

THE DIDACTIC ROLE OF HOLIDAY EVENTS AS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The article considers the holiday as an effective pedagogical form of teaching a foreign language at a university. The authors focus on festive events held at RUDN University Law Institute by the Department of Foreign Languages. The article reveals the concept of the holiday, its significance, and its impact on students. It is noted that the holiday prepares students for creative, productive activities, helps to solve many specific tasks of education, helps to form linguistic, communicative and country-specific competencies, forms a stable motivation for learning foreign languages, and also provides a stable positive attitude towards universal values, and fosters a sense of patriotism.

The authors also underline the importance of university holidays in foreign languages in such a unique multinational university as RUDN University in helping to familiarize foreign students with the history of the Russian state, the feat of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, as well as with the fraternal ties that existed in that specific historical period with other countries and peoples. Particular attention is paid to such practical and relevant forms of celebrations as Victory Day, Memorial Day in foreign languages, international translator's day, science festivals, thematic days and weeks of a foreign language, quizzes and contests for country knowledge, in particular, a competition of puzzles in a foreign language, allowing students to acquire knowledge about the cultural life of the country of the language being studied, about its traditions and customs, as well as develop the ability to communicate in a foreign language.

These forms are always of interest to students: they broaden their horizons and contribute to the development of students' analytical skills, logical thinking, and communicative competence in a foreign language. They also contribute to the unity of the student team and are an incentive for the further development of students' creative abilities.

The article emphasizes that the holiday as a pedagogical form of learning plays an essential role in increasing motivation to learn foreign languages and serves as a complement to traditional forms of training and education.

Keywords: holiday, pedagogical forms of training, linguistic and cultural knowledge, communicative competence, intercultural competence, area competence, aesthetic education, moral education, motivation

1 INTRODUCTION

The changes taking place today in our society and, as a result, in the field of higher education require a transition from a "knowledgeable" learning paradigm to a "competent" one, when a student becomes a direct participant in the educational process, where preference is given to creativity, competitiveness, and the

ability to express one's point of view and defend it reasonably. Therefore, the teacher of a foreign language has the main task: using the unlimited possibilities of a foreign language, find new, non-traditional pedagogical forms and methods that allow you to activate the learning process, make the students reveal interest, and develop professional skills that will be in demand in the future professional activities of students [Egorova, Khruleva, 2015]. The subject of our consideration is one of the most interesting and, as practice shows, effective forms of teaching a foreign language at a university - a holiday fest that successfully complementing other forms and means of instruction, not only helps to solve many specific problems of education, but also plays an important role in the formation of linguistic, regional and communicative competencies, forms a sustainable motivation to learn a foreign language, prepares students for creative and productive professional activities. Holiday is an unusual phenomenon, synthesizing reality and art, artistically decorating one or another real life event. At the same time, one must not forget that the holiday is a complex phenomenon and indivisible into its component parts. A holiday, or performance, is an artificially created, unusual mass action that has a huge emotional and cognitive charge, involves an active process of communication, or rather sociocultural communication of the participants of the holiday, because the audience who came to the holiday becomes its active participants.

Moreover, in a mass holiday, the individual concept of "I" is lost and the general concept of "we" arises. But this does not mean that the "I" disappears without a trace. The holiday is organized in such a way that "I" and "WE" replace each other at certain moments, moving from one to another, depending on the goals and objectives of sociocultural communication. Thus, we assume that we can consider the holiday as a means of teaching a foreign language in an environment artificially created for sociocultural communication in the language being studied.

