TEACHING THE SPANISH LANGUAGE IN A CULTURAL ASPECT

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Abstract

In recent years, approaches to teaching foreign languages have changed, which is associated with the humanization and humanitarianization of the educational system. Increasingly, language is seen not as the primary means of communication, but as a way of knowing the values of other peoples and cultures. Learning a foreign language through the prism of culture is the basis of the cultural approach.

The article considers this approach, defines its criteria, characterizes the methods and principles of this technology. The authors prove that the cultural approach reflects modern requirements for teaching a foreign language and allows students to master linguistic knowledge and communication skills, together with a whole range of cultural knowledge. In the framework of this approach, the object of education is culture, and speech becomes an auxiliary means of obtaining information. The cultural approach involves the formation of lingua-cultural competence - a system of knowledge about culture and the totality of abilities and skills to operate this knowledge in a specific speech situation.

The article considers the role, content, and leading aspects of the cultural approach in the process of teaching foreign languages. The concepts of cultural approach and cultural education are considered. The functional features, tasks, and conditions for using the cultural approach in the process of teaching foreign languages are determined. Despite some differences in the scientific concepts discussed in the article, the conclusion about the necessity and importance of teaching a foreign language as a component of culture is universally recognized.

It is concluded that these studies became major works that set the vector for studying a foreign language for the coming decades.

The need to further develop issues of co-learning a foreign language and culture lies in the upbringing and educational potential: it contributes to a better understanding of different cultures, helps to realize the diversity and richness of cultures, and to understand the native culture better. This phenomenon will influence not only the formation of the cultural identity of students but also allow them to obtain the necessary skills and abilities to communicate with representatives of other cultures.

Keywords: cultural approach, linguistic and cultural competence, language education, foreign language culture, foreign language; cultural dialogue of cultures; socio-cultural approach; intercultural communication; multicultural education; foreign language education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, as never before, teaching foreign languages is a priority in the educational system not only in Europe but also in Russia. The globalization of the economy and culture as a whole necessitates the possession of foreign languages both by a wide range of specialists and people who want to live with the times. In turn, it creates new requirements for the process of learning languages and makes it necessary to search for effective ways, methods, and technologies in order to make it more successful and socially oriented following the conceptual provisions of Euro-education and Euro-culture. Concepts such as multilingualism,
The relevance of the topic of the dialogue of cultures is expressed in the fact that knowledge of a foreign language contributes to the formation of a socially active personality that meets the prospects for the development of society. Goethe said: "If you do not know any foreign language, you do not know your native language." The primary purpose of teaching a foreign language is not only the ability to communicate in this language but also a deeper understanding of the world, the relationship of peoples and cultures. It is necessary to learn to understand both a foreign culture and one's own and to get rid of stereotypes and prejudice concerning other peoples. The way we perceive the world, is always reflected in our concepts based on the native language in all the diversity of its expressive capabilities. Mastering a foreign language, we expand the possibilities of reflecting the world, and this process takes place against the background of the existing linguistic and cultural baggage. Learning a foreign language is inextricably linked with the study of the country's culture. Culture and language coexist in a dialogue with each other and combine two functions of influencing the society: the effect of language, implemented using linguistic means of expression, and the function of influencing the national cultural environment.

Language is a cultural product. S. Ozhegov, for example, understood the language as "an instrument of communication, exchange of thoughts, and mutual understanding of people in society." (Ozhegov, 1990) Addressing the problem of the study of language and culture at the same time is not accidental. This approach to teaching a foreign language provides a more effective solution to practical, compulsory, developmental, and educational tasks and contains excellent opportunities for further maintaining the motivation of students.

According to Ter-Minasova, the solution to the urgent task of teaching foreign languages as a means of communication between native speakers in different languages, and, consequently, representatives of different cultures, consists in the fact that "languages should be studied in indissoluble unity with the world and culture of peoples speaking these languages." (Ter-Minasova, 2004). As E. Sepir stated, "language does not exist outside of the culture, that is, outside a socially inherited set of practical skills and ideas that characterize our lifestyle" (Sepir, 1993). Therefore, overcoming the language barrier is impossible without overcoming the cultural barrier. The approach to the selection of linguistic material by a teacher should be intercultural in order to enrich the knowledge of the country with the studied language with concrete and convincing information from various areas of the society.

