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LANGUAGE TEACHING OPTIMIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL VOCABULARY INTEGRATION INTO INTRODUCTORY AND PHONETIC COURSE

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Abstract

The issue of optimizing the foreign language teaching in the era of globalization is presented. The authors gave an insight to the history of linguomethodological studies in the context of the stated issues. The optimization of learning and its positive and negative sides are analysed. The natural prerequisites to optimization new forms at the present stage of development of linguodidactics and methods of teaching foreign languages are presented. The authors discussed the factors affecting the choice of optimal language learning strategies. The article points to ways for the further improvement in the efficiency of language teaching in another country. The necessity of improving the existing methods of teaching foreign language vocabulary is substantiated. Internationalisms are described as a polylingual phenomenon of language contact with its function and place in language systems. The most important characteristics of internationalisms as a possible resource of intensifying the study of Russian vocabulary, graphics, phonetics and spelling are noted. The frequency of using this word class in speech communication is studied. The study is based on frequency dictionaries and educational lexical minima in Russian as a foreign language. The method of integrating the international vocabulary of students into the curriculum of the introductory and phonetic course of Russian as a foreign language is proposed. The methodological substantiation of this learning strategy is given. Methodical recommendations are expressed for teachers on the implementation of internationalism in the work on the sound-letter and rhythmic side of Russian speech.

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a priori a long and difficult process. At the same time, linguopedagogics has always sought to accelerate it because of the acute needs for urgent mastering of the language, mainly for the purposes of professional intercultural communication. In fact, the history of foreign language teaching methodology has developed by the action of this need. The historical and methodical way from the grammar-translation method to the communicative active one represents attempts of successful language using as a tool of interethnic communication. The appearance of natural, direct, conscious-comparative, conscious-practical, various non-direct, communicative, combined and intensive methods in the long run aimed to accelerate the formation of foreign language skills, improve the efficiency of learning, thereby making the mastery of a foreign language optimal in terms of time.

Today, when the technique has great experience in solving a whole complex of linguistic and pedagogical problems, when the communicative direction in language learning has become a linguistic and methodical axiom, it does not seem possible to pay attention to the development of linguistic competence only. Linguistic and cultural aspects of the language should be analyzed. Finally, when the intercultural issues have already been seriously studied, one of the fundamental objects of linguistics become relevant. Linguistics aims to intensify the teaching practice, to accelerate a long process of mastering a foreign language at different educational stages. And it is not just a “methodical whim”. The desire for such a methodology improvement is based on a conceptual epistemological basis; the need for accelerated learning becomes a necessity, even an obligation, when it comes to prospects and ways of knowing the world around. Learning optimization is a requirement of time, a condition for the further development of mankind and covering knowledge in various fields of science and other types of human activity. It is known that, language undoubtedly plays a primary role in the process of acquiring knowledge about the world (including through communication). Foreign language is no less important in the modern world, being a resource of interethnic exchange of information, cultural values, diplomacy, establishing foreign economic relations, etc.

The importance of intensifying learning is also due to the linguodidactic factor in the development of the linguistics. With the expansion and deepening of the language study in order to learn, the volumes of information necessary for studying are growing, and the requirements for mastering various skills and competences are multiplied. The very improvement of teaching a foreign language, the improvement of ideas about language as a resource of intercultural communication leads to the need to optimize the processes of teaching and learning.

The situation is complicated and, paradoxically, the sociological and sociolinguistic realities of our epoch simultaneously contribute to its resolution. Globalization processes of social life form a completely new communication space.

On the one hand, globalization needs to create a language of global communication (which today is relatively successful in English), which, it must be said, is partly ensured by globalization. The tendency towards a “confusion of languages”, which can lead to the emergence of a interlanguage code unified for different peoples is increasing. The study of these phenomena and the problems of creating artificial languages is engaged in an interlinguistics. The natural prerequisite for the emergence of a “unilingual”
interethnic means of verbal communication are today becoming the internationalization of the vocabulary in the systems of multi-structural languages.