1.1 Current State of Research in the Area under Study

The holiday as a historical and cultural phenomenon has been studied in sufficient detail in the philosophical, sociological, culturological scientific tradition, including the theory and methodology of socio-cultural activity. At a theoretical level, a holiday is interpreted as a multifaceted social phenomenon that reflects the life of a person and society, which is of great importance for the organization of this life. Holiday and festivities can be called the most important socio-cultural values that contribute to the formation of personality, the spiritual development of a person and humanity. It is the holiday that largely synthesizes the entire valuable that has been accumulated in world culture. Holidays are days of relaxation and fun, but their meaning is much deeper. It is no coincidence that for a long time the holiday was considered not only a "day off", but, first of all, a memorable day - dedicated to a particular event. Recently, and until our time, the concept of the holiday has been associated not just with free time from work, not just relaxation, but free time in the meaning of an important socio-cultural act that creates universal values. The history of the development of the culture of society clearly demonstrates that the holiday, introducing people to cultural values and achievements, has always been and remains an effective means of influencing the spiritual world of a person. The Polish sociologist K. Zhigulsky, noting the historical, cultural and socio-philosophical significance of the holiday, indicates that an important sociological feature of the holidays is that people have the opportunity to reveal and creatively express themselves as a historical subject, directly participating in the festivities. This universal principle of the holiday is manifested not only in relations between nations, but also in a temporary aspect, due to continuity, the use of valuable centuries-old experience of mankind [Zhigulsky, 1985]. The holiday, both in essence and in form, is a collectivist phenomenon. A.I. Arnoldov believes that a holiday, unlike many other types of human activity, is always and without fail - a collective action, a collective experience, which necessarily requires the presence and direct participation of a group of people. The holiday arises only where there are spiritual connections between people, and, generated by them, it, in turn, strengthens these connections, demonstrating its universal human socio-cultural qualities [Arnoldov, 1993].

It is important that the holiday is that phase of social life in which its mechanisms, especially the value systems, are revealed with special clarity. The common value system is the basis of mutual understanding between people, the establishment of permanent ties, conflict resolution.

V. I. Dahl defines the holiday as "a day devoted to rest, not business, not work, antonym. - weekday; a day celebrated according to the church's charter, or on the occasion and in memory of an event of civil, state, or local custom, on a occasion relating to the locality, to the person" [Dahl, 2000]. In the "Dictionary of the Russian Language" by S. I. Ozhegov, the following interpretation of the meaning of the word "holiday" is given: 1. The day of celebration, established in honor or in memory of someone or something. 2. Day off, non-working day. 3. A day specially marked by custom or church. 4. Day of joy and celebration about something. 5. Day of games, entertainment. [Ozhegov, 1990]. According to A. I. Mazaev, "the word holiday means a certain period of time (hour, day or days) when people are not doing business. This word

characterizes such free time when, for example, a certain event is celebrated somewhere, which must be distinguished from the stream of other events. A holiday is a free life activity that takes place within the free boundaries of place and time, in the process of live contact of people gathered voluntarily" [Mazaev, 1978]. At the same time, many domestic researchers consider the holiday not only as a day of celebration for something or a form of leisure, but also as an important socio-cultural phenomenon of great educational significance. As M. M. Bakhtin notes, the phenomenon of holiday is one of the most stable elements of the cultural continuum, "the primary form of human culture". The holiday culture is composed of the culture of the game, the culture of the word, the culture of movement, the culture of musical sound, the culture of fashion, costume, etiquette, custom, ritual, in a word, from a combination of different cultures [Bakhtin, 2010]. According to A.I. Mazaev, "a holiday is a special type of model of reality, which reproduces its most natural and existential moments, translating them into the language of its game rules, rituals and symbols. The educational significance of the holiday is connected with all these mentioned" [Mazaev, 1978]. According to G.P. Cherny, a holiday is an integral system of artistic images. "The significance of the holidays cannot be overestimated, because, firstly, they are part of the spiritual heritage of the people, their purest sources of creativity - customs, rituals, traditions, and others. Secondly, holidays are an area of diverse creative cooperation between people in the process of preparation and holding a holiday. Thirdly, holidays are the brightest events of life, certain social boundaries, milestones, prospects, which oriented, which are waiting for" [Cherny, 1990].

D. M. Genkin emphasizes that during the holiday there is a feeling of community and being part of: the holiday creates an empathic unity of its participants, since it is always addressed to all people participating in it and to each person separately [Genkin, 1975]. In addition, the holiday is a flexible pedagogical system that allows to observe the process of pedagogical impact [Genkin, 1975].

2 METODOLOGY

In our opinion, any situation can be used and modeled for educational and pedagogical purposes. The atmosphere of the holiday allows students to be involved in an interesting, festive and at the same time educational environment. The authors set as their goal to test the effectiveness of the organization of festive events when teaching students foreign language communication. To solve the problems and test the hypothesis, scientific research methods were used: empirical: questioning, interviewing, conversation, interviewing, and pedagogical observation.

The following approaches to teaching a foreign language served as the methodological basis of the study: cognitive; competence–communicative, and systemic. RUDN University Law Institute acted as an experimental base. For five years, the authors observed the effectiveness of the participation of students of 1-4 courses in various events: Victory Day: Memorial lessons, poster contest in foreign languages, Translator's Day, New Year's creative evenings in terms of their importance for mastering a foreign language. Over the years, the results of work with more than 300 students were obtained.

