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AXIOLOGY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Anna Krupchenko (a)*, Tat'yana Zharkova (b), Kira Inozemtseva (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Moscow Pedagogical State University, National University of Science and Technology
“MISIS”, Russia. E-mail: ak.krupchenko@mpgu.su, 5765744@mail.ru

(b) Financial University, Chelyabinsk, Russia. E-mail: taniafrance@mail.ru

(c) Bauman Moscow State Technical University (BMSTU), Russia. E-mail: ikm@bmstu.ru

Abstract

The article presents a research conducted by Russian pedagogical and technical universities as well as the leading foreign methodologists to define a new concept “Axiology of Foreign Language Education”. The addressing of value orientations to education is dictated by the modern conditions of world globalization and internationalization, when education acquires a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual character, in which foreign language education takes a leading role. The purpose of the study is to present the formation and development of the axiology of foreign language education through analysis of dictionary definitions of such key concepts as “axiology”, “values”, “value orientations”; research of contemporary specifics of modern equal-status intercultural communication with the view of cultural values of the country of the studied language and first culture for the formation of the intercultural competence of a student - socially responsible citizen of his homeland. The axiological guidelines of professional intercultural communication are substantiated within the framework of professional linguodidactics aimed at the developing of a specialist professional competence by means of a foreign language. The research uses both theoretical methods for a comparative analysis of the target concepts presented in scientific issues, their synthesis and scientific forecasting of the introduction of a new pedagogical trend - “axiology of foreign language education”. Thus, the novelty of the study lies in the content of the new concept – “axiology of foreign language education” transformed into the innovative pedagogical practice of value-targeted foreign language education.

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Keywords: Axiology, cultural values, value orientations, axiology of foreign language education, the culture of the country of the language being studied, professional linguodidactics.



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1. Introduction

The system of values that is being formed today among students at all levels of education acts as the basis of social regulation, determining the content of foreign language education, aimed at forming a socially responsible citizens of their homeland. The importance of knowledge of foreign languages has increased in connection with changes taking place in our society related to the processes of internationalization and globalization. According to N.V. Bordovskaya it can be determined as “the process of formation and harmonization of the multidimensional world in all forms of manifestation” (as cited in Zharkova & Sorokovykh, 2017, p. 10).

Since the changes taking place in the social, economic and spiritual spheres of our society, the loss of previously significant values and the emergence of new ones, as in a mirror were reflected in the development of education, including foreign language education. In order to achieve success of various reforms and transformations in the field of education, it is necessary to substantiate the value-targeted priorities of educational activities

2. Problem Statement

We are truly responsible for the future generation. Any changes in society both socio-political and environmental are reflected in the value system, which undoubtedly causes its changes. The beginning of the new millennium, when there was a radical changes of the value hierarchy, was marked by the devaluation of the moral and spiritual values of a man and society. The crisis, which covered all spheres of society (science, culture, religion), could not but affect education. Education must return to people the lost beliefs in moral values. Education, including foreign language education, should help prevent the danger of spiritual degradation of a man and humanity as a whole.

In philosophical, psychological and pedagogical dictionaries and encyclopedias, “axiology” is considered as a doctrine of values, but at the same time, the very semantic content of value representations is different in different cultures and therefore is determined depending on the cultural and historical context, time, era. Values in the French dictionary “Le Robert pour tous” are defined as “valeur - (latin ‘valoir’) ce qui est vrai, beau, bien dans une société: les valeurs morales, sociales, esthétiques” (“Values are that is true, beautiful, good in society: moral, social, aesthetic values” - Our translation - A.K., T.Zh., K.I.) (Le Robert..., 2001, p. 1157). In the German dictionary “Langenscheidt Grosswörterbuch”, the term “Wert” means: “Nützlichkeit und Qualität von etw.; der erzieherische, geistige, praktische Werte von etw. (“Educational, spiritual, practical values” – Our translation – A. K., T. Zh., K.I.) (Haensch & Wellmann, 2010, p. 1250).

