

# PERSONALITY-ORIENTED APPROACH IN TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (CULTUROLOGICAL AND ETHNOPSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS)

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## Abstract

The article is based on the analysis of pedagogical experience in teaching Russian as a foreign language at the stage of pre-university and university preparation of students of non-linguistic specialties. The author proposes to take into account the cultural, social, psycho-physiological peculiarities of the adult students. The author gives examples from practice, recommendations to incorporate a number of important factors, marking the target audience. It is concluded that the concept «competence of the modern teacher of Russian as a foreign language» has been expanded.

Keywords: competence of the modern teacher of Russian as a foreign language; teaching methods of Russian as a foreign language; ethnopsychological, psychophysiological, linguoculturological characteristics.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Russian language, being the official language of the United Nations and UNESCO, plays an important role in the most diverse areas of communication and it all time needs improving the quality of education according to the interests of innovative, socially-oriented development of the country.

However, the modern methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language in the university today is built not only on the generalization of traditional and innovative methodological approaches, but seeks to attract data from interdisciplinary scientific integration (communication, psychology, psycholinguistics, etc.). Person-oriented learning (hereinafter – POL) becomes the basis of the methodology, as it is based on the ideas of humanization (attention to the inner world of the subject of teaching process and the development of his/her personality). The famous psycholinguist V.P. Belyanin stressed the importance of taking into account the national and cultural characteristics of communicative activity, manifested in language, thinking processes and means of communication [1].

Personally oriented learning for the first time as a special methodological system was scientifically explained in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s (A. Maslow, K. Rogers, etc.), in Europe – in the 1980s, in Russia – in the 1990s. POL has several names: "anthropocentric", "humanistic", "centered on the student learning". Ideas of personally oriented learning in the Russian teaching methodology were first presented by M.N. Vyatyutnev (1984). In the 90-ies they are actively developed by specialists in the methodology and psychology (Winter, Passes) [2]. Traditionally, in the broad sense, the term "personally oriented learning" is viewed as a methodological approach to the organization of the educational process, as part of didactics (close in meaning to the concepts "model", "methodology"), and in a narrow sense – as a specific teacher toolkit (actually technology) [3].

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Research methods are descriptive and analytical method (refers to the study and problem analysis of psychological, pedagogical, cultural, linguistic, methodological sources of the theoretical and practical nature).

## 3 RESULTS

In our opinion, it is especially important to take into account nationally-conditioned characteristics, age, emotional state, mental attitudes of the foreign students, who come to Russia to obtain a higher education in the technical or natural-science specialty and therefore study the Russian language as a means of obtaining knowledge. It should be noted that such personalized-differentiated education is

especially valuable at the initial stage of learning, for example – at the pre-university training stage, as students find themselves in the situation of the adaptation process and sustained multiple stress. As a rule, at the stage of pre-university training students are 18–24 years old and older. In the Russian age psychophysiology, such a contingent is usually considered as adults [4].

D.A. Starkova, T.V. Pollenna, describing the psycholinguistic features of teaching adults to a foreign language (pre-university target audience), noted that the adult learning process must meet not only cognitive and communicative expectations, but also personal ones. Therefore, in the teaching of adults an individual approach is welcomed (the personal interests and life needs of students) [5]. Since the main motivation for studying Russian as a foreign language is the successful admission to a bachelor or master program of a non-linguistic orientation, it is advisable to include at least the lexical stock of the trained unit of scientific and educational discourse in order to maintain the motivation, to strengthen it by feeling "early involvement" in scientific knowledge.

Among the factors facilitating work with such an audience, it is worth highlighting: the increased volitional qualities - perseverance, motivation for the result, mastery of strategies for obtaining knowledge and overcoming difficulties, discipline, independence, etc.

Among the factors complicating the work with such an audience, we propose to note some conscious attitudes characteristic of this age group. So, many adult students believe that to understand a foreign text one must have an excellent memory and know many words. In the dictionary drawing of any text, it is possible to isolate the common vocabulary, and in professionally-oriented texts there will be even more such words. However, in fact, the success of understanding of the text depends much more on the free interpretative knowledge of grammar, and not on the richness of the individual vocabulary [6]. The value of grammatical knowledge should be the object of propaganda in such an audience, the teachers should show that the progressive translation of words does not guarantee an adequate semantic perception of the text, especially complicated by professional vocabulary.

One more feature typical for the personality of an adult student is increased shyness (due to lack of knowledge of the Russian language in sufficient volume for communication) and closedness for communicative tasks and case exercises. This is especially true for students from Korea, Vietnam, China. Overcoming of such a peculiar complex is possible if the teacher is tactful, focused on raising students' self-esteem; has the ability to effectively use the types of educational work, during which students cease to be under close scrutiny of others (for example, work in a language lab); includes communicative-oriented tasks in the learning process from the first days.

