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## Language of International Migration: Terminology and Concept Analysis

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**Abstract:**

*Migration and its impact on society and language have been one of the most discussed issues in human history. The aim of the present study is to review the basic migration notions and related terminology and to perform a comparative analysis of terminology in various cultures and legislations.*

*The theoretical framework of the study is based on the latest development of mobility paradigm in social sciences and linguistics focusing on language of international migration and legislation. Language studies within mobility paradigm reveal particulars of language use in globalized world.*

*Other approaches such as conceptual and comparative analysis have been used to specify terminology and language of international migration. Conceptual analysis allows examining the concept system and concept relationship of this particular sphere and provides comparison and data aggregation about the entire process of migration.*

*A comparative approach to Russian, European, and the USA migration terminology reveals similarities and differences of concepts and their designation in various cultures and languages.*

*The results of present studies contribute to the comprehensive description of international migration language development, importance of its terminology for communicating migration policies, legislative instruments of migration and translation.*

**Keywords:** *Language and migration, international migration terminology, mobility paradigm, concept analysis.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Human migration has a profound impact on civilization. The most significant effects of migration for people's life have been changes in population distribution, multicultural societies, contact language change, economic effects and others. Though these processes have had both positive and negative consequences, most scholars emphasize the evolutionary effect of language and migration in human society (Manning, 2013). Numerous projects have been devoted lately to the study of migration with the aim of understanding its effect in today's globalizing world (Lucassen *et al.*, 2010).

Along with the social importance migration put theoretical questions relating to linguistics. New migration contexts give rise to the specific notions, language of international migration has been important in regulating migration processes and intergovernmental communication (Atabekova *et al.*, 2018; Adsera, 2012). The considerable contribution to the studies of migration impact on language has been made by Piller (2016) who elaborated important perspectives of research such as how migration affects language structure, how linguistic diversity constructs identity, how language affects migration and others.

The research hypothesis has been advanced that the language of international migration has been developed and acquired its specifics in the course of migration processes turning global, giving rise to many social, cultural and legislative problems. The discourse of migration undergoes considerable changes due to various political and economic reasons, necessitating systemic research of language and migration interrelationship. The language of international migration is important to foster productive discussion of migration issues.

## **2. Methodology**

The theoretical framework of present studies is based on latest development of mobility paradigm in social sciences including linguistics. The current paradigm shift from perceiving language as an object in space towards an understanding of language as a process in motion reveals close relation of language and migration. Sociolinguistics and mobility is an important focus of linguistics research (Blommaert, 2016). Language and migration is the concern of various theoretical and applied branches of linguistics focusing on terminology development. The underlying principle of social approach to terminology study is sociolinguistic principle, which determines terminological variation by social parameters of context usage and explains why various terms could be used for the same notion and the same term could be used for various concepts (Benitez, 2009).

Other modern approaches to terminology studies such as communicative and socio-cognitive theory of terminology provide insight and improve understanding of terms as units of language, cognition and social community.

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The above mentioned approaches to study language of international migration are aimed at comprehending the concept of migration and related notions and their representation in language.

### **3. Migration and Language in Retrospect and Current Context**

Migration profoundly influenced the human history; the reasons of people movement have been numerous: tribal in prehistorical time, forced transfer of Africans in the slave trade, persecution for religious reasons, wars and others.

Migration involves complicated communication which requires specialized language. Language of international migration acquired its specificity through the history of every particular country.

The early efforts to theorize migration flows were Ernst Gerge Ravenstein's 'laws of migration', published between 1876 and 1885 (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016). He introduced some specific terms such as *native element* to describe people of the same county, and the term *foreign element* to refer to people from the adjacent county or outside the UK. The systemic research into the relationship between language and migration dates back to the beginning of historical linguistics in the eighteen and nineteen centuries.

#### **3.1. Migration in Russia**

International migration in Russia had various periods of development. Russia is considered to be one of the first countries to institute the State Migration Management Department in 1763, which meant the introduction of specialized documentation and language. The main goal of this institution was to promote migration of skilled specialists from the European countries. But long before that, the processes of entering and leaving Russia required special documents, so called *proezhaya gramota* (a *passage charter/letter*), later passports were introduced for people going abroad.

In the Soviet period migration was rather restricted. In the Post-Soviet era the population inflow from former Soviet republics was the main characteristic feature of international migration. Such terms as '*labour migrant*', '*shuttle-traders*', '*facilitated transit document*' (provided for Russian citizens of Kaliningrad region), *Compatriot policy*, *highly-skilled emigrants*, *two-way mobility* (between Russia and former Soviet Republics) have been used, describing some distinguishing notions of that period (Ivakhnyuk, 2009).