The study of foreign languages and their use as a means of international communication is impossible without an in-depth and diverse knowledge of the culture of the speakers of these languages. Only a combination of these two knowledge - language and culture can provide effective and fruitful communication. The involvement of cultural materials dramatically increases the motivation of learning, which is extremely important, since learning without motivation is ineffective [Safonova, 2013].

### 1.1 Current State of Research in the Area under Study

First of all, it is necessary to find out the current state of the problem of the cultural approach in education. The interest in the development of this area, which involved such scientists as N. Ippolitova, E. Vereshchagina, V. Kostomarov, V. Krasilnikova, I. Kolmogorova, Zh. Lopasova was caused by the assertion
that the educational process can be effective only when it is mediated by culture when culture is dominant in personality education.

The basis for the development of new theories and concepts was the principle of dialogue of cultures, which is revealed by M.M. Bakhtin, B.C. Bibler, S.Yu. Kurganov and other scientists. In the works of these scientists, the emphasis is on the fact that any training should be built as a dialogue of various historically existing logics, cultures, ways of understanding (ancient, medieval, modern, to date). M.M. Bakhtin wrote that "only in communication, in the interaction of a person with a person, is the human revealed in the human and for others and for himself ... The person is alive only in his appeal to others, which means that the person is where there is dialogue" [Bakhtin, 1986]. In the course of the dialogue, a special communication between people arises in which the participants not only "show one or another facet of the ancient, medieval and other thinking, but, above all," grope "their view of the world" [Bakhtin, 1992]. This idea is very crucial, because ignorance of the culture of other people, their mentality leads to ethnic misunderstanding and confrontation.

The specificity of a foreign language as a subject is that teaching it involves mastering not only the foreign language itself but also acquaintance with the literature, history, and culture of the language being studied. Change in the essential approach, according to S.G. Ter-Minasova, "demanded an immediate and radical review of both the general methodology and the specific methods and techniques of teaching foreign languages" [Ter-Minasova, 2004]. In this regard, scientists, educators, methodologists, specialists in foreign languages began to develop productive options for learning a foreign language in the context of culture. Their modeling was based on a didactically oriented sociological analysis of the language of instruction, the sociocultural context of studying a foreign language, and particular attention was paid to the sociocultural characteristics of languages and cultures.

