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Intercultural Communication and Teaching Russian to International Students at Language Summer Courses

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Introduction: the article considers the content and methods of teaching Russian as a foreign language at language summer courses with due account to (as a form of study-abroad training) the motives of intercultural communication. The specifics of teaching Russian to international students in the cultural field of Ukraine is revealed. The timeliness of the study is determined by constantly increasing academic mobility of students and the need for the development of modern educational technologies. The main purpose of the article is to present an integrated approach to Russian as a foreign language teaching at language summer courses, when cultural needs of the trainees and the motives of intercultural communication are considered.

Materials and Methods: teaching methodology draws on specific methods of teaching Russian as a foreign language and models of intercultural competence development. Educational materials for practical teaching of the Russian language are presented; qualitative and quantitative methods to research intercultural communication motives (written questionnaires and interviews on key topics) are used.

Results: through working with the learners of language courses – students of Austrian universities – the data on the learners' motivation factors, the most relevant topics for intercultural dialogue, some important aspects of Russian grammar, and also the data on the most popular knowledge about Ukraine are obtained and carefully analysed. The analysis of the obtained data, carried out by the authors of the study, allowed to optimise the content of the educational process and to increase its effectiveness.

Discussion and Conclusions: teaching Russian to foreigners, showing a keen interest in the cultural values of Ukraine, suggests a parallel formation of intercultural competence based on understanding the local cultural realities. The presented approach to RFL teaching within the framework of the language summer courses provides not only a strong uptake of linguistic material by international students and considerable improvements in their level of proficiency in the Russian language, but also a significant enhancement of the intercultural competence of the trainees on the basis of a variety of teaching techniques and active intercultural communication of international students with native Russian language speakers when working in tandem. The practical significance of the study is determined by the fact that the proposed approach to Russian as a foreign language teaching may find wide application in the training of foreigners at language summer courses; research perspectives are determined by the continuous development of this form of education and the increased importance of intercultural competence in the practice of cultural interaction.

Keywords: intercultural communication, intercultural competence, Russian as a foreign language, methods of teaching a second language, tandem language learning, language summer courses

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Межкультурная коммуникация и преподавание русского языка иностранным студентам на летних языковых курсах

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Введение: в статье рассматриваются содержание и методика обучения русскому языку как иностранному на летних языковых курсах, отражающих мотивы межкультурной коммуникации. Раскрыта специфика преподавания русского языка студентам-иностранцам в культурном поле Украины. Актуальность исследования определяется возрастающей академической мобильностью студентов и необходимостью разработки современных образовательных технологий для их обучения. Цель статьи – представить комплексный подход в преподавании русского языка как иностранного на летних языковых курсах, при котором учитываются культурные запросы обучаемых и мотивы межкультурной коммуникации.

Материалы и методы: методологическим обоснованием настоящего исследования являются частная методика преподавания русского языка как иностранного и модели развития межкультурной компетенции. Представлены учебные материалы для практического преподавания русского языка; использованы качественные и количественные методы исследования мотивов межкультурной коммуникации (письменные опросы и устные интервью по ключевым темам).

Результаты исследования: в процессе работы со слушателями языковых курсов – студентами австрийских университетов – получены и изучены данные о факторах мотивации учащихся, наиболее значимые для них темы межкультурного диалога, важные аспекты русской грамматики, а также данные о наиболее востребованных знаниях об Украине. Анализ полученных данных, проведенный авторами исследования, позволил оптимизировать содержание учебного процесса и повысить его эффективность.

Обсуждение и заключения: обучение русскому языку иностранцев предполагает параллельное формирование их межкультурной компетенции на основе понимания местных культурных реалий. Представленный подход к преподаванию русского языка как иностранного в рамках программы летних языковых курсов обеспечивает не только прочное усвоение языкового материала студентами-иностранцами и существенное улучшение их уровня владения русским языком, но и значительное повышение межкультурной компетенции обучаемых на основе применения разнообразных обучающих технологий и активной межкультурной коммуникации иностранных студентов с носителями русского языка при работе в тандеме. Практическое значение исследования определяется тем, что предлагаемый подход может найти широкое применение при обучении иностранцев на летних языковых курсах; перспективы исследования обусловлены непрерывным развитием данной формы обучения и повышением значимости межкультурной компетенции в практике культурного взаимодействия.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, межкультурная компетенция, русский язык как иностранный, методика преподавания второго языка, изучение языка в тандеме, летние языковые курсы

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Introduction

Students all over the world no longer require a reason for studying intercultural communication, as the need for skills in this area is part of conventional wisdom [1]. According to [2], the first decade of the 21st century has witnessed changes in the scope and range of global educational mobility, and currently there are over 3,3 million students studying abroad.