#### **3.2. Migration in the European Countries**

International migration in European countries can be characterized by the immigration processes which faced many colonial states in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the

beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, providing citizens of their colonies immigration and residency rights (Lavenex, 2009).

World War I and II greatly influenced migration processes and resulted in great flow of *refugees* and *stateless persons*.

The creation of the European Union was crucial for free movements of people, goods and services between European countries. Some countries became mostly *immigration countries*, which were more attractive for foreign workers, others were considered as *transit countries*. Many countries witness the growth of *foreign population*, consisting of *third-country nationals* or *non EU-citizens*. Most immigrants to the European Union are considered as *low-skilled migrants*. The cooperation between European countries in the matters of immigration resulted in *Schengen Agreement*, *Schengen visa* which required intensive intergovernmental and international cooperation and legislation (Lavenex and Kunz, 2008).

### **3.3. Migration in the USA**

The United States of America has been often defined as ‘nation of immigrants’ according to President J.F. Kennedy’s famous speech. The first settlers were colonists from Europe; the Transatlantic Slave Trade brought many West Africans to British colonies in America. By the end of Revolution 1783 the new nation was a mixture of people from various backgrounds. Naturalization Act of 1790 was the first attempt at settling control over migration.

The term ‘*alien*’ is used to designate people coming to the USA, while the term *migrant* has acquired a specific meaning. Other term typical of migration population in the USA is *diaspora*, which is defined as ‘communities, migrant populations, ethnicities or nations that although separated from their home terrains preserve and regenerate a set of distinctive cultural and ethnic identities’. The term ‘*borderland*’ was introduced, as a territory determined by an arbitrary geopolitical line, characterized by legal and illegal practices of crossing and communication. In the USA it is territory which form the divide between the USA and Mexico (Loucky *et al.*, 2006).

The early twenty first century has been widely perceived as the age of unprecedented global migration. Problems related to migration become vital social and political issues in many societies. Mobility of people involves mobility of linguistic and sociolinguistics resources (Blommaert, 2010; Miller, 1955).

Current situation in migration is considered as a result of globalization processes which are characterized by increasing cultural, political and economic interaction. The importance of the past studies for the contemporary understanding of migration effects has been often emphasized (Lucassen *et al.*, 2010).

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Migration requires specialized language for the process to be regulated and researched or described. Migration is often defined as movement from one geographical location to another. International Organization for Migration displays the definition of migration as *'The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification'* (IOM Key Migration Term, 2018).

Various patterns of migration have been defined, comprising *internal migration* and *international migration*. Internal migration includes *rural-to-urban migration* common in industrializing societies and *sojourning or short-term, seasonal or circular migration*. Another term for internal migration has been *intranational mobility*.

Various types of migration are designated by such terms as *'orderly migration'*, *'facilitated migration'*, *'forced migration'*, *'labour migration'*.

As migration has been strictly regulated and national borders controlled by state the definition of international migration has been related to crossing of international borders (Piller, 2016).

Other terms which are used to specify international migration are *'emigration'* signifying movement across national borders from home country and *'immigration'* signifying movement to a destination country (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016).

Alongside with the term *'migration'* the term *'mobility'* is used. This concept is used in wide context, embracing various types of people movements.

The term *mobility* comes to be used in science as it relates to a contemporary paradigm in social sciences (economic, individual mobility), humanities (linguistic mobility), education (academic mobility), anthropology (population mobility) and others. Mobility studies are an emerging interdisciplinary field of research of contemporary society (Faist, 2013).

Terms, used to designate people who move for different reasons vary depending on purposes, cultures, etc. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) defines a migrant as someone *'who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence'* (United Nation Statistic Division, 2014).

People who emigrate and settle in another country are called *'aliens'*, *'foreigners'*, *'immigrants'*. According to the UN anyone who stays or intends to stay for at least

one year, whether for work or study is referred to as an immigrant. In many countries this notion is treated in the same way. It differs from the notion of immigrant in the USA, where the term ‘immigrant’ is used for those who get permanent residency and eligible for US citizenship. Accordingly there is a distinction between ‘immigrant’ and ‘non-immigrant’ visas in the USA (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016).

These differences can be challenging for scholars doing research on migration patterns and data across nations in various communication contexts. They have to deal with numerous categories of migrants such as *minor* or *spousal dependents*, *humanitarian migrants*, students, *returnees* who could be differently defined by national authorities.