On the other hand, the international linguistic situation in the context of globalism in a new way sharpens the problem of linguacultural self-identification of nations. It causes a fierce struggle of nations for their cultural and linguistic uniqueness, which prevents the linguistic unification of the planet. This further complicates the problem of intercultural communication. That is why today the educational policy of both the European Union and other countries has taken a course on compulsory education of multilingualism of the linguistic personality. It meant an adaption to the conditions of modern multilingual and multicultural communicative and educational space. An example is the creation in Europe of the multilingual educational project “EuroCom”, the introduction of a second foreign language as a program in Russian schools, etc.

These realities of our time show social need for a method of accelerated learning of a foreign language. A foreigner learning a language must improve his language skills to avoid communication problems at all levels of activity and to be successful in the modern conditions of a globalized labor market. But is it possible in a timely manner to achieve a high level of proficiency in the language, if you stretch its study for many years? Apparently not.

At the same time, from the point of view of the methodology, it is obvious that super-intensive foreign language courses without working out skills and deep penetration into the language cannot bring the expected high results and have only a purely marketing appeal. A serious methodological disadvantage of all currently existing intensive methods is the fragility of mastering the vast amounts of linguistic information using various kinds of communicative or psychotherapeutic technologies. The solution of this problem to modern methodologists is seen in the consciousness of learning, which is precisely the stumbling block in the improvement of short-term intensive methods aimed at the unconscious learning of material by students.

Nevertheless, for those who strive for “perfect knowledge” of a foreign language, the prolonged conscious-comparative method with the mandatory communicative orientation of educational speech activity remains indispensable. At the same time, the very basis of such an approach contains considerable potential resources for the intensification of learning. It is a support in the student’s native language and an intensification of the language speculation mechanism. From this point of view, perhaps, the best model of an optimized method of teaching a foreign language is the method of national-language orientation of V. N. Wagner (Wagner, 2001). In the aspect of intensive language learning, the advantages of this methodology are the following methodological strategies.

“Similar facts are reduced or are omitted altogether (determination of the meaning of similar grammatical categories, functions of sentence members). With the existing differences, linguistic phenomena appear completely. Especially it is the material presented in detail that has no analogies in the source language. The rules of denial indicating that there is no phenomenon in the Russian language when it exists in the language of students are included” (Wagner, 2001, p. 16).

In the book of the Russian methodologists Kapitonova, Moskovkin and Schukin, (2008) “Methods and technologies of teaching Russian as a foreign language” gives a qualified assessment of this methodology: “It is preferable to use it if the training is carried out in a monolingual group, on the basis of
a nationally-oriented textbook and if the teacher speaks the native language of the students. Under these conditions, the technique provides a significant increase in the intensity and effectiveness of training, as it makes possible to increase the amount of educational material and reduce the time it takes to study it; achieve more accurate and faster perception and deeper learning; provide a positive transference and overcome the negative influence of the native language.” (p. 134)

It seems natural to view the lexical composition of a foreign language from a position of reliance on the students’ native language. This article proposes a method for integrating the international lexicon into the materials of the initial stage of education as an attempt to further optimize the process of forming a secondary linguistic personality of students.

Following the principle of reliance on the students’ native language, it is necessary to preliminarily determine the linguistic addressee of the method proposed here. First, it will include people for whom the languages of the Romance-German group are native, partly people with Slavic native languages, as well as those who are sufficiently fluent in at least one of the languages of the Romance-Germanic group as the second language of communication. It may seem that it limits the target audience, but it is necessary to consider the prevalence on the continents of the Spanish and the international communication status of the English language. Thus, the method of integrating the international vocabulary of students, while not being universal, still retains the features of a kind of “global” methodological direction in teaching a foreign language.

2. Problem Statement

Even at the present stage of methodical science development, the main problem of linguadidactics remains the fact that the student speech in the new language is bad for a long time. Attempts by a foreigner to use someone else’s language as well as his own face with lack of language competence. The lexical side of speech for many months (and even years) remains constrained. It is limited by the prescribed education program. This deprives a foreigner of the freedom to use a language; it alienates him from intercultural communication. It would take too much time for enough words to accumulate in a foreigner’s lexicon in order to speak confidently in a new language.