There are various reasons to study culture and communication, such as personal growth, social responsibility, economic motive, cross-cultural travel motive, media motive, etc. [1]. The benefits associated with personal growth, are open-mindedness (having a mind receptive to other cultures), self-awareness (better knowledge of native culture while exploring other cultures), and personal empowerment (looking at who

you are and becoming more aware of yourself as a unique individual). Social responsibility motive, which expresses a personal intention to solve such pressing problems of mankind as poverty, illnesses, violence against women, child soldiers, drug trafficking, etc., can be implemented through dialogue of cultures approach that implies intercultural competence. Many students work in their college years, and it is the economic motive and corporate profitability can be considered to be of most importance for getting to know how to communicate well across cultures. Cross-cultural travel motive is stipulated by increasing numbers of cross-cultural travelers, such as tourists, students and refugees. Another significant reason for knowing more about cultures and intercultural communication is that nations of the world are producers and consumers of mediated messages that travel across cultural borders.

Being a vivid example of realisation of cross-cultural travel motive and probably some other motives, language summer courses can be referred to study-abroad programmes propelling students to higher level of intercultural communication competence [3].

The main purpose of this study is to give an idea of the content and methodology of teaching Russian to international learners (students of Austrian universities) taking part in a study-abroad programme – language summer courses – and to disclose the specifics of this training taking place in the cultural field of Ukraine.

Realisation of the research purpose shall be consistent with all of the following objectives: presentation of a complex of educational materials, providing successful teaching of Russian, and educational techniques well proved at language summer courses; coverage of qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation of intercultural communication motives and data analysis; assessment of the effectiveness of proposed approach to teaching Russian as a foreign language which provides not only

language acquisition, but also enhancement of intercultural competence.

Literature Review

Intercultural communication can be defined as communication between members of different cultural societies. Ability to such a skill is formed in the classroom by language practice and cultural linguistics, when getting acquainted with the peculiarities of foreign language speech etiquette¹.

W. Gudykunst and Y. Kim consider intercultural communication to be a transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures [4].

The notion of intercultural communication is closely connected with some other key terms, such as: culture defined as the way of life of a group of people, including symbols, values, behaviours, artifacts, and other shared aspects; communication, as the process of creating and sending symbolic behaviour, and the interpretation of behaviour between people. So, intercultural communication occurs when culture impacts the communication between two or more people enough to make a difference [1].

According to I. Piller, a keyword search in the catalogue of the Library of Congress for intercultural communication documents shows that the books relevant to these keywords first started to appear in the 1940s, and most of them (more than 50 %) were published after 2000s. The early publications fall into a number of clearly identifiable strands: military; corporate business; missionary and religious studies which continue to be central to publications in intercultural communication at present, but, as more and more publications have appeared, they are becoming diversified. Therefore, I. Piller points out to different understandings of intercultural communication: contrastive (communicative behaviors stipulated by different cultural backgrounds, where culture is understood as identical to nation, like the British and the Italians), interactive (interaction of

¹ Азимов Э. Г., Шукин А. Н. Новый словарь методических терминов и понятий (теория и практика обучения языкам). М. : Икар, 2009. 448 с. URL: <http://www.twirpx.com/file/209945> (дата обращения: 24.03.2017).



people from different cultural backgrounds, where culture is seen as similar to ethnicity and/or race, e.g., Korean immigrants and African Americans), and discursive (where culture is seen as a product of the text reflecting the beliefs of a person found himself on foreign soil) [5].

Most recent thematic analysis of the articles published in three major journals in intercultural communication research (Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, and International Journal of Intercultural Relations) during 2003–2013 identified eight topics: identity; acculturation and global migration; communication dynamics; intercultural competence; theories, models, scales, and frameworks; perception, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination; cross-cultural differences; intercultural education, training, and study abroad [6].

K. Kudo et al. identify four specific topics that have great potential to advancing knowledge and practice of intercultural relationship development, such as environmental constraints and affordances in relation to relationship prospects, personal blockers and enablers in constrained environments, personal blockers and enablers in intervention environments, cultural barriers, and intolerance at individual and environmental levels [7].

