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Native Language Teaching to the Siberian Peoples in Conditions of the New Language Situation

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Abstract

The reason for the relevance of the studied issue is a new language situation: firstly, native languages disappear from the sphere of everyday communication among small Siberian aboriginal peoples; secondly, theoretical, content-technological and research-methodical aspects of the native language teaching to the school students are insufficiently developed. The goal of the article is to develop a new model of the teaching of native languages as non-native ones and the approbation of this model. The main method of studying of this issue is modeling allowing examination of this issue as of a process of the purposeful and conscious formation of the school students' language competence. The article represents the model of the native language teaching at school including the program and methodical support, in which forms and rules of the studied language use pass to the level of automatic use, i.e. to the sphere of the unconscious. Received results of the learning using this program confirm its successfulness in conditions of the disappearance of original and rare languages of Siberian aboriginal peoples. The represented program allows organization of the language teaching on the base of communicative centrism and intensive technologies, raises the degree of the learners' motivation to study a native language.

Key words: native languages, studying of endangered languages, intensive teaching method, native languages of the small Siberian aboriginal peoples.

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Introduction

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Languages of the Siberian peoples – the Shor and the Teleut – are on the verge of disappearance and belong to the “alarming” group of languages. Up to 2019, the number of school students speaking a native language was 2.4 %. According to the Federal State Educational Standard, native languages function actively, while most of them in the regions of the North and Siberia are studied through the methods used for the studying of a “foreign” or a “non-native” language. The base of the authorial methods of such teaching includes the language as a system, communicative relevance of the grammatical constructions, their own practical experience, the world practice of the intensive learning, and, unfortunately, existence and relevance of this spontaneous pedagogical search does not yet have a support in the Russian education normative field. The Federal State Educational Standard points the following requirements among the requirements for the objective results of studying of the main educational program for the sphere “Philology”, “Native language”: *“formation of the initial knowledge of language as a base of the national identity; learners’ understanding of the fact that the language is a phenomenon of national culture and the main means of human communication; possession of the initial knowledge of the norms of one literary language, etc.”*.

However, considering the number of the language speakers, the realization of these requirements becomes virtually impossible for Kemerovo Oblast; besides, the very term “native language”, in this connection, is not adequate for the situation. The proposed standard is aimed at the students speaking a native language, i.e. for the students already having the language, speech, and communicative competencies, for the students who grew up in a particular language and cultural environment. These school students just need to systematize their knowledge through the learning of the main morphological, syntactical, and word formation rules and to learn to read and write correctly.

During the process of teaching *the children speaking the language*, the teacher “switches on” the language reflection of his/her students, i.e. the teacher directs their consciousness to the comprehension of their speech acts. Unfortunately, despite the existence of standards and numerous programs of teaching of the Russian Federation native languages, it is possible to study the Shor language according to this model only in 1–2 schools of the region (mainly, in the remote villages) because the basic curriculums of these schools include teaching hours for the native language learning in the invariant part. However, there are normative difficulties here as well: as federal standards of teaching of the Siberian peoples’ native languages do not exist, it seems impossible to teach the language in the invariant part.

The modern Shor children who grew up separated from the language of their ancestors do not have above-named competencies. That is why programs of the native language studying for the “speaking” students should be fundamentally different from the programs for the children studying the language as a non-native one in the aspects of the content and working techniques. In the same part of the Federal State Educational Standard (“Philology”), it would be more appropriate to use requirements for the standard “Foreign Language” providing “possession of the initial skills of the oral and written communication with the foreign language speakers on the base of personal speech abilities and needs; learning the speech and non-speech behavior rules; learning the initial linguistic notions necessary to use the foreign oral and written speech, broadening of the linguistic horizons”.

The goal of the social efforts and pedagogical experience in the Kuzbass schools is to provide the process of the Shor language preservation with the studying methods corresponding to the time and language situation. They include, primarily, orientation to the intensive technologies of studying the non-native and foreign languages, communicative orientation in the studying of the language structure, and the correspondence between the ethnic identity formation and the motivation to study the language. In such

language teaching, the teacher has a super-task: to move the system of the studied language's forms and rules to the level of *automatic* use, i.e. to the sphere of the unconscious. Specially developed textbooks and study guides, specific classroom work and other factors should contribute to it. In such approach to learning of the language, the intensification and communicative centrism become the main principles.

Methods

The following methods were used during the study: theoretical (analysis; synthesis; concretization; generalization; analog method; modeling); diagnostic (questionnaire; interview; testing; method of aims and tasks); empirical (studying of the educational institutions' work experience, normative and educational-methodical documentation; pedagogical observation); experimental (stating, forming, and control experiments).

