

18th PCSF 2018
Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

**NATIONAL ASPECT OF MODERN RFL TEACHER LANGUAGE
PERSONALITY**

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Abstract

The modern anthropocentric paradigm of scientific knowledge influences pedagogical concepts, in particular, the features of the teacher's personality and the student's personality. The personality of a student becomes not an object, but a subject of the pedagogical process, (i.e. he/she is an active participant), which increases the motivation to study and effectiveness of the learning process. In these conditions teachers have to meet special requirements. Regardless of their specialties, a large number of foreign students, who come to Russia, learn Russian. Thus, it is urgent to study the problems related to the personality of the RFL teacher. The authors of the article describe the specifics of RFL teacher's language personality verbal and semantic, cognitive, and motivational and pragmatic levels and how they influence the students' personalities and the effectiveness of the pedagogical process. The study focuses on the national aspect of RFL teacher's personality. The material of the article and illustrations of the theory are based on our experience of teaching Russian as a foreign language. In accordance with the objectives of our study, we analyzed different types and forms of lessons (explanation of the new material, revision, lesson-excursions, etc.) given by different teachers who work in various higher educational institutions. We also focused on a variety of the Russian language classes for students with different language skills.

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Keywords: Cognitive level, motivational and pragmatic level, language personality, Russian as a foreign language, verbal and semantic level.



1. Introduction

In the late 20th - early 21st centuries there was a change of scientific paradigms and linguistic studies focused on the person having the abilities to think, to speak and to listen: “The transition from learning a language as a system to anthropocentrism in modern linguistics resulted in the fact that the researchers concentrated on the speech activity, which implies studying the functioning of language, taking into account the factor of “communicative situation” and “human factor” (Krasilnikova, 2015, p. 69).

Studies devoted to the language personality contribute to linguodidactics and methodology of teaching language and literature, as they provide more information about the language as a system: “The methods of teaching Russian as a foreign language refer to the ideas that if a language teaching model is based only on the language but the concept of the language personality is neglected, the model will not be effective enough” (Klobukova, 1997, p. 27).

Modern studies consider the linguistic personalities in various aspects: as a literary image or linguistic cultural type in works of art (Vlasova, 2005; Shcherbaeva, 2010; Popova, 2012), as a similar concept in a special type of discourse (academic discourse) (Smyslova, 2007), as an image in journalistic discourse (Ebzeeva, Mitrofanova, & Dugalich, 2017). A number of studies reveal the general and national specifics of the teacher's personality in different linguistic cultures (Pan & Dmitrieva, 2018; Claxton, 2007); differences in the self-presentation of teachers of foreign languages related to different teaching experience (Collin & Moses, 2017; Filippova & Yashkova, 2012; Levitskaya, 2016), teacher's communicative roles (monitor role, motivator role, language guide role, and social role) (Wang, 2005). The teacher's personality is characterized both as static and dynamic (Sergeeva, 2013), as “always becoming: as constructed through discursive interaction, as the result of discussion and argument, agreement and disagreement, similarity and difference, interaction and negotiation” (Clarke, 2008, p. 24).

This problem is also touched upon in the works devoted to effective teaching (Sevy-Biloon, 2017; Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, Siyabi, & Al-Maamari, 2015; Coombe, 2014; Gan, 2012; Kourieros & Eviripidou; Walkinshaw, 2012; Almazova, Eremin, & Rubtsova, 2016; Almazova, Khalyapina, & Popova, 2017; Popova, Almazova, Khalyapina, & Tretjakova, 2017; Pogodin, & Li, 2017; Zakharova & Krasnoschokov, 2016). Researchers argue that effective teaching depends on the teaching style and classroom management (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Knowles, 1980; Kazemi & Soleimani, 2016) and on the effectiveness of the teacher's communicative behavior (Chory, Horan, Carton, & Houser, 2014; Mazer, McKenna-Buchanan, Quinlan, & Titsworth, 2014; Titsworth, Quinlan, & Mazer, 2010). Teachers believe that one of the ways to create a friendly and productive atmosphere in the classroom is the teacher's self-discourse (Rahimi & Askari, 2016).

Despite of all the above-mentioned articles, national aspect of the teacher's personality has not been taken into consideration. Meanwhile, teachers teach not only languages, but also cultures: “Teaching a foreign language, <...> as a phenomenon of constant student's acceptance of a different culture in the course of language communication, is intercultural” (Berdichevsky, Gianiatullin, Lysakova, & Passov, 2011, p. 9). The worldview attitudes reflected in the structure of the language personality have a great influence on the teaching process, and therefore they can contribute to the optimization of the educational process: “Teachers' beliefs and practices are key components of education and they are important for many reasons.