D. Kealey points out that research on intercultural communication competence over the past 25 years has succeeded in identifying a core set of skills and knowledge needed to become interculturally competent, however many instruments developed to measure the needed skills and knowledge fail to reliably predict success in living and working in other cultures [8].

D. Lieberman and G. Gamst identify three significant trends in intercultural communication competence: intercultural competence, measurement of intercultural competence, and linkages between multicultural competence or social justice initiatives and intercultural competence [9].

Special attention is paid to the development of intercultural competence/intercultural communication models, such

as the integrated model of intercultural communication competence (IMICC) that identifies the variables (empathy, experience in intercultural experience in intercultural communication, motivation to interact with people from other cultures, positive attitude toward them, and the ability to be an engaged listener) which influence intercultural communication competence [10], PEER model, a methodology for developing/evaluating of intercultural competence by guiding students through the interconnected and interdependent phases of Preparing, Engaging, Evaluation, and Reflecting upon their competence [11], or a model of tolerance of intercultural communication as a methodology of solving sharp confessional, ethnic and natural conflicts of modernity [12].

J. Jackson presents a good example of intercultural competence training – an elective, credit-bearing course to enrich and extend the intercultural learning of undergraduates with recent or current international experience [13]. It is worth mentioning here the development of intercultural competences, with intercultural sensitivity as their core, as an acknowledged aim of teacher education [14]. R. Valeyeva and A. Valeyeva describe the relevant aspects of intercultural education, viewed by Russian researchers; essence and main characteristics of intercultural education, developed on theoretical and practical levels; systematic, cultural, axiological and competence approaches to intercultural education [15].

Chinese researches Y. Hu and W. Fan in their comparative analysis of more than 300 intercultural communication articles published between 2001 and 2005 in 11 major academic journals of China and the USA, come to a conclusion that intercultural communication research in China is sharply different from research abroad: while main concern of researchers abroad is intercultural adaptation and intercultural training, the Chinese researchers are mainly concerned with cross-cultural pragmatics with regards to research contents and method [16]. R.-Z. Peng and W.-P. Wu utilize a structural equation modeling approach to construct a scale to measure Chinese

college students' intercultural contact and to explore the pathways from intercultural contact to intercultural competence and their significance [17]. W. Wang and M. Zhou examine a short intercultural sensitivity measurement scale for use in contexts with limited time constraints [18]. R. Chi and D. Suthers explore assessment of intercultural communication competence from a relational perspective using social network analysis [19].

Intercultural competences, in response to challenges created in many countries by the coexistence of communities of different origins and cultures, are bridged together with anticipations skills as a means to reinforce the capacity of global citizens for learning to learn together [20].

As for an idea of language courses itself, short-term language courses are being opened worldwide to stimulate language learning and to develop language proficiency; the university level students believe that participation in academic mobility programme, realised via short-term courses, changes their attitude towards the target foreign language and culture from neutral to more positive [21]. In their language learning stories, university summer school students complain about their previous language learning experiences and their lack of hard work as compared to language summer courses [22]. Spanish researches believe that intensive second language (L2) experiences are reported to facilitate language development even in a home country provided that learners stay at an overnight summer camp exposed to L2 during non-language related activities [23].

The peculiarities of intercultural communication and teaching Russian to international students at language summer courses in Ukraine lie in the fact that it is impossible for international students to simultaneously learn one language within one culture in this country. International learners, coming to Ukraine for a variety of purposes (study, business, tourism), show particular interest in the cultural values of Ukraine, but they mostly choose either

Russian, or English (not Ukrainian) as the language of education. It is the development of an integrated teaching approach to ensure international learners' Russian language acquisition and gradual formation of their intercultural competence, when having intercultural communication in Ukraine and Tandem Language Learning, is the key note of this article.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on the qualitative and quantitative research methods and teaching materials used in practical teaching of the Russian language to Austrian students coming to take part in a summer study-abroad programme in Ukraine. Language summer courses at National Technical University Kharkov Polytechnic Institute (NTU KhPI), dating back to early 1990-s throughout present time, is generally known as the most long-term and successful project which allow German-speaking students to successfully learn Russian taught by Russian teachers and Russian-speaking Ukrainian students who, in turn, learn German taught by Austrian teachers and their German-speaking fellow-students. Written questionnaires were completed by Austrian students, as well as interviews of Russian language learners were conducted for this research in late 2000s – early 2010s, and questionnaires-in-depth – in 2016.