Literature review

The work on the theory of teaching a non-native language as a scientific field from the standpoint of the basic methodology of disciplines: pedagogy, psychology, linguistics, sociology, cultural studies. The patterns of the construction of the process of learning oral and written communication in T. M. Balykhina, the problems of learning the native languages of peoples of the North in the works of A. L. Aref'ev, N. B. Vakhtin, V. P. Marshmallowey, O. N. Pustogacheva. It is revealed that the problems of studying the languages of the indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia are the same and require a common approach to solving the problem of their preservation in the situation of disappearance, the basics of methods of studying languages that have become non-native.

The experimental base of the study

The experimental base of the study were Novokuznetsk Institute-Branch of Kemerovo State University and educational institutions of Kemerovo Oblast.

The study of the issue had three stages.

The first stage included theoretical analysis of the existing methodological approaches in the philosophical, psychological, and pedagogical research literature, theses on the issue, and of the theory and methods of the native language teaching; definition of the problem, goal, and methods of the study, preparation of the experimental research plan. The study involved the examination of the territories' experience of the revitalization of disappearing languages in the educational practice.

The stage of modeling involved the development of the study guide "Эзеноктап!" for the first year of learning, for the students who do not speak the native language. The study guide made according to the intensive communication principle includes twenty thematic sections for 120 teaching hours for the language teaching at the elementary level (A1). The study guide has such appendices as the collection of tests, video and audio materials, and the workbook for the game tasks. The study guide allows satisfaction of the elementary communicative needs during the communication with the language speakers in a minimal set of situations. The vocabulary volume of the elementary level reaches 800 units. Such learning of a language allows satisfaction of the elementary communicative needs during the communication with the language speakers in a minimal set of situations. The model implies its realization in the groups of different age, in non-educational groups, in the variable part of the curriculum, in the system of additional education, at the special courses for young and adult people wanting to learn the language.

At the end of the *elementary level (survival level)* course, a person learning the Shor language should:

- begin the communication, introduce himself/herself to people, greet people, say goodbye, thank people, apologize;

- ask questions, tell about facts or events, about an action, an object;

- express desires, a request, a proposal, agreement and disagreement, etc.

The program made according to this model involves the construction of the grammatical matrices – examples of texts in real communication. Generally, it is a language level implying knowledge of the main grammatical models and everyday lexical topics. This level forms the language (linguistic), communicative (ability to communicate in different situations), and speech (skills and abilities to construct the speech correctly, according to grammatical models) competencies of the students.

Variable culturological content of the extracurricular activities (students' active participation in holidays; project, creative, and research activities, etc.) may support the learning of the language; language learning programs may be complex as well as thematic.

Therefore, the program developed according to the model of the intensive Shor learning is *a document based on the world experience of the intensive learning of a language as a foreign one, on the Federal law on additional education and requirements for the additional education programs realized in the system of extracurricular activities or in the system of additional education.*

Topics that were chosen for the learning concern everyday communication: introducing oneself, family, nature, count, weather, condition, etc. At the end of the first year of learning, a student (a course participant) should:

- be able to introduce himself/herself fluently, to ask a question to the interlocutor, to ask about his/her condition, to initiate a dialogue, to make a short story about himself/herself, about his/her family, etc.;

- know some features of the derivation of personal forms of the Present Tense verb (singular and plural), features of animacy and inanimacy, features of the plural nouns' endings, etc.

This study guide organizes the learning of the Shor language grammar in the *system of speech examples (models)*. Each speech example is concrete because it has a form of a question and a simple sentence; a student can make 8–10 phrases using its model. It allows the compact representation of the language grammatical system without overcharging a student with extensive explanations.

In some exercises of the study guide, basic unit for the construction of the system of speech examples is a *text* containing answers to the asked questions necessary to find and represent. The representation of the phrase does not change its construction; otherwise, this variant is examined as an independent speech example.

The work with speech examples allows compact and quick representation of the grammatical material and organization of the training exercises. However, the main aspect of the learning is the work with a text and a studied grammatical model. At first, students should see the text, understand its sense, and learn a new grammatical form. Further, it is necessary to train grammatical forms found in the text in different types of the speech activity (in reading, writing, listening, and speaking), i.e. to automatize them.

The structure of the study guide allows each teacher to “broaden” it with his/her additional materials, tasks, texts for the work.