Recognizing the interaction of vocabulary and grammar in the process of speech generation required for successful communication, the enormous role of lexical diversity in speech activity should be noted. It makes up perhaps 90% of the language material in speech in comparison with the grammatical component. However, the role of grammar should not be underestimate because of its key place in teaching a foreign language. Maybe, the lack of attention to the lexical richness of speech at all stages of learning slows down the process of learning the language, makes the language barrier insurmountable and the active and free use of someone else’s communicative code unattainable?

As you know, at the introductory-phonetic course the formation of lexical and grammatical competence is not conducted, although the words can serve as educational material. Since in this period of close attention another component of the language, which does not allow focusing on vocabulary is required. It happens because of its purely supporting role, which makes it impossible to fully form and consolidate lexical skills. Semantized lexical units simply cannot be firmly learned by students because they are on the periphery of the training work on introductory-phonetic course. This puts the introductory
and phonetic course apart from the whole further study period, which is already largely aimed at mastering the lexical and grammatical material of the language.

It is also known that sounds and syllables have no communicative value (except for certain conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns and interjections). Therefore, ideally, teaching phonetics should be implemented with examples of a unit that has at least minimal communicative value. And since the word is thus automatically taken as the main conditional educational unit, in this connection, the question of the introduction of some Cyrillic symbols and their combinations separately from the implementation of their functions in the word remains relevant.

The use of interlexemes as educational units in an introductory course of phonetics corresponds with the principle of reliance on the students’ native language. Thanks to its foreign language etymology and mastery of the Russian language, the interlexemes allow one to demonstrate the specifics of Russian graphics, phonetics and spelling on a familiar to a foreigner lexical example. In addition, international vocabulary in teaching and illustrative functions does not need special semantization and additional refinement, since it is already assimilated due to identification (recognition) and unconscious secondary memorization by students. This contributes to the immediate replenishment of the foreigner’s Russian-language vocabulary from the very first classes and to the accumulation of lexical reserves for the speedy transition to elementary communication in the studied language. Thus, in the method of teaching Russian as a foreign language to the beginners, the role of the international vocabulary, which serves as a bond between introductory and phonetic and main courses of Russian as a foreign language, rises sharply.

To implement the described principle, it needs the methodically reasonable selection and organization of internationally-lexical material for the purposes of the introductory course of phonetics is necessary. It should be focused on educating students of the language through inductive presentation of materials.

The set of tasks outlined here requires a preliminary consideration of the optimization source, the international class of vocabulary, which has linguistic nature, as well as functions and places in the language.

3. Research Questions

First, it is necessary to define the boundaries of the notion “lexical internationalism”. Eric V. Gunnemark uses the following criteria for “awarding” the status of an international word: “In order for a word to be considered international, it must be found in the following modern languages: first, in most Romance languages - French, Spanish, Italian, and other; further - in most Germanic, especially in English, but preferably also in German, Dutch (Dutch), Swedish and others; besides, at least in some Slavic languages - for example, in Russian and Serbian” (Gunnemark, 2001). Another prerequisite for the recognition of matched lexical elements as international is the similarity of their semantics.

Like other types of borrowing, international lexemes perform the function of nominating a new concept for a language, the absolute novelty of which for different nations determines the formation of an international vocabulary fund. These are primarily nouns: they account for about half of the entire vocabulary, so that they occupy a central place in the lexical composition of the language. The layers of international vocabulary represent a rather heterogeneous thematic system of concepts. A considerable
number of such words serve, for example, the themes “Family”, “Study”, “Transport”, “Store”, “Art”, “Hospital”, “Techniques” and many others. International words have penetrated all spheres of language use. They are found in colloquial speech, in the scientific style, in the newspaper and journalistic, and in fiction literature. An impressive layer of internationalism is impressive. It has a high frequency index (author, class, problem, group, program, moment, minute, information, process, project, form, school, situation, organization, etc.).