The teaching materials provided the following kinds of activities.

1. Working on the main course book "V dobryi put'!" ("Gute Reise!") for German-speaking learners² which ensured: learning the new lexis (each lesson was supplied with a piece-work Russian-German vocabulary, presented as a kind of explanatory dictionary); listening to the dialogues united in a single script (arrival of a German businessman in Ukraine, his meeting at the airport, accommodation in a hotel, business-breakfast, talks with a partner, singing a contract, visiting restaurants, sightseeing, travelling about the country and coming back home); grammar activity (grammar sections of each lesson

² В добрый путь! Учебный комплекс для изучения русского языка как иностранного / Ю. А. Романов [и др.]. Харьков : НТУ «ХПИ», 2008. 244 с.



included the most important aspects of practical Russian grammar: declension of nouns and adjectives, conjugation of imperfective verbs in the present tense and types of stress, imperative, verb aspects formation, verbs of motion without prefixes and with prefixes, attributive clauses introduced by *который*, etc.) while doing exercises covering all kinds of speech to ensure best results in fixing grammatical and lexical material, presented in the dialogues; taking part in the proposed communicative situations aimed at inducing students to implement their newly acquired language skills in practice of direct verbal communication.

2. Learning the new lexis, as well as doing exercises implemented by using the computer-based training system “Gute Reise!”³, and for listening to the dialogues, the main course video film was used.

3. Working on communicative situations (made up by the students) which were recorded, repeatedly listened, and analyzed so that most typical mistakes could be detected and avoided in the future.

4. Working on the reader⁴ to let students explore most important events of Ukrainian history, Ukrainian culture, traditions, and customs of Ukrainians.

5. Working on the reader⁵ which ensured reading texts, dialogues and doing exercises to enlarge and to live up students’ general literary vocabulary and to develop their skills of Russian oral speech in the colloquial way.

6. Working on the reader⁶ allowed reading texts, taking part in the communicative situations and psychological testing, topical issue discussion to develop students’

skills of generation of coherent communicatively motivated monologues.

7. Taking a special grammar course “The use of Russian active and passive participles”. The teaching materials, published in a brief corrective⁷, as well as the tests of the second certification level (TRKI II)⁸, were used.

8. Project work implemented by students to describe the most outstanding events so that their written skills were properly developed, as well as the grounding in the oral exam was given. All students’ projects were checked and carefully considered (dates of checks: 14.07.2016 – project “Kiev-1” (1st week); 19.07.2016 – project “Lvov”; 21.07.2016 – project “Kiev-2” (2nd week); 28.07.2016 – project “Kharkov”).

9. Written exam (duration 90 min.) which included: one text of about 250 words for speech recognition and answering the questions in writing; one written text of about 250 words for answering the written questions; grammar test on the special Russian grammar course; answering 4 typical everyday life questions in writing (no more than 20–30 words for each answer); a free written topic based on the project work (approximately 100 words).

10. Oral exam (duration 20 min. plus 20 min. for preparation). Firstly, 2 students tried to retell the proposed text of about 400 words and discussed it with the examiners. Secondly, 2 students presented a communicative situation “A conversation of neighboring passengers on board an airliner” based on their project work. They were often interrupted by the examiners and made to produce a spontaneous speech across a wide range of issues. Such

³ Romanov Yu. A., Romanov A. Yu. The training complex for learning Russian as a foreign language (RFL) “V Dobryi Put’!” and RFL computer-based training system. Инновации на основе информационных и коммуникационных технологий: материалы междунар. науч.-практ. конф. М.: НИУ ВШЭ, 2015. С. 80–82. URL: <https://miem.hse.ru/data/2015/10/13/1076075545/INFO%202015.pdf> (дата обращения: 24.03.2017).

⁴ Об Украине – с любовью!: учеб. пособие / Т. А. Снегурова [и др.]. Харьков: НТУ «ХПИ», 2016. 208 с. URL: <http://repository.kpi.kharkov.ua/handle/KhPI-Press/25644> (дата обращения: 24.03.2017)

⁵ Олейник С. П., Романов Ю. А. 25 уроков русской устной речи: учеб. пособие для иностранцев. Харьков: НТУ «ХПИ», 2006. 284 с.