From the above definitions it is clear what is very important for the French society - the struggle for democracy, freedom, truthfulness / truth. But for French people who are aesthetes the most important value is love for beauty and coziness, both in society and at home. According to the definition of the German dictionary, we see that for the representatives of German society practical values are very important, values that determine the order (“Ordnung”) everywhere. But spiritual values still prevail over practical. For representatives of Russian culture, there have always been, are and will be spiritual and moral values. The primary task of our Russian education is to educate a highly moral, spiritually rich personality of the student,

a personality morally stable in all aspects, to teach to distinguish true values from false ones. A personality is a carrier of values that motivate and determine his life activity/ behavior /actions.

The basis of axiology is a variety of classifications of values, among which social, personal, and vital values, etc. are of particular importance to us. Learning the world, a person evaluates it in terms of significance for achieving his ideals and satisfying needs. So, to identify the concept of “axiology” on the basis of the above definitions, we consider the doctrine of values, and values, namely moral, cultural, and educational that are especially significant for the spiritual growth and development of a student’s personality in any society.

3. Research Questions

3.1. Axiology of Foreign Language Education: Values of Intercultural Professional Communication

The scientific search for special consideration of the concepts of “foreign language education” and “value orientations”, which had been the subject of research since the end of the last century, today is becoming an object of precise attention. Almost 10 years ago, representatives of the scientific and professional community of the Academy of Professional Development and Retraining of Educators (APK and PPRO, Moscow), as well as a number of pedagogical and technical universities in Russia, near and far abroad, began a focused research of this philosophical and pedagogical concept and the study of ways to transform scientific solutions into innovative practice through the prism of scientific and practical conferences held on the basis of the above mentioned Academy. Scientific results were regularly presented in the framework of published monographs and scientific papers (Krupchenko, 2017; Krupchenko & Kuznetsov, 2017; Krupchenko, 2018; Krupchenko, 2019; Krupchenko, 2020). Currently, in connection with a change in the paradigm of education, as well as with a shift in emphasis towards humanization, the focus is on the personality of a student with his originality, baggage of knowledge. Professor Galskova (2013) points out that “the personality of a student becomes precisely the value object of foreign language education. In the context of the axiological approach, we are talking about a person who is capable and ready for interpersonal and intercultural communication in a studied foreign language, for cognitive activity in a foreign language and, for self-improvement and self-realization to become a highly moral person, responsible to a society, tolerant and empathic one” (p. 7-15). Since the young generation from the end of the last century “looked” at the West, focusing on their values, the university teacher and a foreign language teacher as well, today have the huge task to unlearn the standards and rules of behaviour inherent in Russian mentality, the value of education, industriousness, the ability to independently acquire knowledge according to ‘Long Life Learning’ paradigm.

In the collective monograph “Axiology of foreign language education” (Krupchenko, 2017), the dynamics of value meanings were addressed both to the substantive foundations of foreign language education, requiring innovative methodological support, and to value theoretical dominants of higher education system proved the significance of professionally oriented teaching of foreign languages. It had led to the scientific justification of the methodology of interdisciplinary foreign language education - Professional linguodidactics (Krupchenko, 2018). The further investigation which had been already

considered in the collective monograph (Krupchenko, 2017) stated the axiological aspects of how these aspects evolved into the axiological strategies of the scientific school “Professional Linguodidactics” transforming scientific ideas that reflect key logically structured concepts of the formation and improvement of the process of foreign language professional education into a system of scientific views shared by target professional community. The practical significance of professional linguodidactics is expressed in the need to develop professional competence of a specialist (Inozemtseva, 2017). At present with respect to a market economy, one of the factors of social protection of a future specialist in the field of finance, management and marketing, entrepreneurship and business is a high level of foreign language professional competence to solve professional problems, which directly depend on the success of business contacts with foreign partners, as well as the personal career growth of a specialist (Inozemtseva, 2017). Originated in 2017, the Professional Linguodidactics series continues to present research results on targeted topics. So, the editions of the monographs “The Axiology of Foreign Language Education” (2017) and “The Axiology of Foreign Language Pedagogic Education” (Krupchenko, 2020) revealed the value-targeted ideas of modern language policy, which focuses on multilingualism and multiculturalism, on the task of updating the content of intercultural communication centered on equality. The research of axiology in foreign language education was addressed not only to the diverse aspects of content (interculturalism and professionalization), but also to their multilevel character. According to Kuznetsov, Krupchenko, and Schaveleva (2017), professional linguodidactics reflects all levels of interdisciplinary professional competence of students and specifies the level and value-targeted aspects of secondary vocational (pedagogical) education, the accentuation of which arose as a result of identified deficiencies in the scientific and methodological support of the pedagogical corps. Anzina, Krupchenko, and Kuznetsov (2018) see the solution to this urgent problem in taking into account the Federal educational and professional standards, which present the requirements for professional competence and professional activity of a teacher.