Most of the international vocabulary is represented by the terms of various sciences. There are up to 17% of the words-internationalism in physics and up to 70% in electronics. They are primarily the antique fund, which is the basis of the terminology of any science.

In addition, many Latinisms and Grecism belong to the sphere of culture, politics, social life. Internationalism of Greek origin are the following lexemes: the alphabet (the word is already found in the texts of 1431), astrology, astronomy, atom, barbarian, geometry, grammar, giant, gypsum, despot, dialect, diameter, diaphragm, diphthong, climate, lexicon, lira, marble, organ, paralysis, gout, rhetoric, syntax, strategist, tragedian, chemistry, chorus, etymology, ether, etc. Internationalism goes back to Latin: administrator, act, analogy, office, nature, prologue, symbol, stage, talent, plot, center, compasses, etc.

International words are also supplemented by borrowings from other languages, for example, from English: out, basketball, boxing, volleyball, interviews, pragmatism, ring, sports, tank, football, hockey, etc.; from Italian: viola, cello, harpsichord, crescendo, mandolin, etc.; from Arabic: admiral, algebra, algorithm, alcohol, figure, etc.; from Dutch: compass, fleet, frigate, etc.; from Czech: robot, sports day.

In the monograph by Akulenko (1972) “The issues of the internationalization of the vocabulary” the following characteristics of the international vocabulary as a multilingual phenomenon of language contacts are provided. As applied to the main European languages, “a large degree of similarity of international words in written, and not orally, is a general rule” (p. 99). “The recognition of internationalism in English is difficult, although the possibility of identification is preserved” (p. 98). “Most important for recognizing international words is the presence of regular matches and the similarity of sounds at the base or root. The similarity of consonants plays a special role, since they are primarily associated with the transfer of meaning in the word.” (p. 98-99)

For the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language, internationalism requires careful selection in view of its heterogeneity, as well as the risk of encountering in their total mass “false friends of the translator” or pseudo-internationalisms. This group of vocabulary dictates a special attitude to prevent interference and expand the classification of lexemes integrated into the mind of a foreigner after an introducing truly international vocabulary into a vocabulary of students.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a methodology for integrating an international vocabulary of foreign students into the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language at the stage of an introduction-phonetic course.
5. Research Methods

The following methods were used to study the international dictionary of the Russian language. The quantitative method was used to determine the share of international vocabulary in lexical minima and frequency dictionaries in Russian as a foreign language. The sampling method allowed to limit the range of didactically and communicatively valuable international vocabulary units. The use of a contrastive method and methods of phonemic and morphological analysis has provided the establishment of the degree of semantic, graphic-acoustic, and morphological identity of interlexemes related to different languages and meeting the requirements for linguadidactic material.

6. Findings

The selection of interlexemes required the selection of the most frequent and communicatively valuable words. For this purpose, the authors turned to frequency dictionaries and lexical minima in the Russian language. During the study, the percentage of international and original vocabulary in these sources was derived. The results revealed some stability in the distribution of words according to lexicological strata.

In the lexical minimum for the A1 level, the share of international words is about 18% (137 words) of the entire vocabulary (780 words), for the A2 level - about 18% (225 words from 1300), for the B1 level - about 18% (420 words from 2300), for level B2 - about 18% (893 words from 5000). For comparison, in the frequency dictionary of 2013 (Sharoff, Umanskaya & Wilson, 2013) the international part of the vocabulary is almost identical to its set in the lexical minimum with the same quantitative composition - about 17% (833 words out of 5000).

To compare the data in a historical history retrospective, the percentage of international vocabulary of the frequency dictionary of the year 2003 (Brown, 2003) is given: about 11% (1105 words out of 10,000). In 2013 the study by L.V. Korostelëva’s (Korostelëva, 2013) about the “functional behavior” of the high-frequency nominal parts of speech made it possible to single out a certain group of high-frequency international nouns and adjectives: only 14% (32 words out of 229 words included in the increased frequency zone at that time). Considering that the above-mentioned lexical minima were developed in the period from 2013 to 2015, it can be assumed that the role of international words in communication is gradually increasing. The growing pace of globalization of many concepts and their notation makes it necessary to predict the further quantitative and functional distribution of internationalism in speech. This gives this study a tinge of partial addressing to future generations of students.