3 DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Among the methods of pedagogical influence that are most often used during celebrating of holidays, researchers distinguish, as a rule, the method of persuasion, the method of promotion, and the method of competition. At the same time, as practice shows, one of the most effective methods of the pedagogical impact of the holiday is also the method of trust, or the method of assignments. This method consists of instructing each participant in the holiday to do something, for example: to be responsible for holding a concert, write a script for the event, arrange a stage for a performance, prepare a wall newspaper or presentation, participate in a theatrical production or provide sound accompaniment for the event, and alike. Instructions method is used to form important personality traits such as responsibility, initiative and determination. However, it should be borne in mind that trust must be combined with exactingness and be accompanied by well-deserved and timely encouragement. It is quite obvious that the potential, inherent in the holiday can be successfully used in the educational process at the university both for educational purposes and in teaching, in particular, a foreign language. The holiday is one of the most interesting and unique opportunities not only to improve knowledge in the field of a foreign language, but also to broaden one's horizons, get acquainted with the culture, traditions and customs of a particular country, develop the ability to communicate abroad.

In addition, the holiday, as mentioned above, helps to solve many specific tasks of education, including aesthetic and moral. Respect for the customs and traditions of different countries and peoples are being formed. As practice shows, in teaching foreign languages, events (Fr. soiree) are one of the most effective forms of celebration. N. A. Shchurkova notes that the content of the "soiree" (hereinafter, evening) can be: 1)

thematic, dedicated to various holiday dates; 2) creative reports of study groups, circles and individual students on the results of any work done; 3) dedicated to meeting with any of the persons of interest to students who speak a foreign language; 4) literature evenings devoted to the work of a writer, composer; 5) decades of arts in a foreign language, expanding and deepening students' knowledge on issues of art, culture and geography of the country of the studied language [Schurkova, 1994].

K. Rogers, the creator of client-centered psychotherapy, (the authors of the article admit that, unfortunately, the paradigm of the educational process is increasingly shifting towards the axis of the provision of educational services and client relationships between the educational center and the student), sees the student as a person, able to develop their natural resources, mind and heart, curiosity, a person who is able to make choices, make decisions and bear responsibility for them, a person who can develop their own values in the process of educational and other activities. K. Rogers proposed to build training on other (in comparison with the traditional and technocratic school) principles. The main among them can be considered the principle of "freedom of learning." It consists of not doing something for a person, not telling him what to do, not solving his problems for him, but letting him realize himself and wake up his own activity and internal forces, so that he would make his own choices, make decisions and answer for them. According to K. Rogers, the teacher's task is not to dictate the knowledge that is ready and possibly not necessary for the student, but to awaken his own cognitive activity, which will be expressed in the choice of content, goals, working methods, behavior, and values. (Rogers, 1994). In the traditional educational system, K. Rogers believes, authoritarian, non-free learning (cognitive learning) takes place, in which the learning process is reduced to the assimilation of the curriculum and the knowledge selected by the teacher. Another type of training should be introduced - "experimental learning": this is such a training organization in which students learn independent activity, on their own experience, in the process of discussion and decision-making. The purpose of training is the development of the personality, its self-awareness, his/her self-realization. To create such training, one needs the following: change the position of the teacher; create an atmosphere of "freedom of learning" in the classroom, use methods that stimulate the student's activity and his/her development. The position of the teacher is the position of a consultant and, in many ways, a psychotherapist who provides "developmental assistance."

The atmosphere of "freedom of learning" in the classroom is characterized by the fact that students are not afraid to make mistakes, freely discuss problems, interact with each other in learning, and see in the teacher the source of experience, knowledge, and senior member of the group.

It should be said that the pedagogy of cooperation of Soviet teachers (the 70-80s of the XX century) is very close to the positions of humanistic pedagogy of the West. The ideas of innovative teachers included the following: change of teacher's position from authoritarian to democratic ("cooperation"); the task is not only to give knowledge, but to develop students' abilities and educate them in the learning process; the search for methods and forms of learning that stimulate the cognitive activity and independence of students and their development.

We believe that it is the holidays organized as part of the educational process that can partly take on both the educational load and the function of developing students' independence and creative freedom, their mutual cooperation in creating the final product, for example, a certain performance on the holiday.

