

The Role of Local History Texts in Implementing the Culturological Approach to Teaching the Russian Language: the Basic General Education Level

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Abstract

The prevailing view in the scientific and methodological community has long been that the culturological approach to language studies (called the "leading" approach in linguodidactics at the turn of the 21st century at the IX International Congress of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (MAPRYAL) held in Bratislava in 1999) is necessary. The issue of means, ways and possibilities for students to master the values of spiritual and material culture through a language can be solved in various ways, but, in our opinion, one of the most effective ways is to include materials on local history and studies into the school curriculum for the Russian language course. Such materials are intended, first, for expanding both the students' universal background knowledge and the knowledge of their country. In this context, one of the most important components aimed at implementing the culturological approach in Russian language lessons is a culturological text on local history and studies. Acquainting students with texts on local history and studies is aimed at "ensuring the historical continuity of generations, preserving, distributing, and developing national culture, and fostering an attitude of care towards the historic and cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia" (Makeev, 1995). All of the above has prompted the authors of this article to attempt presenting their view both on the significance of studying a text on local history and studies within the implementation of the culturological competence and including such texts in the system of educating and training students using the means of the Russian language course.

Key words: local history and studies, culturological approach, culturological competence, culturological text, Basic General Education.

Introduction

At the turn of the 21st century, the problem of studying language and culture within the methodology of teaching Russian as a native language has been actively developed by Bystrova (Bystrova et. al., 2004), Voiteleva (2015), Deikina & Khodiakova, (2003), Domansky (2002), Levushkina (2015), Mishatina (2012), Novikova (2007), Pakhnova (2000), Sayakhova (Sayakhova & Mullagalieva, 2006), and Khodyakova (2012). Within the modern foreign

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methodology of teaching a foreign language, this problem has been developed by Byram, Morgan, Zarate (Byram et. al., 1991; 1994; 1994), Broger (1992), Hyde (1998), Kaikkonen (2001), Kramsh (1993), King (1990), [15], Shanahan (1998), Robinson, & Nemets (1985) et al.

Within the declared subject, we decided to tackle the issue of ways and means to use a text on local history and studies during the Russian language lessons due to the fact that, as yet, the methodology has no integral system or consistent approach that teachers of the Russian language could use as a basis for including local history/studies materials in the teaching process. Currently, there is an evident necessity to create new textbooks and study guides based on the linguo-local studies approach taking into account the national and regional component (Aydarova et al., 2017; Bochkareva et al., 2017; Korableva & Kalimullina, 2016; Osadchy & Akhmetshin, 2015). This is important today both due to the methodological necessity and to the state's policy regarding education (Korableva & Kalimullina, 2014; Korableva et al., 2017b). Thus, the Federal State Educational Standard of Basic General Education lays special emphasis on the necessity to not only "introduce school students to the national culture of their people within studying a school course, but also to ensure the historical continuity of generations, preserve, distribute, and develop the national culture, and foster an attitude of care towards the historic and cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia".

Method

In this work, the authors use both universal methods of scientific cognition (analysis, synthesis) and special methods related to the methodology of teaching the Russian language: studying and analyzing scientific literature, observation, questionnaire survey, and the diagnostic and forecasting method in teaching the Russian language.

Findings

Yelabuga is a city with a thousand-year history, which was and still is a subject of study for great many research scientists. Among the first researchers of Yelabuga history there are Nevostruyev, Kulyginsky (Valeev & Kornilov, 2007), Shishkin (1871), and Kudryavtsev (1898). These famous historiographers who put forth tremendous effort to immortalize the city in the annals of history were born in Yelabuga and left their works on their hometown history to future generations.

Today, local studies are expanding their boundaries and a new area has appeared that has been actively implemented at the educational institutions of the town and its districts, school students of which have since 1994 studied a new course – Yelabuga history and studies. In 2012, a course book "History of Yelabuga" for 7th-grade students was published as a result of creative cooperation of the staff of the Yelabuga State Historical, Architectural and Art Museum and Heritage Site, school history teachers, local history experts and scientists (Rudenko, 2012). In the previous year, within the implementation of the Strategy of Education Development in the Republic of Tatarstan for 2010-2015, a resource book to the pilot project of the innovative Yelabuga history studies program was published that contained lesson plans, additional materials, tests, and crossword puzzles.