The calculations also show the correlative role of internationalism in Russian communication with primordially Russian vocabulary. The more communicative frequency and significant words are considered, the more numerous the international vocabulary becomes among them, making up the same percentage of the total mass of words. Thus, it is possible to conclude that internationalisms have a strictly defined place in speech communication: speech become complicated when international words are used only. However, it is not possible to completely remove this component from communication activities, since the share of its presence in information exchange processes is always significant.
The selected and analyzed inventory of words made it possible to arrange them according to the principle of the didactic sequence of material presentation. Its inductive presentation, aimed at developing the language guess of the students, is also considered.

The principle of reliance on the student’s native language implies a comparative study of graphemes and sounds of the source and target languages. V.N. Wagner identifies the following possible ratios of Cyrillic and Latin characters (Wagner, 2001):

1) the coincidence in the outline and sound meaning: А, о, е, с, c;
2) the coincidence in the outline and sound meaning of capital letters, the different outline of lowercase letters: К, М, Т, m;
3) the coincidence in the outline, a discrepancy in the sound meaning of uppercase and lowercase letters: Рр, Хх;
4) the coincidence in the design of capital letters with their different sound meaning; the difference is both in the style and in the sound meaning of lowercase letters: В, н;
5) the coincidence in the outline of lowercase letters with their different sound meaning; the difference is both in the style and in the sound meaning of capital letters: У, у;
6) the presence of different signs in the alphabet Б, Г, Д, Л, П, Ф, Ц, Ч, Ш, Щ, ъ, ы, ю, Я, я.

In the traditional method, all sounds of the Russian language are introduced during the first ten lessons. All vowels, except for the vowel [ы], are presented in the first two lessons (vowels [a], [o], [y] - in the first lesson, vowels [a], [u] - in the second lesson due to the assimilation of soft consonants). Regarding the Russian consonant sounds, the following sequence of studies was adopted in the Russian methodology: starting with solid labial [б], [п], [м], labial-tooth [в], [ф], front-lingual [с], [з], occlusive [т], [д], [н], lateral [л], go to a trembling sonant [р], a specifically Russian consonant, as well as to all the soft variants of already hard solid sounds.

In order to optimize learning, we propose to write down letters in printed form using averaged upper-case characters. The differentiation of upper- and lower-case characters is demonstrated at the generalization stage of the material.

With the introduction of “lexical-phonetic” material, the teacher writes on the board (or demonstrates on the slide) the Russian equivalent of the international lexeme, then pronounces it and demonstrates translation into the student’s native language (if it is one of the most European languages). After that a teacher speaks the Russian equivalent again, then asks students repeat after him. A teacher demonstrates the transcription of each word. Again, he first utters the Russian analogue, then his version in the translation, then again, the Russian version. Students repeat after him, for some time independently interpreting the phonetic, graphic and spelling differences in the Russian and native analogue of the word.

If it is necessary, the teacher draws a phonemic analogy between a difficult sound in the Russian version of the inter-loop and a similar position for the sound in the student's native language (факт — fine, май — my, база — bite, порт — port, etc.). Thus, the development of individual sounds is carried out after the alien perceived them in the sound-letter complex of the word, which allows to independently and intuitively draw conclusions about the patterns of a sound use.
This approach means a repetition and a concentric generalization of the analyzed material, a formulation of universal intra-language rules. At such systematization stages, the teacher demonstrates the translation equivalents of the considered words, the equivalents of graphemes and sounds in the compared languages, the comparative schemes of regular and variable sound-letter equivalence, graphic equivalents of sound combinations. A thematic classification as an important component of generalization that is realized in the cooperation of the teacher and students, according to the material, systematization of the encountered vocabulary is also needed.