It should be said that the holidays satisfy a wide range of material and spiritual needs of society and the individual. Needs are a source of human activity, a means of social activity [Benifand, 1985]. There is a system that needs holidays. If the total needs for the holiday are conditionally divided into groups, as A.V. Benifand proposes, then we will see the following picture: the need for a holiday; ideological and political needs, legal, philosophical; artistic and aesthetic and moral, communicative, organizational, educational, creative. When organizing holidays within the framework of the curriculum, the social and cultural function of the holiday comes to the forefront: communicative, organizational, and educational.

Student festivals are usually devoted to important events in cultural and social life and are dedicated to significant dates and significant events in the history of the country of the language being studied. In the program of the holidays, we recommend including a variety of contests, dramas, necessary to enhance speech and thought activity, and develop creative abilities. One of the necessary conditions for the effectiveness of an evening is the organization of the control over students' understanding of language material [Kholod, Egorova, 2014]. Let us give an example of the celebration of the Day of Translator at the Law Institute of RUDN University. The preparation for the event begins a month earlier. Roles and assignments are allocated; those responsible for the design and musical accompaniment are appointed. It is advisable to conduct a dress rehearsal on the eve of the holiday. As for the day of the event, wall newspapers become its undoubted decoration, in the preparation of which all student groups take part.

Interesting facts from the life of famous translators of antiquity and modernity and their most famous quotes can make up the contents of a wall newspaper.

It is important that the information is accompanied by figurative content - from photographs to poetic lines, which allows students to absorb information related to the science of translation in a peculiar way. Properly selected material and color scheme contribute to a better assimilation of facts than their presentation on the pages of textbooks. As practical experience shows, it is better to start the celebration with an acquaintance with the history of translation as a phenomenon, as well as with the life and work of Jerome Stridon, the first translator of the Bible. This can be done in the form of a presentation or a quiz that activates the mental activity of students and contributes to the formation of linguistic and regional competence.

An important element of the learning process is the annual celebration of Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War held at the Law Institute and the lessons of Memorial held in it in foreign languages and the inter-university poster contest in foreign languages. In addition to the unconditional educational function that this event performs, it should be noted its significant cognitive, historical, and regional value. Students get acquainted with a great deal of materials in foreign languages, such as materials about the history of the Normandy-Niemen aviation regiment, the heroes of the Resistance movement, Spanish volunteers, in particular Ruben Ibaruri, who fought and died on Soviet soil. Students independently seek and translate materials, work as a team. Also, many begin to become interested in the history of their family's participation in the war, prepare messages in foreign languages. Songs and poems performed in foreign languages also contribute to phonetic literacy and the development of mnemonics. These events also increase the sense of social responsibility of students and teachers: foster a sense of patriotism, and in such a unique multinational university as RUDN University also helps to familiarize foreign students with the history of the Russian state, the feat of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, as well as with fraternal ties that existed in this historical period in our state with other countries and peoples.

One of the effective forms of the fest, widely used in teaching a foreign language at our university, is themed days and weeks. This form is massive in nature, since students of different faculties can take part in it, and complex in structure, since it includes a set of various events that are held in a certain period of time and aimed at realizing the tasks of an integrated approach to training and education. The theme of the events within such weeks should be informative, interesting, related to educational material and, importantly, accessible and appropriate to the level of students' language training. As a rule, the process of preparing and conducting a thematic week of a foreign language takes place in three stages. The first, that is, preparatory, stage includes the preparation of the program of the event, a discussion of its nature and content, the time and place of its holding, the composition of the jury, as well as the discussion of bonuses, awarding certificates to the best participants and teams. The success of a thematic week of a foreign language largely depends on the thoroughness of the preparatory work.

The second stage is the very conduct of a week of a foreign language, which may include events such as quizzes on the traditions of the countries of the language being studied, a competition for the best translation, concerts in a foreign language, presentations about the countries of the language being studied and the great people of these countries, performances and theatrical staging. At RUDN University Law Institute, language weeks are timed to coincide with the New Year holidays and carry an additional burden: removal of pre-examination stress.