An important factor in the foreign students learning is taking into consideration their ethnopsychology, which is determined by national traditions, culture, stereotypes of the country. So, if we talk about the features of psycholinguistics of "eastern type of thinking" people, we can distinguish the following nuances: the representatives of so called Far Eastern cultures (the countries of the Asia-Pacific region) with hieroglyphic writing system are characterized by domination of the right hemisphere, "responsible" for image-emotional perception of the object (therefore, students of these countries are inclined to refine, detailed, and therefore think specifically-symbolically). In the process of teaching this group of students, it is necessary to make maximum use of graphic and objective visibility, because things that they can not imagine are hardly understood by them. It is important to note that in the process of adaptation in a foreign country, the students of the People's Republic of China are showing little desire for self-expression: they prefer to listen than to enter into a dialogue or a discussion with the teacher. Hence they have a need for learning phrases, dialogue models, texts, saturated with standard grammatical constructions, poems and their expressive reading. In addition, in interpersonal relations with these students, any conflict should be avoided, it is recommended to exercise restraint and encourage everyone, even a small success in the class. Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, grammatical categories of native languages of which differ significantly from the Indo-European system, have more difficulties with mastering the verbal system of the Russian language. They, as a rule, choose the method of memorizing the endings and paradigms. For comparison, native English speakers, on the contrary, experience fewer difficulties with mastering the Russian-language temporal system, because their time scheme is complicated enough and analytically conveys the values of completion / incompleteness, length, sequence of actions, which are as well important for the Russian language [7].

Indeed, the orientation toward writing in the systems of teaching native languages in Eastern cultures imposes a significant imprint on the dominant teaching tactics that are chosen by oriental students for the study of a foreign language. This is especially noticeable at the stage of pre-university training for students of future non-linguistic specialties. Thus, Chinese students master written language more

quickly than oral; learn terms and systems of paradigms more readily. However, they naturally experience difficulties in drawing up dialogues, playing out situations, interpreting audio texts. Working in a group of such students, the teacher should pay attention to the underdevelopment of intuitive methods of working with the word, it is necessary to support them with methods of visual and mechanical processing of the text. Knowing that the strengths of the psyche and thinking of the Japanese are based on analogy, reliance on existing experience and are particularly systematic, help to use the wide possibilities of syntactic and lexical synonymy and antonymy, as well as visual clarity in the learning Russian. Students from the Arabian countries perfectly use the auditory sources of learning foreign language material, quickly and skillfully reproducing the oral Russian speech. This audience enthusiastically perceive dialogue and role work forms. Students from francophone Africa (for example, Congo, Burundi) are focused on the formation of skills of independent work, perseverance and curiosity, they can actively manifest themselves in any educational and extracurricular activities, easily enter into communication, they study folklore material and literary works of different countries with great enthusiasm. Students from Vietnam, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka are quickly adapting and easily absorbing grammatical material, as they begin to learn Russian before coming to Russia (for 2-4 months). But very often they have a low level of phonetic preparation, and it takes a long time to correct the incorrectly learned pronunciation [8].

A high level of independence and motivation is most often enjoyed by students from Europe and the United States. They are the most open for mastering any linguistic material in different linguoculturological tricks (starting from the discussion of slang material, mass media information, ending with Russian literature, painting, song and folklore). From the first days students from Europe and the US need to find out the range of their own interests and to choose a creative task (for homework) that they will perform in parallel with group training. In this audience the teaching device "from facts of language to cultural facts" and "from facts of culture to facts of language" is maximally justified [9].

As for the university (adult) audience, there is a tendency to master the material consciously, so a constant explanation of the importance of one or another activity in the classroom can contribute to improving the effectiveness of learning in general. This difficulty alleviation can be reached by the student's timely assignment to the type of so-called "non-communicative personalities" [10]. Such students are focused on sensible mastering of a foreign language, on performance of language exercises. At the initial stage they have a slower formation of speaking skills, and they are more prone to ethno-cultural stress. It is advisable to select students of the opposite communicative type in the training-dialogue pair to such students (preferably representatives of the same or an adjacent national group in order to exclude additional stress factors).

Some other difficulties of the stage of pre-university preparation are worth mentioning. Firstly, it is difficult to master the new phonetic system of the Russian language, the difficulties associated with the pronunciation of individual sounds ([p], [l]), imitating the intonation pattern of native speakers. Obviously, it is the adult learners who have already been formed for a long time, and intonation is completely related to unconscious skills, that await great difficulties in this aspect. Secondly, it is the complexity of the formation of listening skills. According to psychophysiology, the auditory memory in most adults is worse than visual. Therefore, the teacher of Russian as a foreign language needs to appeal to the complex perception, to use the entire toolkit of speech analyzers (auditory, visual, cognitive), and to offer assignments with elements of reading and writing, even in phonetics and listening classes. Let us note that the presence of linguistic experience among the students of the department of pre-university training greatly facilitates and accelerates the process of studying Russian as a foreign language, reduces the level of adaptive stress. It should be borne in mind that such apparent "ease" can be misinterpreted by other students in the group as a factor of their own failure.

Psychoemotional characteristics, the temperament of students can also be taken into account when organizing the work of students in class. Regardless of the image of the student and his / her abilities and desire to learn, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese students do not require a special approach in terms of adjusting the types of work to the type of psyche of a particular student. American students with different levels of psychoemotional intelligence are able to work in the classroom under given conditions. And only European students often require a personality-oriented approach: there are students who find it difficult to work in a group and build a spontaneous speech; who knowingly do not teach the endings of the paradigm of declension of nouns, etc. This audience, in our opinion, requires the greatest skill and lability in building effective work in the class.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Concluding the article, we note that the competence of the modern teacher of Russian as a foreign language presupposes not only knowledge of the subject of teaching (the language itself) and methods of teaching it, but also includes some more complicated parameters such as the ability to psycho-differentiation, flexibility, rapid reaction, the ability to maneuver educational material and adjust audience attitudes.

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