Among the studies, first of all, it is necessary to highlight the work of V.V. Safonova "Sociocultural approach to teaching a foreign language as a specialty" [Safonova, 1992]. V.P. Furmanova "Intercultural communicative competence and cultural and linguistic pragmatics in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages" [Furmanova, 1994], E.I. Passov "The concept of communicative foreign language education" (Passov, 2000) and P.V. Sysoev "The concept of multicultural language education" (Sysoev, 2003). The unifying principle of these works is that they focus on the need to learn the language and culture. Despite some differences in scientific concepts, the conclusion about the necessity and importance of teaching a language, and in particular a foreign language, as a component of culture, is universally recognized. V.V. Safonova believes that the sociology of studying and teaching a foreign language should be considered as an integral part of the general theoretical foundation of a culture-oriented communicative methodology of teaching a foreign language [Safonova, 1996]. According to L.I. Bim, the sociocultural approach entailed a change in the purpose of learning a foreign language, and the main thing is that "languages should be studied in indissoluble unity with the world and culture of peoples speaking these languages" [Bim, 1996]. N.D. Galskova believes that issues related to the content and organization of multicultural education are of particular importance since it implements an approach to training and education that allows to take into account the cultural, ethnic, and religious specifics of students, develop a tolerant attitude towards representatives and phenomena of another linguistic culture. Besides, multicultural education allows a young person to understand their culture and its role in the development of global cultural space better [Galskova, 2008]. She believes that the fact that "knowledge of any language is intended to become a kind of mechanism for turning lingua-ethnocultural diversity into an instrument of mutual understanding" is also an important point [ibid.]. Today, the thought expressed by N. Bulankina and S. Polyankina, on the significant role of education, which under the conditions of multiculturalism "acts as the main integrating factor and condition for the learner's personality to join cultural values, the transmission of social and individual experience, the development of a humanistic worldview" is becoming more and more acute [Bulankina, Polyankina, 2008]. The perspective of cultural education in the study of a foreign language is also essential, which is aimed not only at mastering the norms of intercultural communication with native as well as non-native speakers, but also at cultural search strategies that allow students to independently study any other culture that may be of personal and/or professional interest for them " [Safonova, 2013]. At present, one of the tasks in teaching foreign languages, the need for the solution of which is indicated by V.V. Safonova, is a more intensive development of such a field of knowledge as language pedagogy, revealing the essence and patterns of bilingual, as well as multilingual, multicultural education. Language pedagogy, in her opinion, defines the "range of variability of the ways, principles, strategies and methods of studying languages and cultures, depending on sociocultural factors that significantly affect the effectiveness of intercultural interaction between people in the multilingual, multicultural world of the 21st century, which is quite controversial, burdened with political, economic and cultural conflicts and global interdependence"
In modern scientific literature on the problems of education, it has been repeatedly expressed the need for a cultural approach to the study of academic disciplines. “The development of the individual in harmony with the universal culture depends on the level of development of the basic humanitarian culture. This regularity determines the cultural approach to the selection of the content of education” [Slastenin, 2000]. The essence of the humanitarianization of education is understood as the student’s entry into the culture, as a multifactorial and multifaceted process, the purpose of which can be defined as the education of a person of culture. This goal can be achieved provided that one of the guidelines of modern education is the word in its broad sense, the word - studied by a complex of integrated humanitarian disciplines. The word (language), in this case, acts as one of the most important tools of personal self-realization, an instrument of all educational technologies [Kozyrev, Chernyak, 2007]. In the conditions of modern personality-oriented education, it acquires special significance since it allows us to design all the levels of language proficiency towards the formation of linguistic and cultural competence of students. This competency presupposes such a construction of a learning system in which, instead of the system of “language learning - getting acquainted with the culture,” the focus is on the relation "language learning - getting acquainted with culture - language learning." The communicative competence of a linguistic personality is based on their general cultural baggage; it is formed and adjusted in the process of speech practice or targeted learning. The presence of communicative competence is an indicator of the communicative culture of a linguistic personality, serves as one of the most crucial indicators of the general culture. The formation of cultural competence is aimed at the recognition of language as a form of expression of national culture, the relationship of language and history of the people, the national and cultural specificity of the Spanish language, the possession of the norms of Spanish speech etiquette, and the culture of interethnic communication. Thus, the cultural and communicative competencies are inextricably linked with each other, forming one. It allows to talk about holistic linguistic and cultural competence.

The study of a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication, in contrast to the traditional approach, is aimed at the development of personally significant meanings, ideas, understanding of the system of values of speakers of a particular culture. Future specialists need to get a mandatory minimum amount of knowledge about the characteristics of a communication partner as a representative of a specific linguistic and cultural community, to introduce them to the specifics of communicative behavior and those values that are accepted in a foreign culture. As noted above, the primary purpose of teaching foreign languages at a language university is to enter real intercultural communication. Recently, there has been a transition to the socio- and intercultural teaching paradigm. Its basis is a cognitive-communicative approach, which, along with teaching a foreign language as a means of communication, aims not only to include culture in the content of training but also to compare and evaluate one’s own and foreign-language culture. The center-forming principle and the primary purpose of the cognitive-communicative paradigm is the formation of the cultural and linguistic personality of a specialist in foreign languages with linguistic, communicative, pragmatic, discursive, and intercultural competence.

It should be noted that the latter is present as a component in all types of competence mentioned above. Changing the paradigm and learning objectives lead to different methodological positions regarding the modernization of the essence of teaching foreign languages. The concept of foreign language culture in intercultural communication allows us to solve lingua-didactic and methodological issues related to teaching a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication, in which the main focus is on the development of the learner’s cognitive ability and the qualities of his consciousness.

