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**LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION OF MUSLIM MIGRANT CHILDREN  
IN MODERN SCHOOLS**

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*Abstract*

The issue of the language adaptation of migrant children in the Russian Federation entails the problem of effective inclusion of migrants into the social life of Russia and is highly relevant in today's context. The complexity of the problem lies in the fact that the process of cultural and language adaptation is very difficult in view of the fact that for the vast majority of migrant children coming to the country the Russian language is not native because it lost its status of being an international communication tool. Nowadays teachers face the necessity of creating conditions for language adaptation of migrant children and the use of modern practices and methods for effective teaching of the Russian language to migrant children from various ethnical groups. The purpose of this study is to create the conditions necessary for effective language adaptation of migrant primary school children, to develop integrative methods of teaching Russian to migrant children. The main method in this study is a pedagogical experiment (ascertaining, forming and control stages of experiment). Moreover the method of expert estimations and the methods of statistical processing of quantitative data have been used. The study was held in several schools of Zelenodolsk (a town in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia) where the Tatar cultural component of the syllabus is taught in Tatar language.

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## 1. Introduction

Because of growing migration processes Russian schools and schools in other countries organize their children in groups so that Russian speaking children and children whose native language is not Russian study together. Children of various nationalities study in these multicultural schools. They yet



can't speak the Russian language and they are overall poorly adapted to their new linguistic, social, cultural, educational environment. The issue of linguistic adaptation and the issues related to teaching migrants the Russian language are extremely relevant in modern scholarship. A number of scholars in our country study the linguistic adaptation of migrants and how the Russian language taught to migrant children. Among them are: Gulyaeva (2010), Nikiforova and Ignatiev (2016); Nurullina, Yusupova (2016), Makarov (2012), Pkhanaeva (2014), Usha (2014), Sherstobitova, (2015), Shchukin (2012), and foreign scientists: Polivara (2015), Bojović (2016), Fernandez Sierra (2017), Convertino (2016), Fassetta (2012).

The scientists understand the linguistic adaptation as the ability to communicate in Russian fluently which is built on the basis of already existing communicative skills of migrant children. Migrant students have different background knowledge. Many migrant children can be characterized in the following way: they cannot read well, they have poor vocabulary, they do not understand idioms and metaphors; they cannot explain the text of their textbooks in their own words. Students, for whom Russian is not a native language, are in danger of not developing their learning abilities properly because of their poor Russian language proficiency.

Migrant children often have difficulties with understanding grammatical gender, the categories of animateness and inanimateness, the prepositional case and tenses in the Russian language. The main goal in the teaching process is to help migrant children acquire communicative skills; facilitate the development of strong speaking skills in the Russian language (Phanaeva, 2014, 6). Language adaptation is designed to introduce the Russian language to migrant children so that it become an integral part their understanding of the world. Forming Russian-based world view is a complex issue that involves introducing various concepts of Russian people about the world and their values. There are introduced through the texts of folklore songs and tales, Russian classical literature, history, traditions and customs, norms of the Russian etiquette, etc.

Scientists from different countries indicate the importance of addressing the psychological and sociocultural adaptation problems related to linguistic adaptation of migrants, the development of respect for other cultures and respect for the national culture of the country in which migrant children now live. (Convertino, 2016). The primary goal in teaching migrant children is the development of their speech competence achieved through effective learning activities focused on the grammatical patterns of the Russian language. The basic principle of teaching migrant children implies going from specific cases to general rules. It is important to teach migrant children to perceive the interlocutor's speech correctly, to extract information from a written source quickly and accurately, to express their thoughts and feelings in oral and written forms clearly, to use all the resources of language in speech. The child of a migrant need to create the following competences: linguistic, speaking and communicative (Gulyaeva, 2010, 158). The main task of modern school is to teach migrant children to speak Russian as fluently as children from Russian-speaking families.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The urgency of the problem of migrant children integration into the Russian educational space is linked to objective social processes.

In a new sociocultural and linguistic environment, migrants face the processes of cultural alienation, loss of language area therefore the most important thing is to create conditions for language adaptation in the hosting country and preservation of native language and traditions of people.

In working with children of migrants it is important to take into account the level of knowledge, the dynamics of representations depending on the phase of training, national, social, psychological characteristics, value orientations and motivational sphere. Upbringing and education of migrant students is realized through the influence of ethnicity, national culture and intercultural processes.