An interesting approach, which the authors of the article have been practicing for several years, seems to us a competition of riddles in foreign languages. Preserving the richness and imagery of the native language, the riddles contain a learning element and are a complex thought exercise, which is enclosed in an entertaining and unusual shell. Since the riddle is an allegorical description of an object, when solving it, the process of creating an associative-logical series takes place, in which the characteristics of objects and phenomena are compared in order to find a connection between them and guess the intended object. This process is complicated by the fact that when solving the riddles of a foreign culture, it is necessary not only to have linguistic competence, but also to have certain sociocultural and linguistic, and regional knowledge. As a source of cultural information, riddles can act as an incentive for independent linguistic and regional research, which contributes to the formation of intercultural competence, which is based on knowledge of ethnic and cultural differences and similarities of peoples. It should be borne in mind that the same phenomena of a real picture of the world are seen and evaluated differently by representatives of different cultures. Including the folklore riddle in the process of teaching a foreign language, considering it from the point of view of the cultural and linguistic and regional information that contains in it, we are more aware of our own culture and can see the specifics of the perception of the world around us by the representatives of a foreign culture.

An interesting form of celebration with educational functions, we consider the celebration of musicals or excerpts from them if the teacher is lack of time. This form contributes to the development of sociocultural competence and familiarization with the cultures of other from countries. The methodological advantages of songwriting in teaching a foreign language are obvious. It is known that in ancient Greece many texts were learned by singing, and in many schools in France this is practiced now. The same can be said of India, where at present a certain part of the information is learned by singing. For students, studying a foreign language, a musical can be an excellent means of working to improve pronunciation, intonation, and also serve as one of the techniques of mnemonics. The musical festival also contributes to the aesthetic and moral education of students; fully reveals the creative abilities of everyone. Thanks to the singing of the musical, a favorable psychological climate is created in the team, fatigue is reduced, and language activity is activated. In many cases, it also serves as a discharge that reduces stress and restores students' performance.

A prerequisite for all these events is to create an atmosphere of festivity and ease. The third stage is always devoted to summing up, after which students who won prizes are awarded with diplomas and prizes. It is important that the rewarding of participants is fair and determined by voting. Thus, evenings and thematic weeks of a foreign language play an important role in the formation of both linguistic and regional communicative competencies, broaden the horizons of students, are an incentive for the further development of their creative abilities, and contribute to the unity of the student team.

Among the new and extraordinary holidays that are directly related to the field of education, of particular interest is the annual Science Festival held at RUDN University. Having united people of different professions and ages (scientists, post-graduate students and students, schoolchildren, teachers of higher and secondary educational institutions, representatives of other organizations of the scientific and innovation sphere) on its site, the Science Festival, which is a modern form of popularizing science, has become a real Holiday of Science with its many creative events that provide each participant with the opportunity to touch science in the literal sense of the word, expand their horizons, get acquainted with the latest achievements of science and technology, attend lectures and master classes by famous scientists and specialists, get acquainted with original interactive scientific projects and present, in turn, their innovative developments. As a rule, a whole series of various events of the Science Festival is dedicated specifically to foreign languages: popular science lectures in an interactive format, master classes, presentations, exhibitions, scientific tournaments, interactive quizzes, theater performances, and alike. Each participant has the opportunity to test their knowledge in a foreign language, plunge into the atmosphere of another country, get acquainted with its culture, listen to the music of the country of the language being studied, take part in intellectual games, in shows and tournaments in foreign languages, be involved in the staging of any custom or tradition of the country of the language being studied.

Participation in such events allows, of course, expanding the horizons of students, improving their knowledge in the field of foreign languages and regional studies, contributes to the development of linguistic and regional communicative competencies, and serves as an incentive for the further development of students' creative abilities.

4 CONCLUSION

Thus, a fest as a pedagogical form of teaching a foreign language is one of the unique opportunities to make the educational process creative, contributing to the development of students' creative potential, enhancing their cognitive interest and, undoubtedly, increasing motivation for learning foreign languages. Complementing other forms and means of training and education, the fest contributes to the formation of the most important competencies - linguistic, regional and communicative, expands not only philological, but also the general horizons of students, develops their ability to communicate in foreign languages, fosters respect for the culture, traditions and customs of the country of the language being studied, and spiritually enriches students.

As an interesting and effective pedagogical form of teaching a foreign language, the fest plays an important role in preparing students for their future professional activities, in the formation of such valuable and professional qualities of the personality of a future lawyer as creative curiosity and determination, responsibility and initiative, the desire for a creative search and creative fulfillment, the ability to develop and implement cultural and educational programs, as well as solve the problems of upbringing and spiritual the development of students in both educational and extracurricular activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article has been prepared in the framework of RUDN University participation of Russia-wide 5-100 program.

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