From the point of view of the Russian word rhythm, the following sequence of inputting internationalism is recommended as the lessons are conducted. First, students learn monosyllabic words, then disyllabic words (in both versions of the rhythmic scheme) and trisyllabic words with the accent on the second syllable (since in these words the reduction of unstressed vowels is the least heard, it seems to be unnecessary for study at this stage). Then they know trisyllabic words with an emphasis on the 3rd syllable and trisyllabic with the stress on the 1st syllable. After that four-syllable words with the stress on second and third syllables are given. Words with the stress on the first and forth syllables are last, because of the greatest manifestation of vowel reduction). Then the five-syllable words with the accent on the third and fourth syllable are given (the remaining variants are introduced later). After six-syllable words with the stress on the third and fourth (the remaining variants are introduced later). Finally, seven-syllable words are introduced last, along with the most difficult “lexical and rhythmic constructions”.

**Table 01.** Interlexemes, numbered in accordance with the possible sequence of presentation in the lesson.

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<td>31. lampa [lamp]</td>
<td>32. sous [sauce]</td>
<td>33. epokha [epoch]</td>
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**Table 02.** Interlexemes, numbered in accordance with the possible sequence of presentation in the lesson.

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<th>Interlexemes. Second lesson</th>
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The teaching system of the introductory phonetic course to students of Russian as a foreign language with the integration of international vocabulary in the role of teaching graphic-phonetic, phonomorphological, phonetic-orthographic and accentuation-rhythmic material considered in this article is a trial technology to intensify the formation of a foreigner lexicon. Its further development seems to be highly relevant, since it meets the demands of the modern communication and educational paradigm of society.

**7. Conclusion**

So, in the age of high speeds and in modern conditions of globalization and multilingualism, which dictate certain changes in lifestyle and education, a studying of foreign language to the level of a confident user simply cannot last for decades. The need to optimize this process is beyond doubt. As one of the possible ways of its implementation, it is proposed to rely on the student’s language experience, on the linguistic system that is familiar to him and on its lexical component. The purpose of this approach is to intensify the replenishment of the learner’s foreign vocabulary, since traditional methods, as a rule, do not consider the fact that the vocabulary plays the significant role of grammar to maintain communication in a foreign language. In the conditions of the initial stage of training, the most appropriate class of words for this purpose is international vocabulary.

Most internationalisms do not require special explanations and fixation in the memory of students, since they are already in the mental repository of the native language system. They are understandable when a teacher relies on the student’s initial vocabulary. Therefore, the abundant introduction of interlexemes into the introductory-phonetic course and the initial stage of education in general cannot cause difficulties in its development, as it cannot damage the study of the original vocabulary, which most clearly reflects the specifics of the Russian language. On the contrary, the analysis and integration of interlexemes will...
only “equip” many specific features of Russian phonetics, rhythms, graphics, spelling, word formation and morphology with additional examples that do not require additional semantics and automation efforts on the part of the teacher. It will enrich the student beyond the prescribed minimum lexical reserve, which will bring the language learner closer to the moment of going into active communication.

The integrative method proposed in this article tends to a reasonable increase in the lexical component in the classroom exercises. The development of individual sound articulation and combinations is implemented here as an optional fixing part, but individual sounds and their combinations are not placed in the center of even the introductory-phonetic course. The central educational unit here is recognized the word as a complex sound-letter complex and the smallest possible unit of communication. Due to the reliance on the language guess and the students’ native language, the proposed method has a playful tint in the work on language material.

Introduced into the learning system “in advance”, the international dictionary will become a reliable resource, a solid support for expressing thoughts in a foreign language. Therefore, its activation is of great importance at all study stages. Also, “interlexicon” should be an indispensable basis for building an alien foreign system of signs and concepts, a system of internal relations between them and a system of their functions in communication. It must become something that will always remain something “native” and familiar for a long time in the “harsh and inhospitable” world of a foreign language. The foundation of knowledge about the multicultural linguistic system, which will instil confidence that a foreign language, is still accessible to understanding. It is not entirely alien and closed to learning.

References