At the heart of teaching migrant children to communicate in the elementary school lies the game-based approach. Game in this context 'is a psychological justification for the transition to the new language of learning' (Shchukin, 2012, 242). The use of games as a method of developing speaking skills in the elementary school allows teachers to design communication tasks so that they demonstrate the use of necessary communication patterns. The use of various games including riddles, crossword puzzles, singing performances, poems, and fairy tales ensures that children develop sustainable interest for learning the Russian language. Moreover, it is important to pay attention not only to how students speak in Russian but also to what they say (whether what they say has personal importance for them). The leading motivation in teaching migrant children to speak is a game and in teaching to read and write is cognitive motivation (Shchukin, 2012). It is important to draw the attention of students to the content-semantic aspect of texts. For the learner texts are a source of extra-linguistic information and they are not viewed as examples of the possible use of lexical-grammatical forms. This means that they need to be learnt specifically (Usha, 2014, 133).

For successful language adaptation of migrant children it is necessary to work on the development of students' vocabulary. Vocabulary-focused work should be carried out at all stage of a lesson (the explanation of words' meanings, etymology of words, practicing pronunciation in the course of writing, vocabulary and grammar work, the selection of synonyms and antonyms, constant lexical-semantic, grammatical, orthographic, derivational work).

It is also important to work with the dictionaries of synonyms, antonyms, idioms and grammatical dictionaries. It is necessary to do exercises to develop articulation of migrant children: tongue twisters, nursery rhymes, speech warm-up, learning small rhymes. Such types of activities develop the listening skills and help improve pronunciation and develop the skills of the fluent pronunciation of phrases and sentences, facilitate the memorization of lexical and grammatical materials. Migrant students should use rules, instructions (algorithms) explaining the rules of the Russian language actively. For rapid language adaptation migrant students need constant work with speech models and samples. The basic principle of teaching migrant children is by helping them acquire speaking experience focused on grammatical rules. In this case, speech samples are not simply memorized but naturally acquired through repetition and play in different communicative situations. An interesting and important form of lexical work with migrant children is playing language games, puzzles with lexical orientation, etc.

### **3. Research Questions**

During the research the following tasks were solved: 1) to study the work on the theory of linguistic adaptation and on teaching the Russian language to migrant children; 2) to justify theoretically the problem

of language adaptation and learning the Russian language for children of Muslim migrants; 3) to develop an effective system of work with such children in primary school; 4) to test experimentally the effectiveness of teaching with use of the developed system and to generalize the results of the experiment.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this study is to create the conditions for effective language adaptation of migrant children in primary school, the development of teaching methods appropriate for Muslim migrant children.

#### **5. Research Methods**

##### **5.1. Theoretical and empirical methods:**

To test the hypothesis the following set of complementary methods was used:

- Theoretical methods – the analysis of the written works of educators and psychologists on the issue; the analysis of methodical and educational literature; the theoretical analysis of the main provisions of the proposed methodology on the basis of which the hypothesis of the research was built; theoretical substantiation of the system of work with children of migrant Muslims in teaching Russian language in primary school;

- Empirical methods – observation, summative and formative pedagogical experiment, questionnaires, tests, interviews, analysis of results of experimental work.

##### **5.2. Base of research**

The study was held in several schools of Zelenodolsk (a town in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia) where the Tatar cultural component of the syllabus is taught in Tatar language (Grammar school №5 and Grammar school №16). The experiment involved fifty-two primary school students.

##### **5.3 The stages of the research**

The research had three stages:

At the first stage we created an experimental platform on the basis of the above secondary schools of the Republic of Tatarstan, we observed the process of linguistic adaptation of migrant children and how the Russian language was taught to primary school students; questionnaires and interviews with primary school children were conducted; the levels of linguistic adaptation and Russian language proficiency of children were assessed; provided testing of the research topic at the initial stage of the experiment.

At the second stage we clarified and adjusted theoretical framework of the study, carried out our educational experiment in primary schools of Republic of Tatarstan: two schools in the Zelenodolsk region with Tatar cultural component (Grammar school №5 and Grammar school №16). The experiment involved students in grades 1-4 (52 people).

At the third stage of our work we carried out the generalization and systematization of the obtained data, the approbation of the research topic in publications and presentation of the author at scientific conferences.

#### **5.4 Evaluation criteria**

The main assessment method in this study was the testing method by Photekova. It is an assessment tool for language adaptation and speech development of younger students in 4 levels: level 4 – 100-80% (high); level 3 – 79,9-65% (above average); level 2 – 64.9-50% (medium); level 1 – 49.9% and below (low). The maximum number of points is 200. The percentage of correctly completed assignments is displayed by the processing of the results. The levels of linguistic adaptation are determined by the following indicators:

I. Investigation of sensory-level speech.

1. Condition of phonemic perception.

2. Articulation skills.

3. Pronunciation of sounds.

4. Syllabic structure of words.

II. Study of language analysis skills.

III. Study of the grammatical structure of speech

IV. The study of vocabulary and word formation skills.

V. Research of the understanding of logical-grammatical relations.

VI. The study of formation of coherent speech

The amount of cumulated number of points is summarized for the whole test.

