matters of linguistic interest, e.g. the writer's command of French;

- draw out the pertinence of the text for a broad study of the social, political or cultural history of language, showing, for example, how the French language was used, learned, taught or regarded in Russia in the period in question.

Click here for a list of the Texts and accompanying introductions published in this corpus to date.

Location of primary source material

The majority of the texts that we publish in this first batch of documents in our corpus, or intend to publish in the next batch, are held in the following archives or in the manuscript departments of the following libraries.

- GARF — Государственный архив Российской Федерации: The State Archive of the Russian Federation (Moscow)

- IF — Institut de France (Paris)

- RGADA — Российский государственный архив древних актов: The Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (Moscow)

- RGB — Российская государственная библиотека: The Russian State Library (Moscow)

- RGIA — Российский государственный исторический архив: The Russian State Historical Archive (St Petersburg)

- RGVIA — Российский государственный военно-исторический архив: The Russian State Military-Historical Archive (Moscow)

- RNL — Российская национальная библиотека: The Russian National Library (St Petersburg)

Other archives or libraries that we have used in the preparation of the introductory essays include the following.

- BNF — Bibliothèque nationale de France: The French National Library (Paris)

- IRLI — Институт русской литературы (Пушкинский Дом) Российской Академии наук: The Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St Petersburg)

Structure of the corpus

The texts that this corpus of primary sources will eventually contain are taken from documents which served many different purposes and are of many different kinds.

We are classifying our texts under the following headings:

- Code-switching
- Dictionaries
- Diplomatic language
- Education: teaching and learning French
- Ego-writing: diaries and memoirs
- French for an international readership
- French in government organs
- French in the Russian press
- Historical and political reflections
- Imperial family and court
- Intellectual life
- Lingua franca
- Military affairs
- Personal correspondence
- Literary works in French
- Science and scholarship
- Social life
- Spiritual life
- Translation

This list can also be accessed from the link to Classification of documents in the left-hand navigation pane.

For the most part, we have classified the selected texts in a way intended to illustrate both the range of functions that French had at one time or another in pre-revolutionary Russia and the range of types of document in which French occurred. French functioned, for example, as a court language, an administrative language, a social and domestic language for the nobility and a *lingua franca* for communication with non-Russians both in Russia and abroad. It occurred in works of fictional and non-fictional prose, police reports, military treatises, the private correspondence of noble families and both loyalist and oppositional polemical writings designed to win over a foreign readership.

In many cases, of course, it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between different functions of French (e.g. as the language of diplomacy or as a *lingua franca* for communication with foreigners). Nor is it always easy to decide whether a text serves as a better example of a function of French (e.g., as a medium for refined social intercourse) or of a type of document or genre (e.g., nobles' personal letters or short prose works intended to be read in a salon). Assignment of texts to one or

another of our categories is therefore not always a straightforward matter and in a few cases the text might serve just as well as an example of a different category.

At the same time, we have wanted to include in the corpus texts that throw light on the historical development of cultural exchange between France and Russia and on attitudes towards such exchange. We therefore include material on the ways in which French was taught or learned and on such means of improving knowledge and facilitating exchange as lexicography and translation.

We also intend to illustrate the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching (the practice of alternating between different languages or varieties of language). In reproducing examples of code-switching, of course, we are no longer dealing primarily with a function of French or with a type of document in which French was used (although the best evidence of code-switching between French and Russian in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia is found in noble correspondence). Rather we are dealing with striking evidence of Russian bilingualism and with clues that help to explain the choice of language in certain situations.

Editorial practice in the corpus

Click here for information on the Editorial practice and house style we have adopted while presenting the texts in the corpus and preparing the introductory essays and the notes to the texts and essays.

Our practice has been governed in particular by a wish to make the material in the corpus accessible to as wide a range of users as possible, including non-Russian speakers and non-French-speakers and the general reader as well as the specialist.

Navigating the corpus

The texts and introductions may be accessed by any of the following routes:

i.   via the Classification of documents in the corpus (see the left-hand navigation pane);

ii. from the list of Texts in the corpus (see also the left-hand navigation pane);

iii. in the case of a text, from the introductory essay to the text, or

iv. in the case of an introductory essay, from the text which it introduces.

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We gratefully acknowledge the help of Chris Bailey, who worked at the University of Bristol's Institute for Learning and Research Technology when this corpus of documents was being assembled, with the construction of this part of our project website. We have also benefited from the advice of Stephen Gray and Markland Starkie on this and many other IT matters.

Permissions

We have obtained permission to reproduce documents that are published on this site in all cases where permission has seemed necessary. We gratefully acknowledge such permissions in the individual documents in the corpus. We undertake to remove any material if requested to do so by rights holders of whom we are not aware.

Further development of the corpus

Our project on the history of the French language in Russia has now formally come to an end and many printed publications have arisen out of it: see the main project website at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/research/french-in-russia/

However, it is likely that other documents and essays on them will be uploaded to this corpus from 2018 on.

Gesine Argent, Derek Offord, Vladislav Rjéoutski, April 2013

Revised by Derek Offord, November 2017