2 DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

For the successful study of a foreign language in general and foreign language culture in particular, such conditions as an integrative approach to the cultural enrichment of the students’ worldview when studying foreign languages, that is, studying not a separate branch of culture, but several, are necessary. For example, music, theater, cinema, art, and further; orientation to multicultural and bilingual education, a departure from cultural isolationism in educational systems. It suggests that a foreign language not only introduces the culture of the countries of the language under study but by comparison, sets off the peculiarities of its national culture, introduces universal values. При культурологическом подходе инозыччая культура пронизывает все содержание процесса обучения иностранным языкам. With a cultural approach, a foreign language culture permeates the entire content of the process of teaching foreign languages. The cultural approach, as defined by such scientists as N. Ippolitova, I. Kolmogorova, V. Krasnikova, V. Safonova is a complex integrative pedagogical concept that functionally plays the role of its principle, conditions, and means at different stages of the educational process, relying on the culture as a
means of pedagogical activity structurally consisting of three components: practical-activity, cognitive-informational, value-oriented; procedurally representing the process of culture-intensive personality development [Ippolitova, 2010]. The cultural approach can be used as a teaching tool, as it includes the necessary content (folklore, customs, and traditions, art, painting, architecture, music, cinema, theater, fiction and media); provides an opportunity for various kinds of activity: game, work, sport, creativity, and communication; is provided with technical means: video, television, cinema, computer programs and so on. The cultural approach represents culture in its entirety and diversity, restores it as the natural and main foundation of education; creates conditions for enriching students with information about the culture; helps a person to find himself in a culture, to form his own cultural identity, attitude to other cultures; contributes to the removal of isolation, abstractness and cultural depersonalization of knowledge, ensures their rooting in the social national - cultural plan; calls on everyone to care for the preservation of cultural diversity, to follow the principles of equality and contractual principles, to avoid forceful interference in nature and social relations. The main components of a foreign language culture are: [Nefyodova, 1987] the way of life and the variability of the lifestyles of countries in cultural communities and their associated social values, norms, traditions and customs; sociocultural portrait of countries, their peoples and languages; value - semantic aspects of the spiritual, physical and material culture of the studied communities; historical and cultural background and features of historical and ethnic memory; cultural heritage, cultural identity and mentality of peoples, countries of the language being studied; sociocultural aspects of the communicative behavior of members of the cultural community; sociocultural norms of behavior in the context of intercultural communication. An important aspect in teaching a foreign language is the selection of cultural material for educational purposes, which determines: the value meaning and significance of the selected materials to form undistorted ideas about the history and culture of peoples among students; the degree to which this material can serve as an incentive for acquaintance with key cultural concepts, for example, “cultural heritage”, “language and linguistic culture” and so on; the lack of distorted ideas about countries and peoples in cultural material; acceptability of cultural material in terms of age characteristics, cognitive and communicative capabilities of students; the presence of cultural material, on the basis of which it is possible to familiarize students with methods of protection against cultural aggression and cultural discrimination. The authors believe that all these tasks can be successfully solved even within the framework of a single university and faculty. The main thing is to understand and teach students to understand that language is a means of familiarizing with another culture, of which language itself is an integral part; it is the possibility of implementing the principle of intercultural communication, that is, creating conditions for mutual understanding and mutual enrichment. Today there is a real opportunity to implement the principle of multilingualism, while fully satisfying the so-called social request concerning the Spanish language. An example of such an approach to the formation of the curriculum is the Law Institute of RUDN University, where European and Oriental languages are taught. Here, the concept of multilingualism became acceptable about a single student, since most students study two or three languages, while the level of motivation remains consistently high to a second or third foreign language. Moreover, it should be noted that some students change their language priorities in favor of a second language in the process of learning. Since teaching a second foreign language has almost become the educational norm in our university, then the result is almost comparable to the primary foreign language. The authors, based on their own experience, can confidently state that with the correct organization of the training material and the process of teaching a foreign language in general, it is possible to achieve significant results that would not differ in quality indicators from the results obtained from many years of teaching the first foreign language. The basis for programming any training is made up of the following components: GOAL + CONTENT + TECHNOLOGY + RESULT. Each of the components will be examined below.