⁶ Штыленко В. Е., Штыленко Е. Л., Романов Ю. А. Этот многоликий мир бизнеса: учеб. пособие для иностранцев. Харьков: НТУ «ХПИ», 2008. 220 с.

⁷ Русский как иностранный: Краткий корректировочный курс / Ю. А. Романов [и др.]. Харьков: НТУ «ХПИ», 2009. 180 с.

⁸ Тесты, тесты, тесты...: пособие для подготовки к сертификационному экзамену по лексике и грамматике / Т. И. Капитонова [и др.]. СПб.: Златоуст, 2007. 160 с.

aspects as phonetic purity, appropriateness of speaker's reaction, student's vocabulary, and speaker's grammatical correctness were estimated.

11. Commencement. Final grade was assigned as a general result of the written and oral exams, and the certificates were given to students.

Results

Written questionnaires and interviews, conducted with Austrian learners before and during summer courses, can be referred to 4 key points:

1. Students were asked to describe their motivations and expectations of Russian language learning and enhancing intercultural competence while their stay in the host environment. Most of the students placed improvement of the Russian language skills

as top priority of their sojourn in Ukraine. To reach this goal, they were aimed at making a lot of acquaintances with native Russian speakers and using Tandem Language Learning based on mutual language exchange between tandem partners teaching each other their native language. Keen on national culture can be considered to be second priority of the learners. It should be noted that part of Austrian students made no difference between Russian and Ukrainian national cultures stating that they came to Ukraine to explore "Russian culture and people". However, some students showed a strong interest in Ukrainian culture and "the state of Ukrainian soul". Also, for many students, having a good time and sightseeing was a significant motivation factor to take part in a summer study-abroad program in Ukraine (table 1).

Table 1. Motivations and expectations associated with the Russian language learning and enhancement of international competence, %

Таблица 1. Мотивации и ожидания, связанные с изучением русского языка и улучшением межкультурной компетенции, %

Motivation factors / Факторы мотивации	Quantity of positive answers / Количество положительных ответов
Improvement of target language skills / Улучшение навыков владения изучаемым языком	80
Acquaintance with native speakers for Tandem Language Learning / Знакомство с носителями языка для изучения языка в тандеме	70
Keen on national culture / Интерес к национальной культуре	75
Having a good time and sightseeing / Хорошее времяпровождение и осмотр достопримечательностей	55

Table 2. Topics for discussion in class or elsewhere, %

Таблица 2. Темы для обсуждения на занятиях или во время внеклассного общения, %

Topics / Темы	Quantity of positive answers / Количество положительных ответов
Russian grammar / Русская грамматика	80
Conversational practice (in general) / Разговорная практика (в целом)	80
Ukrainian-Russian relations / Отношения Украины и России	30
Family life / Семейная жизнь	25



2. When asked about the most important topics to be discussed in class or during participation in extracurricular activities, Austrian learners opted to have a refresher course in Russian grammar with a focus on conversational practice touching upon various social problems (for example, Ukrainian-Russian relations, challenging problems of family life, etc.) (table 2).

3. Grammar. Russian grammar points, as the kind of knowledge students needed to learn, were, in order of priority, as following: verbs of motion, participles, verb aspects, complex sentences with conjunctions (table 3).

Table 3. The most required Russian grammar points, %

Таблица 3. Наиболее востребованные аспекты русской грамматики, %

Grammar / Грамматика	Quantity of positive answers / Количество положи- тельных ответов
Verbs of motion / Глаголы движения	80
Participles / Причастия	75
Verb aspects / Виды глаголов	55
Conjunctions / Союзы	50

4. Students were asked to mention the most important and urgent aspects of knowledge about Ukraine to improve intercultural communication. History of Ukraine and Ukrainian culture were considered to be most important; national economy and policy – important; art and some other aspects – rather important. Some of the students well understood cultural differences of various parts of Ukraine and wanted to explore them through their experience (table 4).

The content of above qualitative data and the level of positive answers highlights the key results of the research on motivations and expectations of Russian language learning, enhancing language skills and intercultural competence. The analysis of the obtained data, carried out by the authors of

the study, allowed to optimise the content of the educational process and considerably increase its effectiveness.