#### **5.5 The course and description of the experiment**

The study was held in several schools of the Zelenodolsk region of the Republic of Tatarstan (Grammar school №5 and Grammar school №16). 52 pupils of primary classes took part in the experiment. The experimental group of Muslim students from Grammar school №5 was 26 pupils (first grade – 8 pupils; second grade – 8 pupils; third grade – 10 pupils). The control group of Muslim students from Grammar school №16 was 26 people (first grade – 6 pupils; second grade – 10 pupils; third grade 3 – 4 pupils; fourth grade – 6 pupils). The total number of migrant children studying in primary classes in those schools: first grade – 14 pupils; second grade – 18 pupils; third grade – 14 pupils; fourth grade – 6 pupils. Thus, 52 child Uzbeks study in both the experimental and control classes (which is 13.3% of the total number of primary school students). At the stage of ascertaining experiment we studied the development of coherent speech. Students in the experimental group and the control group were offered two tasks: (1) writing a story based on a series of pictures and then (2) presenting this story orally. Each of task students could get maximum 15 points. Tasks were integrated. Oral summary of the text requires a sufficient level of development of verbal memory; the ability to present information verbally in a coherent way and convey causality is based on cognitive activities.

The following results at this phase were obtained:

Students of the experimental group showed the following results: 1) making up a story in accordance with a picture: first grade – 5 points; 2nd grade – 7 points; 3rd grade – 8 points; 2) a summary

of the text: first grade – 4 points; 2nd grade – 5 points; 3rd grade – 6 points. Students of the control group showed the following results: 1) making up a story in accordance with a picture: first grade – 4 points; 2nd grade – 5 points; 3rd grade – 5; 4th grade – 6 points; 2) a summary of the text: first grade – 4 points; 2nd grade – 5 points; 3rd grade – 5; 4th grade – 6 points. Thus, the levels of language adaptation and language development of migrant children in the groups were equally low.

At the stage of the formative experiment we held systematic work in two directions: the lessons of the Russian language and supplementary lessons of the Russian language (extended education).

At the lessons of the Russian language migrant learners studied phonetics, articulation of the sounds, the use of adjectives, nouns. Moreover, they were practicing looking up new words in dictionaries, structuring expressions, phrases, sentences, texts on various topics. We used linguistic material. Over the course of supplementary lessons migrant students were offered a range of tasks aimed at the development of speech abilities, intonation and phonemic hearing, ability to think, to conjecture, to present information logically and coherently.

At the control stage of the experiment the students of both groups (experimental and control) were asked to complete the following types of tasks: phonetics tasks; tasks of articulation skills; tasks of pronunciation; tasks of syllabic structure of words; tasks of linguistic analysis; tasks of grammatical structure of speech; tasks of derivational processes; tasks of understanding logical-grammatical relations; tasks of coherent speech.

Thus, the experimental work with migrant students in primary school showed children have different levels: level 1 (low) – 9 pupils (17,4%); Level 2 (medium) – 23 pupils (44%); level 3 (above average) – 10 pupils(19.3 per cent); level 4 (high) – 10 pupils(19.3 %)

## **6. Findings**

In the experiment, migrant primary school children have learned to: analyse and briefly describe speech sounds and explain the meaning of words; to distinguish between the pronunciation and spelling of the words; find ways of finding and analysing new words (including with the use of a dictionary); to write simple texts (30-50 words); to create simple monologues on various topics; follow the rules of spelling and punctuation. After participating in the experiment students know how to: use the acquired knowledge and skills in practical activities and daily life; perceive spoken speech; work with dictionaries; comply with orthoepic norms; create oral and written texts; follow the norms of the Russian speech etiquette in the situations of everyday communication.

## **7. Conclusion**

The developed methodology for teaching Russian as a foreign language involves the inclusion of migrant children into the system of schooling in the Russian language. Moreover we helped children improve their language competence through supplementary lessons of the Russian language. The additional content of lessons should vary depending on the stage of education of children and their level of proficiency in Russian.

The developed approach promotes rapid language adaptation of migrant children in a foreign environment and helps them adapt to the culture and socio-cultural space of their new country. By

language adaptation of migrant children we understand the development of linguistic skills which is achieved through comprehensive studies on the development of children's speech and familiarization with the surrounding world by means of traditional culture. Existing studies on language adaptation of migrant children has shown that language adaptation develops in close connection with the culture of native speakers, i.e. Russian culture. We noticed that the most effective adaptation strategy for migrant children is the integration model (the expected adoption patterns of a new culture combined with the norms and values of people, their culture). When presenting one or the other language material to migrant children, it is necessary to observe the following structure: a new word, phrase or grammatical model, the student first needs to hear (we say the item), then see (we write it on the board in front of them), and then repeat it and finally children record it themselves.

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