They provide critical insights for the understanding and improvement of the educational processes” (Collin, & Moses, 2017, p. 1). The given facts prove the actuality of the theme.

2. Problem Statement

In our article we will: define the notion “language personality”, describe the structure of RFL teacher’s language personality, assess the role of national aspect of RFL teacher’s language personality

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What should we understand under the notion “language personality” in pedagogy?
- 3.2. What communicative roles does the RFL teacher play in the classroom?
- 3.3. Why is national aspect of RFL teacher’s personality so important for the effectiveness of the pedagogic process

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to define national specifics of RFL teacher’s language personality levels: verbal-semantic, cognitive, and motivational-pragmatic.

5. Research Methods

The authors use the following methods:

- Analysis of scientific publications on relevant topics;
- Observation of RFL lessons and their assessing;
- Linguistic and cultural analysis in defining the specifics of national aspect of RFL teacher’s personality.]

The term history. The term “language personality” was first used in Russian science by Vinogradov (Vinogradov, 1980), then it was repeatedly clarified and developed by the researchers of various scientific directions, which emphasizes its complexity and relevance. A linguistic person is as a person producing a discourse, a native speaker, using linguistic means of various levels to achieve communicative goals and express ideas (Bogin, 1986; Karasik, 2004; Karaulov, 1987; Krasnyx, 1997; Maslova, 2001; Proxorov, 2006).

The language personality is inherent not only in a real native speaker, who uses the language, but it also characterizes a typical representative of a certain linguistic community and its constituent component - a small speech community. In other words, it characterizes an average native speaker. The language personality of the RFL teacher will be considered as a typical representative of a small speech community who has professional skills and who is a member of a bigger speech community identified as “the Russian language personality”.

Karaulov (1987) argues that the structure of the language personality includes three levels:

1. Verbal-semantic (a zero level. It is related not to the language personality, but to the level of the language proficiency and the preferable language tools. We do not give the reasons why certain units are preferred);
2. Cognitive. It reflects the picture of the world of the speaker;

3. Motivational and pragmatic. It describes the goals and motives of the person's behavior.

The structure of RFL teacher's personality. At the zero level (the verbal-semantic level), the teacher's language personality should have a normative character, since the teacher is an ideal Russian language personality a foreign student should try to copy. This means that the teacher cannot make any mistakes.

It should be mentioned that the teacher can use only a small number of linguistic means due to the fact that students' skills and knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar are related to their level of mastering the language. Anyway, the RFL teacher cannot fully act as a national Russian language personality. So, to provide a verbal communication the teacher chooses the common tactics that are known to students, and slowly introduces them according to the concentric principle. For example, teaching students how to greet people, initially the teacher introduces the most universal greeting "Здравствуйте" (How do you do?), then informal "Привет" (Hi) is introduced, and later the teacher explains that such greetings as "Доброе утро" (Good morning), "Добрый день" (Good afternoon), "Добрый вечер" (Good evening) depending on the time of the day.

At the lexical level of the RFL teacher, teaching the Beginners, international words are preferred: student, hobby, yoga, music (Video 3). So, instead of the word "врач", the teacher is likely to say "доктор" (doctor), instead of "преподаватель" he/she will say "профессор" (professor) (Video 3); instead of "фразеологизм" the word "идиома" (idiom) will be used (Video 5), and the word "томат" is likely to be used instead of "помидор" (tomato) (Video 9). This makes students feel more confident, as they can easily improve their active vocabulary.

The teacher usually uses the terminology connected with the students' specialty. These terms are practiced at the lessons of Russian. However, taking into account the specifics of the Russian language as an academic subject, the RFL teacher often uses philological terms even working with the students of non-philological faculties. Teachers refer to this terminology to explain the linguistic material and to manage the pedagogical process. They use such terms as "помета" / "label", "контекст" / "context" (Video 5); "стиль речи" / "style of speech", "разговорный стиль" / "conversational style", "молодежный сленг" / "youth slang" (Video 10).

The verbal-semantic level of the teacher's language personality has some features that are not inherent in the other types of the language personality. First of all, this refers to the repetitions of the thematic word and of the discussed problem, as well as to the echo-repetition of terms or names (Tarasova, 2012, p. 58-59). The teacher's active vocabulary is also estimated in a different way, because the choice of lexemes is related to the lexical minimum of a certain step of the teaching process.

Teaching the Russian language, first of all, the teacher has to draw the attention of students to the specific use of such personal pronouns as ты-вы, to peculiarities of the formal and informal language (Здравствуйте – Привет / How do you do? – Hi!; До свидания – Пока / Good-bye! – Bye!). In our opinion, at the initial stage it is not admissible for teachers to communicate with students by means of informal language that is easier for students from the point of view of pronunciation and memorizing, as it is inappropriate within the academic discourse (like Привет – Пока / Hi! – Bye!; Открой – Читай / Open - Read). This violation of the rules of communication is as serious as grammar or spelling mistakes.

