RLMSEE-2020

The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment

LEXIS IN TEACHING CHILDREN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AS NON-NATIVE

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Abstract

This article describes basic principles of selection, organization and presentation of lexis in teaching students the Russian language as non-native. It is noted that the selection of lexical material should be based on: a) the lexical minimum of the system of testing foreign citizens in the Russian language (adjusted for the age of students); b) basic school textbooks. Particular attention is paid to a new, ethnocognitive approach. It is based on taking into account the national peculiarities of the cognitive process and on using linguistic and cultural material that reflects the specifics of the Russian cognitive base and the cognitive base of those peoples whose representatives are studying in the Russian schools. The focus of the study is "the eastern style of thinking", which assumes such features of the cognitive process as synthetic nature, field dependence and scanning control, rigid cognitive control, abstract conceptualization. In this regard, methodological recommendations for working with lexis are offered.

Keywords: Ethnocognitive approach, Lexis, Russian, teaching

1. Introduction

Teaching Russian as a non-native language became relevant for school education about 15 years ago due to the increasing migration flow. Saint Petersburg is a megalopolis that attracts a large number of migrants. Migrant children enter schools without any examination or preparatory language course. Over the past years, the problem of social and cultural adaptation and teaching foreign-speaking schoolchildren has been covered in scientific papers (Gromova & Hayrutdinova, 2017; Nesterova, 2018; Rocheva et al., 2017; Vandyshev, 2019; Zabavnova & Danilova, 2018), and manuals for non-Russian-speaking students have been created. Today, one of the most popular areas of teaching Russian as a non-native language is teaching primary school students. The programs in primary schools allocate teaching time for the lessons of Russian language for foreign students, so the work can be conducted only outside school hours and to a limited extent.

New approaches to the selection of content and presentation of educational materials that would intensify the learning process are becoming popular (Bakulina et al., 2016; Zheleznyakova & Lapteva, 2020). The subject of our study is the acquisition of lexis. Lexis, being the basis of language competence, at the same time acts as the most important means of acculturation, as a comprehension of the cognitive experience of the people occurs through the word.

2. Problem Statement

Lexis is the basis of speech. If 20 years ago and earlier lexical competence was understood as a type of language competence, today researchers are increasingly talking about the integrative nature of lexical competence, which combines both the system characteristics of a word and the background and connotative components. In this regard, the problem arises of finding new approaches to teaching the lexis of Russian as a non-native language in primary school. The ethnoncognitive approach can be effective. It has not previously been considered with reference to younger students.

3. Research Questions

When talking about teaching Russian lexis in primary school, it is important to answer the following questions:
- how should the selection and organization of lexical material be carried out?
- what are the optimal ways of explanation of a meaning?
- which methods of formation of lexical skill can be more effective?
- how should we take into account the ethnic characteristics of the cognitive process of students?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to define the basic principles of selection, organization and presentation of lexis in teaching students Russian as non-native language and to develop vocabulary teaching methodology according to an ethnocognitive approach.

5. Research Methods

The main research methods are the following: the study of theoretical sources, the description, comparison and generalization of material, the analysis of methodological literature, educational programs, and standards for teaching Russian as foreign language and non-native. A special place is occupied by the method of modeling language material for methodological purposes.

6. Findings

It seems that the development of vocabulary of children will be more effective if it is based on an ethnocognitive approach to teaching a non-native language. This approach is based on taking into account national peculiarities of the cognitive process and on using linguistic and cultural material that reflects the specifics of the Russian cognitive base and the cognitive base of those peoples whose representatives are studying at Russian schools.

Researchers turn to the study of cognitive features of foreign language acquisition (Gorshkova, 2017; Verbitskaya et al., 2017). Alexander Shamov and his followers carried out the systematic research of consideration the characteristics of the cognitive process in teaching foreign language and, in particular, vocabulary. The researcher proposed a model for teaching foreign language vocabulary. The model is based on patterns of students' cognitive activity (Shamov, 2006; Solodilova, & Zakharova, 2020). In their works, proponents of a cognitive approach to teaching explore the methodology of foreign languages in middle and high school. Previously teaching Russian to younger foreign-language students has not been considered from the position of a cognitive approach.

When planning work with vocabulary, the teacher first faces the problem of selecting lexical material. It seems that lexis for the lessons of Russian as non-native language in primary school should be selected based on: a) the lexical minimum of the System of testing Russian language for foreign citizens (adjusted for the age of students); b) basic schoolbooks.