Lecturers and teachers of the Yelabuga Institute pay special attention to local studies and history within their work with Yelabuga institute and school students. In particular, Maslova et al. in their article note that "in working with school students, historical museums of the Yelabuga Institute stake on developing children's understanding of the cultural diversity of the peoples and their history... In implementing the education and training functions, playing classes for school students in the Museum of Yelabuga take on even greater importance within the implementation of the innovative project "IntelLeto" (Maslova et. al., 2016). Special courses in Local Literature Studies and Local History Studies are presented at the Philology and History Faculty. In recent years, various scientific works have been published that describe the richest historical heritage of our town (the authors of the works are Gafurov et al. (Gafurov et al., 2007); Nigamayev (Nigamayev, 2007), and Kotlova (Kotlova, 2013).

"Extensive charity work for which the Stakheevs became renowned in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century" (Maslova & Krapotkina, 2014) significantly changed the internal and external appearance of Yelabuga. The Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University honors the contribution of this merchant dynasty's members to the cultural life of our town and once in two years holds the International Stakheev Readings, which have become a tradition and which gather not only those who love the works of the poet and writer, or descendants of the Stakheev family living both in Russia and abroad, but also specialists in local history and studies.

Thus, local studies in Yelabuga are developing with active participation of specialists and people who love their local history.

Currently, the prevailing view in scientific and methodological literature on problems of teaching a native language is that the culturological approach is necessary for studying a native language (Novikova, 2007). In our opinion, the implementation of this approach can be based on the acquaintance with local history, which should become a basis for teaching humanities (Magsumov, 2016; Korableva *et al.*, 2017a). In this sense, a notion of a local history and studies material as a reflection of a cultural and historical aspect in teaching a language becomes a key one. We believe that materials on local history should be introduced not only in history lessons but also in studying all humanities, including a native language lessons, starting from the primary school (Magmusov, 2013, Magsumov, 2015).

The practical aim of our article is to review the ways of including local history materials in the school program and to propose practical recommendations to implement this. In order to do this, we have developed a set of tasks that will allow both learning and reinforcing the program materials on the subject by students and acquaint them with the local history and culture (Tarman, 2016; Tarman *et al.*, 2015). The texts that we propose to include in the Russian language course program correspond to the age peculiarities of secondary school students, as well as meet the requirements of using a meta-subject approach in education. The texts are intended both for establishing subject knowledge of the Russian language and for acquainting school students with history of their region.

Working with a local history/studies material within a Russian language lesson contemplates a multi-aspect activity that includes elements of a linguistic, stylistic, and literary analysis, speech tasks, various types of segmentation, orthography and punctuation issues, preparation for expressive reading of a text, and in some cases – for retelling or for creating writing.

During the first stage of selecting materials on local history and studies, all the texts that are somehow related to the history of Yelabuga were divided by their functional and stylistic features into: 1) fiction (works by D.I. Stakheev, S.T. Romanovsky, and N.A. Durova); 2) publicistic (newspaper articles "The Enthusiast of Yelabuga Land", "The Last Century Yelabuga. The Troitsk Cemetery", etc.; and 3) science education (the legend of the Devil's Fort (Chyortovo Gorodische)), the Ananyino culture, etc.).

The second stage of work included distributing the texts by topical units based on their content. As a result, four topical units were singled out:

1. Biography – reflecting lives of great men (some facts of the biography of I.I. Shishkin, a painter, Tazi Gizzat, a writer, N.A. Durova, the hero of the Patriotic War of 1812 and a writer, I.V. Shishkin, a merchant and patron of arts, S.T. Romanovsky, a writer, etc.).
2. Monuments – guardians of people’s destiny (the Troitsk cemetery, the Kamashev House, the Shishkin House, the Lenin Square, and the building of the Yelabuga Institute).
3. Yelabuga, praised throughout the ages (excerpts from works of fiction on the local nature and famous people who glorified our town).
4. Legends – reflection of people’s understanding of history (the legends of the Devil’s Fort (Chyortovo Gorodische), of the origin of the name "Yelabuga", and of the miraculous blinding of Pugachev).

As an example, here follows a text on local history/studies from the first block and possible tasks to it.

Portrayer of Russian Landscape

Shishkin, Ivan Ivanovich is a greatest master of the Russian national landscape. His name is widely known.