A retrospective analysis of the development of strategies for the axiology of foreign language education is currently completing in a study conducted in December 2019 in the format of the forum “Axiology of foreign language education in the context of preparing a teacher of the future”. The forum was implemented in line with the objectives of the national project “Education” (2019-2024) and considered one of its areas “Teacher of the Future” as a new ambitious task set by the state to identify promising axiological strategies that characterize the teacher of the future. It means a teacher / teacher of a foreign language in the context of realizing the tasks of the new cultural and educational doctrine of the Russian Federation, related to the strengthening of civic identity, with the formation of traditional values and patterns of behaviour for Russian culture. The scale of the tasks, which were considered as a nationally justified challenge to the scientific and professional pedagogical community, prompted an innovative search for breakthrough solutions looking to the future (Krupchenko, 2019). The Forum included an analysis of the state of formation of the value-oriented competencies of a foreign language teacher, which was carried out during the preparation of the Forum. The consolidation of scientific ideas, opinions, approaches in the process of the Forum served as the basis for identifying the conceptual provisions of the axiology of foreign language pedagogical education, which are presented in the materials of the forum (Krupchenko, 2020). During the process of preparation for the Forum, a whole range of research tasks were

realized through the prism of three studies. Thus, an analysis of the essay competition ‘Foreign language teacher of the future’, which was attended by 150 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels — future teachers of a foreign language, demonstrated the importance and impact of computer technology on the educational process, while the authors of the essay claimed that neither machine, no robot can replace the teacher’s personality with his individual approach to each student, human warmth, understanding and support. The competition was evaluated by both teachers and students studying under the program “Creative competitions in foreign language lessons”, and this allowed to take into account the views of the authors of the bilateral educational process. The second and third types of studies included a survey of future teachers / teachers of foreign languages (140 students of the Moscow Pedagogical State University - at the master's and undergraduate level) and representatives of the professional community registered at the Forum (98 profiles), as well as interviewing scientists in the field of foreign language teaching with the involvement of a wide professional community for the consolidation of scientific ideas of scientists from universities in Russia, near and far abroad.

3.2. The practice of introducing axiologically oriented technology into foreign language education

The significance of the axiological aspects of foreign language education in the course of the study determined the need to develop targeted educational and methodological tools for training, for example, young specialists in the field of economics and finance, management and marketing, entrepreneurship and business, who will have to deal with foreign partners in the future. In this situation, specialists should have professional competence in the field of their specialism, focusing on the value-relevant achievements in their country and in the country of a business partner. They must take into account the cultural values of a foreign country for successful business contacts. Teachers should introduce the students with the values of a foreign-speaking society using different teaching aids presenting literature, art, material production, etc.), national characteristics (order and punctuality in the German linguosocium, love of joke and sense of humor - in French): which examines the importance of the formation of such universal human values as responsibility and citizenship using the proposed texts as examples, mercy, compassion passion, etc. The Germans and French highly value education (“Bildung”, “instruction”), implying not only education, but general altruism / erudition.

It is necessary to study the values of a foreign language culture in comparison with the values of its culture, as well as with the ethnic values of its people, which also include traits of a national character, mores and customs, especially speech etiquette.

Comparative, contrasting teaching of a foreign language was also pointed out by German methodological scientists Gerhard Neuner and H. Hunfeld: “... Es ist die Möglichkeit, Einblick in eine fremde Welt zu bekommen und sie mit der eigenen Welt zu vergleichen ...” (“When learning a foreign language, it is possible to get an idea of a foreign world and compare it with your own”. Our translation - A.K., T. Zh., K.I.) (Neuner, 2007, p. 111). A meeting with an alien world takes place against the background of the student’s own cultural life experience or his fragmentary knowledge about it. Their influence on his self-esteem can range from admiration for a stranger and devaluation of his own world to a strict rejection of the “stranger” (cultural shock!). Therefore, the teacher needs to be very careful with the choice of topics.