*Illegal migration* became a great challenge for many governments as it suggests illegal form of entry through falsifying documents or *people smuggling*, *overstayers*, *failed asylum seekers* and others. The concept of *illegal immigrant* often acquires political shade, due to this the latest trend is to substitute the term *illegal immigrant* for more neutral one, such as *undocumented or unauthorized immigrant/migrant*.

The term *global migration* has been used along with international migration. Difference between these terms is that global migration is seen as taking shape in the world characterized by increasing economic, political and social integration.

The terminology is embracing various spheres and could be systemized to provide a comprehensive description of language of international migration. The following subcategorization of terms is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Migration terminology

Processes/ measures	Places	People
migration flow	receiving/sending countries	migrant population
migration corridors,	destination societies	foreign-born population/
regular/irregular migration	country of net emigration/	parent,
emigration	net immigration	forced /voluntary migrants
outflow of workers	gateway cities and regions	labour migrants
historical settler societies	country of domicile	regular/irregular migrant
net migration	country of residence	refugee
two-way mobility	territories of contracting	asylum seeker
(between Russia and	parties	illegal migrant
former Soviet Republics)	host society	clandestine migrant
migration patterns/models	non-EU companies	undocumented
border-control policy	non-EU countries	migrant/alien
migrant identity	camp for detaining the	alien, legal/illegal alien
social integration processes	transient	work permit holder
intercultural education	borderland	working holidaymaker
young immigrant identity	migrant-destination country	stateless person

Processes/ measures	Places	People
construction process Asylum procedure non- admittance refoulment /non- refoulment international migration poverty relief anti-immigration sentiment	destination country sender nations country of origin	EU nationals overstayers failed asylum seeker low skilled migrant non-EU citizens global migrant foreign citizen

*Source:* Authors.

#### 4. Legal Terminologies Related to Migration and Refugee Protection

Various organizations have been established to deal with migration, issuing various documents, contributing to new legislative instruments and requiring a lot of translation.

The Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) was established in 1951, the name changed to Intergovernmental Committee for Migration in 1989. *International Organization for Migration (IOM)* was established in 1952 to deal with migration globally.

The refugee protection in the modern history of migration could be traced to the beginning of the 20 century. After World War I many national borders were redrawn, civil wars broke, many people were forced to leave their home giving rise to a refugee crisis. The international system of refugee protection was set up by the League of Nations. Several institutions were created - the Nansen International Office for Refugee, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany, the Office of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.

The first legal instruments of 1922, 1924 and 1926 years dealt with Russian and Armenian refugees, specified their legal status, introduced “*certificate of identity*” known as *Nansen passport* and provided recommendations to governments of countries of residence regarding personal status, labour regulations, visa etc. Nansen passport, the certificate for stateless people and refugees was internationally recognized from 1922 to 1938. In the Convention relating to the Status of refugee adopted in 1951, replacing the previous Convention, the refugee identity documents were described as *identity paper* and *travel document* (Jaeger, 2001).

The notion *statelessness* was introduced in international legal instruments after World War I. It was often used to refer to refugees, but in legal documents adopted after World War II the term statelessness was treated as a complex concept and the distinction between refugee and stateless person had been specified. *Stateless person* is defined as ‘a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the

operation of its law' by Convention of 1954, but the process of identifying a stateless person could vary (Bianchini, 2018).

*International Refugee organization* (IRO) was established in 1946 by UN Resolution and in 1952 it was replaced by UN office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration was set up in 1951.

The development of migration terminology concerns not only introducing of new terminology, but changing the concept of the term. Thus the notion of *refugee* acquired some particular meanings, with the definition of the status of refugee being changed in legislative documents of 1922, 1924, 1926, 1951 and 1967. Etymology of the term shows historical changes of the concept.

According to etymological dictionary the term refugee originated from old French, first applied in English to designate French Huguenots who migrate. The meaning 'one seeking asylum' prevailed until 1914, when it was used with the meaning 'one fleeing home' to refer to citizens of Flanders heading west to escape fighting in World War I (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001-2018).

At the Conference on Russian refugees, convened by the League of Nations on July 3, 1922 the proposals of issuing identification papers to Russian refugees have been considered. The term 'refugee' was used in the Arrangement of 1922 referring to Russian Refugees in the aftermath of Revolution and civil war and the document of 1924 included Armenian refugees.

The Arrangement of 1926, dealing with the Identity Certificates to Russian and Armenian Refugees, stated the following definitions of the term refugees:

'Russian: Any person of Russian origin who does not enjoy or who no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and who has not acquired another nationality'.