I.I. Shishkin began his studies at the Kazan gymnasium from which he graduated in 1848. For several years, he continued his education at home and studied painting at the same time.

In 1852, Ivan Shishkin left for Moscow. There I.V. Stakheev, his uncle, was friends with Pakhomov who was a member of the council of the Moscow School of Arts, Sculpture and Architecture. In August of the same year, the future painter was admitted to the School and studied there until 1856.

In 1856, Ivan Shishkin entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg where he studied for 5 years and received all academic awards and honours. In 1860, Ivan Shishkin received a gold medal and a right for a trip abroad for two landscape paintings "View of Valaam Island. Kukko" (where he had gone in summers of 1858 and 1859).

The 1870s and 1880s were a golden age for the painter’s talent. During this period, he painted works that are now among the treasures of the Russian national art: "Rye" (1878), "Amidst the Open Valley" (1883), "Wood Distances" (1884), "The Oak Grove" (1887), "Pine-Trees Lit Up by the Sun" (1886), "In The Wood of Countess Mordvinova" (1891) (Cherepivskaya, 1992).

Tasks:

1. Read the text. List the paintings mentioned in the text. Which other paintings by Ivan Shishkin do you know?
2. 1) Find synonyms to the word 'painter'; 2) Find the proper nouns in the text; 3) copy out the numerals from the text and write them down as words; 4) underline the subject and the predicate in the first two sentences of the second paragraph.
3. Make the morphological segmentation of the word 'живопись' (oil paintings).
4. Prepare for expressive reading.

The "Free Flight of Creative Imagination" block includes 18 topics of creative tasks for school students developed by the authors. For example, "An Ode to My Beloved Town", "A Letter to a Famous Citizen of Yelabuga", "A Creative Sketch of the Shishkin Pond in Spring", "Beloved Town Melting in Blue Mist..." (on the Yelabuga landscape), "To You, My Diary, Can I Entrust a Secret On My Home Town, On The Land of My Heart", "Granting the Light of Knowledge For Ages" (on the history of the Yelabuga Institute), etc.

Besides, the selected texts (extracts from the works of S.T. Romanovsky, D.I. Stakheev, and N.A. Durova) were adapted for dictations in the Russian language course. We recommend using several selected texts (based on the newspaper articles on the culture and beliefs of Ananyino people, holidays, or merchant dynasties) for written reproductions. Test tasks on the local history based on the local history texts are included in the "Local History Experts" block.

Thus, the proposed ways of introducing local history/studies material into the school program and the practical recommendations on their implementation allow forming the culturological competence of school students based on the language and culture co-studying principle (Mauch & Tarman, 2016; Yiğit & Tarman, 2016).

The didactic materials based on the local history/studies texts were reviewed within the discipline "Methodology of Teaching the Russian Language" and aroused much interest among students. The results of the questionnaire survey held among attendees of further education courses in the Yelabuga Institute of the Kazan Federal University in 2015/2017 (145 persons) showed that 90% of those surveyed were ready to use local history/studies materials and the set of corresponding tasks in teaching Russian language, realize the importance of using those in language arts and understand that studying the local culture can help in educating a person who loves their history and respects the traditions of our multiethnic country.

Discussion

Based on studying the declared range of problems in scientific works by leading methodologists, testing the collected corpus and corresponding tasks within the discipline "Methodology of Teaching the Russian Language", and questionnaire survey held among attendees of further education courses, the authors identified the mechanisms and ways of practical implementation thereof in secondary schools of our region (Akhmetshin, et al, 2017; Fedorov, 2014a; Il'Yaschenko et al., 2015; Fedorov, 2014b; Szydowski, 2017).

A small fragment of possible inclusion of local history/studies material into a Russian language lesson in secondary school clearly demonstrates that such material can exist very well within the program and syllabus for the subject taking into account the national and regional component, as well as promotes the development of a student's basic competences. The recommendations we propose should without doubt aid a subject teacher in practical implementation of the culturological approach and formation of students' culturological competence through a local history/studies text.

Conclusion

The prospects of developing this study can include implementing the tested materials within training of bachelors in the Russian language and literature, within studying methodological disciplines, developing a special course "A Local History/Studies text in Russian language Lessons: Theory and Practice of Implementation", or preparing study guides for teachers and local history/studies specialists.

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