The issue of the Shor language dialects (Mrassk and Kondomsk ones) remains a special issue in the preparation of the study guide and the program. Considering teachers' disagreements on some lexical and grammatical units, we reserved the right to use literary norm or to note dialect character of a word form, because we hope that during the organization of learning process a teacher may comment these cases

of discrepancy or use “Shor grammar” by N.P. Dyrenkova, “Shor grammar” by E.F. Chispiyakov, the dictionary by N.N. Kurpeshko-Tannagasheva and F.Y. Aponkin, study guides by I.V. Shentsova, etc. In this model, it is possible to consider group learning as the most effective form of learning (due to the formation of situations close to the real communication) and the game (business, role, communicative, etc.) as the most effective type of activity. In addition, students’ project activity should include linguistic expeditions, linguistic excursions, translation of texts of the modern pop songs into the native language, etc.

Understanding of the fact that the communicative environment means people and speech allowed us to define the aims of the additional conditions of the program realization:

- organization of the speech interaction between language speakers and students;
- use of mass media in the language teaching practice;
- design of socially significant language events implying the growth of the significance of the native language and the motivation to learn it at the levels of a region, a city, a settlement.

Each language learning level contains a description of its own results. Following the world experience of the division of the language levels, we use the following classification as a base. The first level is the level of a beginner (before the grammatical case, “survival level”). At this level, a student learning the language can understand some everyday, commonly used phrases, etiquette formulae; he/she is able to read short advertisements, to introduce himself/herself, to ask simple personal questions, for example, “Where do you live?”, “Where are you from?”, to answer such questions. If a language speaker speaks slowly, clearly, as in the training audio lessons, it is possible to understand words studied at this level while hearing.

At the elementary, second level, a student can understand texts on such common topics as family, shopping, work, and others, communicate using simple syntactical constructions. At this level, it is possible to distinguish several familiar words, phrases in the flow of speech to understand general sense of a statement.

At the third, intermediate level, it is possible to understand general sense of the clear speech on common, familiar topics linked to the everyday life (work, studying, etc.), to tell about events, a student’s plans, hobbies, desires, etc., to write a short text about himself/herself.

The level “upper-intermediate” allows a speaker to understand the general sense of a complicated text on concrete and abstract topics, including professional topics, to speak with language speakers rather fluently, without pauses.

The next three levels (levels B2, C1, C2 in the world classification) are levels implying confident use of the language except some phraseological, colloquial formulae requiring special knowledge. These levels allow fluent reading of fiction, understanding of irony and implicit senses.

The program pays special attention to the forms of control. Control in the Shor language learning is the determination of the language level reached by students during a certain period of learning. Besides, control is a part of the lesson when a teacher estimates the level of students’ knowledge of the learned material. Control allows the teacher to get information about results of the work of the group of students as a whole and each student in particular, about results of the teacher’s work (helps to improve his/her work seeing its advantages and disadvantages); the teacher knows the level of his/her progress in the program realization and of the efficiency of his/her methods. As for students, control promotes the formation of learning skills, helps them to improve their knowledge, promotes systematic and stable knowledge, forms student’s orientation in results of his/her work, promotes the repetition of the material, forms students’

responsibility for their work.

In the learning of the Shor language, as well as in the learning of any language, there are some requirements for the control: it should be purposeful, objective, systematic, etc.

Forms of control, i.e. ways of the interaction between the teacher and the student revealing the level of knowledge of the foreign language material and the level of the required students' competencies, include the system of sequential, connected diagnostic actions of the teacher and students providing feedback in the learning process aimed to the getting of the information on the successfulness of learning and the organization of learning activity.

Forms of control may be written and oral, individual and group (pair). In the program, we offer texts for dictation, texts for copying, tests as forms of the written survey of group control, quests for the Shor language intensive learning textbook of the elementary level (Konovalova, Chaykovskaya, 2017). The study guide includes several types of texts for dictation added to each thematic part of the textbook, according to the course and logic of the lesson (introduction of the new knowledge, fixation, systematization, generalization, etc.). There are creative, distributive, graphical, selective, preventive types of texts for dictation.

All parts of the program have video appendices containing records of real communication.

During the preparation of the language contents of the program, the following factors were objects of attention: the history of the ethnos, features of the language situation, social conditions (historical past often causes the reduction of the number of language speakers), level of motivation to learn the language inside the ethnic group.

The industrial history of Siberia determines ethnical processes typical for the modern Shors. It is possible to note not only the assimilation of cultures and language but also the formed marginalization of the ethnos among results of industrial development of territories of the traditional nature use of Shors (Borina, 2012). The following economic changes caused it: deprivation of the right to land property and to the main production means property; growth of kolkhozes in the middle of the 20th century leading to the residents' resettlement from small villages to larger ones; the activity of Gorshorlag up to the fifties.

Generally, the economic growth priority replaced sustainable development of small aboriginal peoples having their own sources of existence and preservation of culture.

After the abolition of the district, the actualization of construction of the railway, mines, West-Siberian Metal Plant, etc. led to the elimination of issues of the education and language almost for fifty years. Some residents of the villages went to the construction objects, to the cities, other residents deprived of the generic territories of hunting and traditional crafts had to resettle to the larger settlements.