The teacher, who has a typical Russian language personality, should not break the rules of communication inherent in Russian linguoculture; instead, the teacher has to address students using the personal pronoun Вы and the appropriate formulas of the imperative, greetings, etc.:

Т.: Повторите, пожалуйста / Will you repeat, please (Video 2).

Т.: Скажите, пожалуйста, как у нас говорила Аня? / Tell me, please, what Anya has said (Video 9).

The nonverbal aspect of the teacher's language personality should also be the standard of tolerant behavior. Gestures are interpreted at a subconscious level, so even if students are told what gestures mean in Russian linguistic culture, nevertheless, they will feel uncomfortable if the teacher uses a certain gesture that is offensive in their native linguistic culture. Gestures typical for pedagogical discourse can be offensive. For example, pointing to the student as an invitation to answer the question may be offensive for Africans; and direct eye contact may be insulting for a Chinese student. Nodding your head as an approving gesture and a gesture of agreement, can also be interpreted in the opposite sense by students from Bulgaria, Turkey or Iran.

The gestures used by the RFL teacher in the classroom are predominantly international and depend on the learning situations and the subject. The communicative method of teaching that is popular in the modern methodology restricts the use of the students' native language, so the gestures help students who begin to learn Russian to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words: it is easier to memorize and recognize the new words and to improve the vocabulary.

So, the words of approval like "Молодец" (Well done!) are accompanied by a gesture of "applauding" (Figure 1) (Video 4):



Figure 01. Gesture "Applauding"

Asking a question like "Какой был парад? Хороший?" (Was the parade good?), the teacher uses the "thumb up" gesture (Figure 2) (Video 4):



Figure 02. "Thumbs up" gesture

The gesture in figure 2 is read mainly as "well", but in some national classrooms, for example Irani or Uruguayan can be understood as derogatory. African students can also feel as derogatory an indicative gesture in figure 3:



Figure 03. Indicatory gesture

The RFL teacher's tolerance is expressed in the non-verbal behavior when he/she uses the international gestures to indicate notions or actions:



Figure 01. Gesture "Listening"



Figure 05. Gesture "Farewell"

Intonation is also a non-verbal means of communication, reflecting the national features. Introducing new lexemes, the RFL teacher uses them at the end of the sentence to make them sound more emphatic. To make students understand what he/she says, the teacher speaks slowly (50-60 words per minute), and the new words are pronounced even more slowly and pauses are used. The falling intonation at the end of the sentence is also a distinctive feature of the Russian language. Teachers must observe this norm, in spite of the general tendency that is popular with TV journalists to raise the tone at the end of the sentence like in English. Students of an international group may have a different reaction when the teacher speaks loudly to draw the learners' attention to important information. Some students may think that the teacher cries, which causes a negative reaction (Xromov, 2011).

At the cognitive level, the RFL teacher acts as a translator of the values of Russian linguistic culture. In this case, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the teacher's language personality has a special role as it changes the stereotypes about Russian linguistic culture. In addition, in Russia the RFL teacher helps foreign students to get accustomed to a new linguistic and cultural environment. In addition, the Russian language performs an integrative function in a multi-ethnic group, uniting representatives of different linguistic cultural communities in a team: "Learning the Russian-language model of reality and participating in communication in Russian, representatives of different cultural traditions improve their basic interaction and cooperation skills" (Krotova, 2014, p. 98).

The Russian language is one of the central concepts of the thesaurus level of the language personality of the RFL teacher. To help students develop their language skills, the teacher often underlines that Russian differs from the other languages:

T.: In Russian there are hard and soft consonants, whereas in the other languages the consonants cannot be hard or soft (Video 12).

Teaching students in a mono-national group, the teacher often makes comparisons by means of translation:

T.: In Russian the word *bonjour* sounds as *здравствуйте!* (Video 2).

T.: Do you know what the word "угадывать" means?

S.: I do not know the meaning of "угадывать".

T.: It means "to guess" (Video 18).

Teachers often encourage students to compare the target and the native languages:

T: We will write an essay (*эссе*). Do you always use this word (*эссе*) in Slovak? (Video 11).

The cognitive level of the teacher's language personality should take into account the most sensitive spheres of social life which may cause conflicts. Traditionally, these spheres are related to distribution of gender roles, confessional differences, marriage and family.