The practical activity of any teacher of a foreign language is based on the universal technology of communicative teaching of a foreign language culture, which makes it possible to achieve high results and form a number of critical competencies. In our educational system, the cultural approach was taken as a basis, which allowed us to formulate our national concept: teaching Spanish culture through the language, while the entire learning process is perceived as a process of learning the culture. Language is seen as an integral part of this culture and as a way of expressing it. With this approach, we go beyond the traditional linguistic training, and we are already talking about the so-called “ethnolinguistics”, that is, teaching foreign language culture in general. Currently, the requirements for the final product in the process of teaching foreign languages, that is, for the result, should be correlated with international standards, in particular, developed by the European Union. Therefore, the teacher's task is expressed in the need to construe the process of teaching foreign languages
in such a way that students at the primary level acquire satisfactory communicative competence as a whole. However, possessing only linguistic knowledge is not enough today. In the process of learning a foreign language, students need to master a certain level of sociocultural competence, regional, historical, and cultural knowledge. These two processes, the study of language and the study of culture should not be opposed, but preferably skillfully integrated.

We represent culture as a combination of three elements: *Cultura* with a capital letter, that is, art, literature, painting, theater, cinema, music; *cultura* with a small letter, that is, the spiritual world of a person, communication, life, traditions, customs, and *cultura juvenil moderna* - argo and jargon, that is, communication and the spiritual world of certain social groups, in our case, youth.

Today, the formation of the so-called "secondary linguistic personality," that is a person who speaks at least two foreign languages, and is open to intercultural communication is impossible, without using modern teaching aids and modern technologies, and therefore everything that we teach and how we teach has much value. The authors see their task as teachers of a foreign language in giving students a "tool" and teaching them to use it to study the world through this language.

We believe that we can achieve this specific result, first of all, through careful modeling, that is, the selection of the content of the training. The insufficient saturation of the educational services market with educational and methodical literature in the Spanish language is the reason for the development of the original educational syllabus and teaching aids. This, for example, is a manual for Spanish and Latin American holidays: "Let us talk about holidays in the world of Hispanic culture" (program, study guide, audio, and video teaching aids).

One of the main methodological provisions of the program of this manual is the cultural approach to teaching, which contributes to the formation of not only communicative competence as the primary goal of teaching a foreign language, but also forms a system of knowledge about Spanish and Latin American holidays and introduces sociocultural manifestations of a particular era.

Following the didactic principles of scheduling, it is necessary to motivate the choice of the topic. The fact that the holidays are the most representative in every culture and reflect not only aesthetic tastes and trends but also human values, customs, and traditions of the people, is undeniable.

The world of the holiday can attract both a student who already has specific knowledge in this area and a student who does not know this side of the Spanish culture. For this reason, this choice is an excellent way to interest, intrigue students, so that they perceive audio or video or text as a tool for strategies that will help them improve their communicative competence and expand the system of cultural knowledge.

Using the holiday as a subject for teaching the Spanish language, we are based on the fact that this phenomenon is a carrier and a way of conveying historical, artistic, and social reality. In our case, such a traditional theme as a holiday becomes both an object of study and a reason for practical classes in Spanish.

It is much easier to decide what to teach, but much more challenging to answer the question "How to teach?" Nevertheless, this is an essential thing in the learning process. Of great importance is the search for new methods, technologies, improvement, or change of traditional ones. In modern teaching, the teacher and student are partners in the same process. However, still, the effectiveness and attractiveness of this process depend on the abilities, talent, ingenuity, and dedication of the teacher himself and his ability to motivate and interest his students.

We consider the learning technology as a combination of methods, ways, and techniques and, unlike other components of training, are subjective, which is determined by the needs of a particular teacher. It is in the technology that the author's approach is manifested in the implementation of the goals and objectives of teaching foreign languages. Our training system provides for a block-modular presentation of the material, that is, topics united by similar attributes, which enables students to get a complete picture of a particular aspect of the language or culture of the country of the language being studied. We strive to use the most attractive forms of learning through which students make their first contact with Spanish culture. Non-traditional forms of organization of educational activities of students, such as a lesson-excursion; Christmas devoted lesson (lesson-presentation of projects); integrated lesson; somebody's birthday lesson; lesson-dramatization, attract students for two reasons:

1. Work that is carried out outside the audience or goes beyond the traditional;
2. The connection that students establish between the virtual image and reality.