Within fifty years, traditional Shor culture not only assimilated but also completely passed to another cultural environment adapted to the reality of the industrial, social, and cultural modern life: nowadays, there are no traditional Shor buildings, elements of the ethnic costumes in the everyday clothes in the remote villages, while the villages themselves seem dying; young people focus on the employment in the large cities; villages do not have clubs, medical centers, shops.

It is noticeable that examples of folklore disappear from the oral tradition, the memory of people. Only household stories of hunters, stories of elderly people about spirits of places, the taiga host, the water host, some beliefs, signs still exist. The major part of this folklore legacy was fixed only in literary texts, scientific and literary publications based on the materials of the work with informants of the 50s – 60s. People partly preserved the language as the means of communication only in the conditions of Shors' local life; as a rule, these conditions exist in the country territories, in cities with the population not over 50 000,

in the remote villages of the region. Only there these conditions provide the full succession of generations due to a child's participation in the everyday cultural life: hay harvest, picking pine nuts, beekeeping, keeping horses, fishing, traditional kitchen culture (Arakchaa, 2005; Konovalova, 2017). In the places of the ethnic group's local life, the percentage of Shor students is higher than the percentage of students of other ethnic groups; thus, the presence of such subjects as "Native Language", "Native Literature" in curriculums, extracurricular activities of ethnic character do not raise doubts of the parents, students, and teachers (representatives of the ethnic group as well). In these settlements, social organizations appear and take a direct part in problems of national education, along with the education management bodies. Often they initiate events of the ethnic orientation: work in cultural centers, clubs, the organization of holidays, meetings with elders, ecological paths, local city and village competitions, linguistic camps, priorities in the publication of children's literature, etc. In the places of local life, society realizes programs and journalistic projects in the native language or dedicates them to the life and problems of Shors.

Another feature of the educational system in these settlements is the system of studying in the boarding schools and schools in the remote villages with the population not over 600.

The system of studying in the boarding schools developed in the region from the middle of the 20th century when the abolition of small villages started while industrial development of Kuzbass led to the resettlement of the population to larger villages and cities. The number of children and, accordingly, schools considerably reduced in such villages, and, in the early 21st century, the studying of children from the villages located over 30 km away from city centers fully turned into the studying in boarding schools. Curriculums of these educational institutions focus on the system of the ethnic-oriented additional education: musical studios teaching to play national musical instruments, national choreography, active participation in the national competitions and holidays, studying of the native language and literature in 1–9 forms, interaction with representatives of the social organizations, and general supervision over the life-support issues performed not only by educational bodies but also by representatives of the territory administration responsible for national issues. All these factors allow making the native language learning more effective and methodically complete.

Results

At the end of the first year of studying according to the program, school students could fluently begin the communication with language speakers at the "survival level", introduce themselves, greet people, say goodbye, thank people, apologize, ask questions, tell about facts or events, about an action, an object, express desires, a request, a proposal, agreement and disagreement, feelings and emotions, etc. The motivation to learn the native language increased.

Debatable issues

Studying of the psychological and pedagogical literature allowed reveal the issue of the teaching of the disappearing languages belonging to the Siberian small aboriginal peoples, noting of the methodologists' and linguists' disagreements in the opinions about methods of the teaching of native languages as foreign ones; different historical and cultural conditions of existence of a certain ethnos, variety of levels of the language situation in regions caused it. There are regions where native languages remain in the sphere of the everyday family communication, regions where native languages have the status of "the second official" languages, and regions, which do not have languages of small aboriginal peoples in the communication because of the assimilation with other nationalities. Works by E.N.

Chaykovskaya represent the analysis of different social and cultural conditions of the languages' functioning and ways to solve the problem of the preservation of the language in the educational practice in details.

Conclusion

The project is one of the first projects for languages of the Siberian aboriginal peoples. It allows speaking about its successfulness in conditions of the disappearance of the original and rare languages of Siberian aboriginal peoples and will continue for the second and further years of learning with more difficult material. In the fourth year of study, school students should know the language at the level C2. The experiment has shown that effective learning of the language material rises the degree of the motivation to learn the native language.

Recommendations

This project will be interesting in those regions and for those ethnic groups, which have disappearing languages. The intensification of the learning material within a short period will allow providing of learning of the language in any learning group, the organization of the school students' independent work, self-control of the knowledge. Students' participation in the national holidays, in the project and creative activities, the native language communication should support the learning of the language. The volume of the practical part (communication with the language speakers, watching video materials, creating texts) should be not less than 100 teaching hours and have a form of project work.

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