According to the State educational standard of Russian as a foreign language (the first level of general proficiency), "achieving this level of Russian language proficiency allows a foreigner to meet the basic communication needs when communicating with native speakers in the social, everyday and socio-cultural spheres" (Andryushina et al., 1999, p. 5). This level is a prerequisite for admission to Russian universities. It seems that a foreign student who entered the 1st grade of a Russian school must have at least a first level of Russian at the end of the 4th grade. However, in addition to the social and cultural spheres, the educational sphere is important. It is obvious that the vocabulary of the existing lexical minimums should be minimized. It is associated with both the age of students and relevant communication situations, as well as with the limitation of study time. For example, such words as *visa, detective, application, student ID, telegram, fax* should be removed from the "Documents, printed materials" topic group of the lexical minimum of the first level.

At the same time, the study should include words, which are used in basic schoolbooks, but are not represented in the lexical minimums for Russian as a foreign language. The texts of schoolbooks are extremely diverse, especially the texts of schoolbooks on reading. Therefore, it is impossible to organize

additional classes to work on studying the entire range of words included in schoolbooks. Non-equivalent, background and connotative vocabulary might be of particular interest in terms of the cognitive approach.

We have analyzed the lexical minimum of Russian as a foreign language for the first level of general proficiency. The purpose of the analysis was to identify which non-equivalent vocabulary is presented in it. The focus on an adult audience is manifested in the fact that among the few non-equivalent words there are words that are not relevant for modern primary school students: *Soviet, zakuska*. Such non-equivalent words of the lexical minimum as *dacha, kefir, kopeyka, otchestvo, pirozhok, samovar, borsch* are necessary for foreign students. However, it would be wrong to use only these words for classes in Russian as a non-native language because non-equivalent vocabulary is also found in schoolbooks. For example, in schoolbooks for grade 1 "The World Around Us" and "ABC", in addition to geographical names that also belong to non-equivalent vocabulary (Rus', Moscow, Volga, Uglich, etc.), there are words such as Maslenitsa, Duma, Ded Moroz, Kremlin, terem, bogatyr, Tsar, tsarevna, baranki, compote, avos', kak-nibud', etc.).

In our opinion, focusing on geographical names is not advisable in correction course since geographical objects are specifically studied at school. Other non-equivalent words that are reflected in school literature should be included in correction course on Russian as a non-native language both for forming communicative competence and for acculturation of foreign speakers.

The selected lexical material should be presented in accordance with the situational and thematic principle. It is important that the development of new vocabulary during the lesson of Russian as a non-native language precede its appearance in the main school course. This must be observed for words with a cultural component. Such an advance will prevent difficulties that would inevitably arise in the absence of preliminary work. For example, in the second topic of the schoolbook "The World around Us" for grade 1, the non-equivalent word *Maslenitsa* is used. Children are asked to describe the holiday using photo without prior explanation. There is a photo of a snow town, which does not seem apt for perception by foreign speakers. During the lesson of the correction course, the word should be presented in a more relevant context, for example, using the image of a Maslenitsa scarecrow, around which the celebrants dance.

In the subsequent stages of studying, the context can be verbal: oral or written, and one or two sentences are enough. For example: *Vo dvore nikogo ne bylo, no ya vyshel gulyat': avos' druz'ya pridut.*The best ways of semanticizing are illustration and translation, which is associated with the age of students and low level of Russian language proficiency. Teachers rarely know the native languages of migrant children, so they can use bilingual dictionaries for translation. Illustration and explanation should be used together. The explanation should be simple for students, and certain simplifications are allowed, for example, some semes may be omitted, they will be learned later: *Maslenitsa is a Russian holiday that sees off winter and meets spring*; *Terem - high house, usually wooden, was so called in Russia before.*

In some cases, elements of word-formation analysis can be included at the semantisation stage*: You now know what a terem is. What is a teremok?*

In grades 3-4, an effective technique for learning non-equivalent vocabulary is to keep a dictionary in which students write down new words and a brief explanation.

The next stage is the direct formation of lexical competence: it is important that children realize a new word, pronounce it correctly and use it as many times as possible, including in context. As foreign-speaking first-graders usually do not know how to read and write, the exercise options are few. In addition, the adjustment course involves some minimization of educational material due to the limited number of hours (usually 2 hours per week), so it is not advisable to introduce additional material that is not relevant at this stage when learning one non-equivalent word. For example, if we talk about the holiday of Maslenitsa in more detail, it is inevitable to turn to such difficult words for foreign speakers as pancakes, stuffed animals, and sledges. However, not all these attributes of the holiday are presented in the schoolbook "The World around Us" as part of the study of the topic, so the corresponding words can be learned later.