The means associated with the teacher's authoritativeness are extremely important for the language personality of the teacher. The authoritativeness is expressed in the strategies the teacher uses to correct mistakes and to sum up the results. The so-called echo-correction promotes a friendly atmosphere: the teacher repeats a wrong word or a phrase using the rising intonation. If the teacher is not sure that the student is able to correct the mistake, he/she gives the right version the student has to repeat:

Teacher (T): Как вас зовут?

Student (S.): А как ... зовут ... Лаура.

T.: Меня зовут Лаура. Повторите, пожалуйста (Video 2).

S.: Четыре лет.

T.: Четыре года. Четыре года (Video 4).

As you can see, the teachers do not make corrections just saying "wrong" ("неправильно", "ошибка"). To draw the student's attention to his/her mistake and to ask him/her to correct it, the teacher can use a gesture:

S.: Я понравился парад.

T: (the teacher is using the gesture of listening).

S.: Мне понравился парад (Video 4).

For the same purpose, the teacher can ask an echo-question emphasizing the wrong word/phrase/part of the sentence:

S.: Мой младший брат – Джозеф. Ему пятьдесят лет.

T.: Сколько лет?

S.: Пятнадцать (Video 16).

At the motivational-pragmatic level, it is important to create an atmosphere of friendliness. Here, the strategies of approval and support are important; so both verbal and non-verbal means are used. However, the teacher should keep in mind that the students' attitude to touches can be different. The

approval tactics is expressed at the lexical-phraseological level (e.g. “Правильно!”, “Замечательно!”, “Здорово!” (Well done!) (Video 1), “Молодцы!”, “Очень хорошо” (Very good!) (Video 2); “Отлично!” (Excellent!) (Video 18).

The tactics of approval work effectively thanks to the use of hyperbolas when teachers assess the abilities of students (T. (addressing students): Dear experts! (Video 13)), and thanks to the use of litotes in reference to the students’ mistakes (T.: In case you make slight mistakes, I will correct them.) (Video 12).

The teacher acts as a communication manager, asking clarifying questions, involving passive students in the polylogue, following the stages of communication, summing up the results:

T: Как вы думаете, какая это женщина? Сколько ей лет? ... То есть, проблема в возрасте? ... Настя, как ты думаешь? (Who do you think this woman is? How old is she?..So you think the main problem is her age? Nastya, what do you think?) (Video 19).

The teacher’s authoritativeness is expressed when the teacher corrects students' mistakes and sums up the lesson. There are some common clichés used to summarize the main ideas: “Таким образом” / “Thus”, “Итак” / “So”, etc. They also characterize the discourse distance of communication.

Friendly atmosphere is created by common tactics, for example, the teacher uses the word "please" (пожалуйста) asking somebody to do something:

T.: Садитесь, пожалуйста / Sit down, please (Video 2).

T.: Маша, прочитайте, пожалуйста / Masha, read it, please (Video 5).

Teachers thank students for giving a correct answer or finish the lesson saying "thank you" (спасибо) or "thank you very much" (большое спасибо):

T.: Всем спасибо / Thanks to all of you (Video 6).

T.: Спасибо большое. Вы хорошо говорите по-русски / Thank you very much. You speak Russian well (Video 7).

The pedagogical communication can be effective if the teacher emphasizes that he/she and the students are one team pursuing the same goals. At the verbal-semantic level, this strategy is implemented by means of using the pronoun “we” (мы) and corresponding verbal forms:

T.: По-русски говорим / We speak Russian (Video 2).

T.: Еще раз повторим / Let's repeat it again (Video 5).

T.: Букву «г» мы читаем как «х» / We pronounce the sound “x” instead of “g” (Video 6).

6. Findings

Summing it up, the specifics of the language personality of modern RFL teacher lies in the following features of its verbal-semantic level:

- Normativeness;
- Limitedness of language units;
- Clearness of speech in terminological, content and structural aspects (international words, general terms, grammar constructions depending on the study level);
- Repetitions which are not perceived as superfluous;
- International gestures;

RFL teacher moulds in students' consciousness understanding of Russian value system and corrects their stereotypes about Russia and Russian people. The central concept here is the concept "Russian Language". On motivational-pragmatic level RFL teacher's language personality acts as the manager of intercultural communication. The main characteristics are authoritativeness and friendliness.

7. Conclusion

The study of the peculiarities of the language personality of the teacher is still relevant. In particular, the problems of parameterization of the language personality and the problems of effective classroom interaction should be discussed within the framework of professional development courses. More attention should be paid to the ways the teacher's language personality influences the language personality of the student. As RFL teachers teach not only languages, but cultures, they should always bear in mind the importance of national aspect of their language personality.

Acknowledgments

The article is published within the initiative theme 050323-0-000 Russian Language in Different Linguistic and Cultural Surroundings

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Videos of RFL lessons

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