Further methodologists emphasize that comparing foreign culture with the culture of their country should contribute to thinking and reasoning about what is interesting and attractive in a strange world and what is incomprehensible, alien and even dangerous / awesome (Neuner, 2007, p. 111). Students already understand that in order to support the act of communicating with foreigners and be interesting interlocutors, it is necessary to know the native culture, the culture of their Motherland, as well as the culture of the multinational people of their region. Today, the scientific school “Professional linguodidactics” is promoting the methodology of equal status intercultural communication, which allows students to develop intercultural competence on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and recognition of the values of each country for successful intercultural professional communication. The theory is directly related to the practice of multidisciplinary foreign language teaching (Inozemtseva, Troufanova, & Krupchenko, 2019), proved the need for the use of value-based technologies (Prilipko & Inozemtseva, 2018) reflected in the textbook “English for teachers. Academic English” (Krupchenko, Kuznetsov, & Prilipko, 2019), in which teachers are supposed to be acquainted, learn and master the technologies and techniques for developing interactive professionally oriented tasks (Anzina, Krupchenko, & Kuznetsov, 2018).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study lies in:

- Justification of the formation and development of axiology of foreign language education, its key concepts, analysis of the role of axiology in conditions of multiculturalism and multilingualism in the modern world.
- Updating the content of intercultural communication, focused on an equal dialogue with representatives of different cultures.
- Identification of axiological guidelines of Professional linguodidactics aimed at the formation of professional competence of a specialist by means of a foreign language.
- Providing methodological support to young teachers of a foreign language through the publication of teaching aids, collective monographs, organization of conferences and forums on the issues under study.

5. Research Methods

The study used general scientific methods of theoretical research (comparison and analysis of basic concepts, terms and their characteristics; description; explanation; generalization and systematization, comparison and retrospective analysis).

Theoretical analysis of scientific literature on the topic of research (axiology of foreign language education).

Empirical methods (pedagogical observation, generalization, pedagogical / methodological / linguodidactic experience, processing personal data, essays, creating a video, preparing and conducting the Forum, publishing a collection of materials).

6. Findings

Today's world is involved in global processes that have affected almost all spheres of life. The younger generation will have to live in a new open world, at the intersection of foreign and native cultures. It has led to the relevance of the appeal to the value orientations of education, namely to the justification of the new educational methodology "Axiology of Foreign Language Education".

The value and target orientation of education, taking into account its multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual and socially heterogeneous character, and requiring updated content in the context of the formation of intercultural competence, becomes equal status of intercultural communication, combining the preservation of national identity and mutual respect in the dialogue of cultures.

An appeal to axiological guidelines, fixed in the key provisions of the scientific school "Professional linguodidactics", substantiating the importance of the development of foreign-language professional communicative competence of a specialist.

The presented editions of teaching aids, collective monographs, materials on organizing conferences and forums on the issue of "Axiology of Foreign Language Education" serve as methodological support for young teachers of a foreign language in conducting research, developing manuals, including for those who become specialists in the field of economics and finance, management and marketing, entrepreneurship and business, to ensure successful foreign economic contacts with representatives of other cultures.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to note that:

- The basis of all human values is, as Albert Einstein stated, morality;
- In connection with the change of value orientations, the focus of our precise attention remains on the student's personality, a developed, humane, tolerant, highly educated and highly moral person, a person who is able to live, create in an ever-changing world. The study of a foreign language and culture contributes to the development of a multicultural personality of a student;
- Knowledge of one's own and foreign-language cultures, as well as excellent command of a foreign language for business and professional communication, the ability to maintain contact / intercultural interaction with representatives of various linguistic societies is a solid basis for introducing students to the global values of civilization;
- To solve these and other problems, the study put forward the idea that the basis for teaching foreign languages could be an updated methodology of foreign language education, that is, the axiology of foreign language education, which focuses on an equal dialogue of representatives of different cultures for the successful implementation of the tasks in the field of education, science, business and production. The moral ideal of equality, mutual respect, devotion to one's people and responsibility to the destinies of mankind - all this lies in the content of axiology, which is proposed to be realized in the process of foreign language education.

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