For example, the lesson "Cooking a Spanish dish" takes place in real-time, and the topic "cuisine" is
generally beneficial in all respects since it allows us to formulate and improve all language aspects and form a set of competencies. For our students, Spain is associated not only with color but also with taste. The methodology for conducting such lessons is not complicated, and the lessons are attractive to students. This is one of the ways to create conditions for students' language improvisation.

The second example is a lesson-exursion "Walks in Madrid." Of course, this is a virtual tour but is carried out on the Internet on the streets of the city, when students learn to be a guide and act like a tourist, the task of the first is to introduce "the sights of Madrid"; second, ask as many questions as possible. The task of the teacher is to improvise and create the conditions for spontaneous speech. Before the lesson, an "itinerary - map of Madrid" is issued, which indicates the places that you need to "visit."

With such an organization of educational activity, motivation plays a crucial role. And without a sufficiently high level of internal motivation of students, which is formed based on the conscious significance of acquired knowledge and their practical usage for further improvement, it is unlikely that high results will be achieved when teaching a second foreign language in conditions when the knowledge of two foreign languages is considered an educational norm. If the student's intrinsic motivation is continuously maintained and deepened in the learning process, then success is guaranteed to both the teacher and the student.

In such an international university as RUDN University, students have the opportunity to get acquainted with native speakers of Spanish and Latin American culture, so we often invite students and graduate students from various Spanish-speaking countries to our classes. We consider this work as one of the best ways to implement the cultural approach in teaching Spanish. What are the goals pursued? Firstly, the formation of sustainable motivation through direct contact with a representative of the Hispanic-Latin American culture, secondly, overcoming the psychological barrier when communicating with a native speaker of another language and other culture, thirdly, improving communicative competence and expanding the subject of communication, based on the interest and request of students. It should be noted that students are primarily interested in the socio-cultural aspect of life in Spain and Latin America. They have a desire to discuss problems that concern the youth, for example, parent-child relationships, leisure and hobbies, drugs and crime, holidays and birthdays, favorite dishes, and which artists the Spaniards prefer, Spanish and Latin American cuisine, music and cinema. These are just some of the topics that were discussed in these classes.

Classes are characterized by complete immersion in a foreign language environment, and the only way to solve a particular language problem is through the same language, that is, translation into the native language is never used. However what is also valuable in these lessons is that cognition of a different culture is carried out on the basis of comparison, rather than the juxtaposition of various socio-cultural manifestations in Spain, Latin America, and Russia, which helps to understand and appreciate culture and yourself as a carrier of this culture.

3 CONCLUSION

Summing up, it can be said that at the end of the XX - beginning of the XXI century, there was a significant change in the value-based foundations of teaching the subject "Foreign Language." The cultural paradigm of education outlined a strategic task for it - compulsory language learning in the context of culture. Acquaintance with the culture of the country of the language being studied has an impact on the development of the personality of students on the basis of a new culture in his dialogue with the native. The concepts presented in the article became innovative, united by a common cultural idea - the idea of co-learning the language and culture, which had a significant impact both on the content component of the subject "Foreign Language" and on the teaching methodology. For the process of teaching foreign languages, it is not so much crucial that ignorance of a foreign language culture can become an obstacle when communicating with representatives of other nations, but that the primary goal of a foreign language culture is to learn a language while simultaneously studying the culture of the country of the language being studied in the form, in which it is mediated by a language. Foreign language culture significantly increases the educational potential of the subject. Besides, the use of foreign language culture contributes to the formation of motivation for learning, which in the context of language education is extremely important since the foreign language communication itself is not supported by the language environment, and the real need.

Thus, the cultural approach plays a vital role in teaching a foreign language, since it is a complex integrative pedagogical concept that functionally plays the role of its principle, conditions, means at various stages of the educational process; meaningfully relying on culture as a means of pedagogical activity. We believe that the dialogue between cultures and civilizations should become the fundamental methodological principle in modern linguistic pedagogy.
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