The following and other tasks and exercises are possible:

- repeat after the teacher using illustration: Maslenitsa. Eto Maslenitsa. Maslenitsa - eto prazdnik;

- questions, in full answer it is necessary to use the right word: (pointing to the illustration): Kak nazyvaetsya etot prazdnik? Chto takoe Maslenitsa? Kogda prazdnuyut Maslenitsu? Kakoe vremya goda vstrechayut vo vremya Maslenitsy? Ty ran'she prazdnoval Maslenitsu?

- tasks on listening comprehension with the use of dolls: listen and answer the questions:

- Privet, Katya! Kuda ty idesh'?

- Privet, Amina! Ya idu na Maslenitsu.

- Chto eto?

- Eto prazdnik. My budem provozhat' zimu i vstrechat' vesnu. Poidem vmeste!

- S udovol'stviem!

Kto eto? Kuda idet Katya? Chto takoe Maslenitsa? Ty khochesh' poiti na Maslenitsu?

- riddles:

Maslenitsa k nam prishla,

I blinov v dar prinesla.

Eto znachit, chto, Zima,

Ukhodit' tebe pora.

Chto prikhodit k nam ona,

Dolgozhdannaya ... .

If foreign speakers are able to read and write, the exercise options can be more diverse: insert a missing word; connect pictures and names; read a story about ..., find the word ..., explain its meaning and make a sentence with it, and so on.

Learning non-equivalent vocabulary provides good opportunities for creating a dialogue of cultures in class. For example, you can ask students the following questions*: Is there a holiday in your home country that you spend the winter with? How is it called? What are you doing on this holiday?*

The best method for forming a communicative competence is a role-play: *Imagine that you go to school on Maslenitsa celebration and meet your friend. He does not know what Maslenitsa is. Explain and ask him to, come with you.*

One of the most important principles of the ethnocognitive approach is the principle of consciousness. It is implemented, in particular, when introducing background and connotative vocabulary

in comparison with units of the native language, when working with lexical lacunae (for example, relationship terms). So, in Russian, children's children are *vnuki*, and in Kazakh, there are separate words for the designation of grandchildren on the line of the son (*nemere*) and children of the daughter (*zhien*). In this regard, students with a native Kazakh language may avoid using the word *vnuki* under the influence of overdifferentiation.

In order for effective work on vocabulary, it must be carried out in accordance with the features of the "Eastern" style of thinking, characterizing foreign schoolchildren in Russia. We have systematized the available scattered experimental data (Nisbett et al., 2011; Zhang, 2002; Zhirnova, 2012; Zhumagalieva, 2002) and we have identified the features of the "Eastern" style of thinking that can be taken into account in the process of teaching vocabulary:

synthetic nature: words should be presented in the most typical and indicative context, since students do not pay attention to details;

- - field dependence and scanning control: presenting words in the context, the selection of a new word, its semantization and grammatical characterizing should be carried out by the teacher, as it will be difficult for the student to select the necessary element from the context and analyze it;
- rigid cognitive control: listening, speaking, reading and writing should replace each other with minimal frequency in the process of learning vocabulary, as it is difficult for this students to change the ways of processing information;
- abstract conceptualization: it is important to include words in groups in accordance with various criteria: topic, semantics, grammatical features, so the vocabulary will be learned more effectively.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the ethnocognitive approach to teaching children lexis of a non-native language determines:
- the selection of lexical material,
- the ways of its presentation,
- forms of fixing.

The course of Russian as a non-native language in primary school should include the words from the lexical minimum of Russian as a foreign language for the first level of general proficiency, as well as words used in textbooks on school subjects. The learning of these words during the lessons of Russian as a non-native language should precede the introduction of these words in other school lessons. It will have a positive impact on the results of studying not only Russian, but also other subjects. Words should be presented in accordance with the situational and thematic principle, necessarily in a typical context, while the teacher should carry out semantic and grammatical characterization. The best ways of semanticizing are illustrations, explanation, and translation. In the process of fixing lexical material, words should be included in groups in accordance with thematic, semantic and grammatical criteria. During tasks and exercises, the types of speech activity should alternate with a minimum frequency.

Acknowledgments

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