'Armenian: Any person of Armenian origin formerly a subject of ottoman Empire who does not enjoy or who no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality'.

The definition of refugee in the consequent 1951 Convention comprises the definition of the previous Arrangements of 1926 and 1928 and Convention of 1933 and determines refugees as persons who leave their country of origin as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and specifying further those events as occurring in Europe or in Europe and elsewhere at the time of signature or ratification of the Convention by Contracting parties (UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951).

The Protocol of 1967, providing definition of a refugee, states that equal status should be enjoyed by all refugees irrespective of the dateline and without any geographic limitations (Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967).

The first refugee legislation in the USA was enacted in 1948. Displaced Persons Act provided for admission of Europeans after World War II, later laws provided the admission of refugees from different countries. The Refugee Act of 1980, enacted by Congress, incorporated the United Nation definition of refugee and provided the legal basis for the U.S. Refugee Admission Programme.

The term ‘*asylum*’ was not used in the first legal instruments, but later was considered as a fundamental right and international obligation recognized by 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugee. European Refugee Fund was set up in 2000 which was replaced by Asylum Migration and Integration Fund for the period 2014-2020.

The concept *asylum seeker* which refers to a person seeking official refugee status could be treated differently. The term has been introduced in the international law and countries, signatories to the UN Convention of 1951, keep to UN definition and relevant procedures to deal with asylum claims, but some countries, e.g. Israel, deal with asylum seeker differently, providing privileges to some groups.

Legislation in the sphere of migration of many countries is developing rapidly as it has to respond to changing realities (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Council of Europe, 2014). The studies of its language and terminology have to proceed from various perspectives to make the whole system comprehensive, effective and reliable. Table 2 comprises names of some organizations and legal documents dealing with migration.

**Table 2.** *Organizations and Legal instruments dealing with the protection of migrants and refugees*

Legal instruments	Institutions/Organizations/Departments	Documents
Arrangements of 1922, 1926	League of Nations	‘Nansen Passport’
The Convention of 1933	The Nansen International Office for Refugees	Certificate of Identity
Convention Relating to Status of Stateless persons (1954)	the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees	Certificate of citizenship
Displaced Persons Act	the Office of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees	Indefinite Leave to Remain
Refugee Act of 1980	the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees	Immigrant Visa
Immigration and	International Refugee Organization (IRO)	Non Immigrant
	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	
	International Organization for Migration	
	Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration	

Legal instruments	Institutions/Organizations/Departments	Documents
nationality Act Citizenship and Immigration Bill 2009 Principle of non- refoulment Chinese Exclusion Act ( Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952) Temporary Protection Directive Family Reunification Directive Immigration and nationality Act Refugee Law Law on forced migrant/displaced persons		Visa Certificate of Refugee Migration Card Travel document Asylum application Residence permit Residence visa Foreigner residence Permit (RF) Residence permit for Stateless Persons

*Source: Authors.*

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of language of international migration provides an outline of cognitive, social, cultural and linguistic peculiarities of terms development. Terminology of migration makes use of common words, which could acquire specific meaning; depending on different social contexts the terms function as polysemantic language units, or on the contrary, various terms can be used to designate the same notion.

The migration processes differ in various countries, the creation of international organizations and international law development provide mechanisms to solve the problems of migration in the most effective ways. Cooperation in this sphere has been intensified in the last few decades and language plays a particular role in harmonizing legislation and the relations between different states to alleviate complicated circumstances many people find themselves due to crises and conflicts.

As International Organization for Migration stated there is no single instrument or norm covering all rights or duties of a migrant, the organization finds it important to consolidate the information regulating international migration. Alongside with the special Migration Law Database set by IOM which provides instruments related to international and regional migration, treaties, resolutions, and relevant cases, etc., the cooperation and consultations on permanent basis are of primary importance. To

make this communication constructive, the awareness of specificity of international migration language and its role have to be taken into consideration.

The study of international migration language provides for understanding the migration discourse which has been a complicated phenomenon embracing a wide range of institutions and communities where language practices are central for promotion social integration and stability.

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[https://imldb.iom.int/\\_layouts/15/IML.Portal/AppPages/ViewItemProperty.aspx?ListItemID=23&Isdlg=1&ListID={d049b8d1-0ca8-43b3-b0c2-4014192c81a3}](https://imldb.iom.int/_layouts/15/IML.Portal/AppPages/ViewItemProperty.aspx?ListItemID=23&Isdlg=1&ListID={d049b8d1-0ca8-43b3-b0c2-4014192c81a3})
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