Table 4. The most important aspects of knowledge about Ukraine, %

Таблица 4. Наиболее важные аспекты знаний об Украине, %

Aspects of knowledge / Аспекты знаний	Quantity of positive answers / Количе- ство положитель- ных ответов
History of Ukraine / История Украины	80
Ukrainian culture / Украинская культура	80
National economy / Национальная экономика	60
National policy / Нацио- нальная политика	60
Social problems / Соци- альные проблемы	50
Art / Искусство	30

Discussion and Conclusions

In countries of the former USSR, theoretical perspectives for development of intercultural communication appeared in 1990s. But prior to that, there was serious research in related disciplines: national studies, linguistic and cultural studies, cultural linguistics. These research areas, in varying degrees, prepared a platform for the development and implementation of those aspects of international communication which are associated with teaching a second language. National studies were included in the curricula of linguistic universities and referred to giving some information about the target language country. In 1960–1980s, there were active discussions about the status of national studies in the USSR. The difficulties were caused by definition of the subject, due to the heterogeneity and the scope of the training material required for bringing to students. Despite numerous attempts to modernize the concept of national studies, in practice, unable to connect into coherent system fragmented information about the geography, economy, culture, administrative-territorial system of the target language country, all of them

failed. Also, the negative role played by the paradigm forming concept of “country”, which is the base for such sciences as political and economic geography, took its effect.

In 1973, the first edition of the work by E. Vereschagin and V. Kostomarov “Language and culture”⁹ was published which declared the emergence of a new field in methodology – “Linguistic and cultural studies”, the so-called Soviet version of intercultural communication. This work covered such traditional international communication problems as acculturation, culture shock, specific of consumer behavior, body language, background knowledge, etc. The authors chose, as the basic category of linguistic and cultural studies, not “country”, but “culture”, and as the main principle – the use of language means with national-cultural semantics for delivering national studies information at Russian language lessons.

The Soviet concept of linguistic and cultural studies was not widespread outside the USSR. According to major opinion, the principles of linguistic and cultural studies should be used sparingly¹⁰. Otherwise, there is such a threat of national studies “overload” which suppresses all other aspects of teaching with the mass of extra-linguistic information.

In the mid 1990s, an active development of cultural linguistics took place. This term appeared in connection with the works of phraseological school headed by V. Teliya and works by V. Vorobev¹¹. Within the framework of cultural linguistics, the study of culture through language is especially productive when considering mythologised phraseological units and imaginative metaphors¹².

However, as Yu. Stepanov rightly observes, it is not always possible to combine data of language and data of culture in

a single theory¹³. Rather it should be said of working out a third, more generic conception applied to the linguistic theory, on the one hand, and to the culture theory, on the other hand. Particularly relevant, in our view, is the development of a model of teaching to ensure gradual formation of cultural competence of international students studying in Ukraine.

Teaching Russian to international students in Ukraine has its peculiarities. In accordance with the logic of the above concepts, data presentation of the target language country should take place simultaneously with the study of the target language. However, that is not the case in Ukraine. As it was already mentioned above, international students, coming to Ukraine, show particular interest in Ukrainian culture, but very few of them intend to learn the Ukrainian language. We are not there yet to speak about the mass transition to teaching the Ukrainian language to international students at Ukrainian universities. To do this, there are neither objective factors (social procurement), nor subjective factors (the desire of the students themselves). Students prefer, as the language of education, either Russian, or English. There is probably a similar situation at universities of Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, where international students are trained mainly in English, rather than in national languages of these countries. The exception is, perhaps, France, where the knowledge of French is a prerequisite for entering a university, although there are lots of English programs.

There is a kind of paradoxical situation when the Russian language acquisition takes place in the cultural field of Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine is one of the leading places in the former Soviet Union to train foreign students most of whom get

⁹ *Верещагин Е. М., Костомаров В. Г.* Язык и культура. Лингвострановедение в преподавании русского языка как иностранного. М. : МГУ, 1973. 233 с.

¹⁰ *Донец П. Н.* Основы общей теории межкультурной коммуникации. Харьков : Штрих, 2001. 386 с.

¹¹ *Телия В. Н.* Русская фразеология. Семантический, прагматический и лингвокультурологический аспекты. М. : Языки русской культуры, 1996. 288 с.; *Воробьев В. В.* Культурологическая парадигма русского языка: Теория описания языка и культуры во взаимодействии. М. : ИРЯП, 1994. 75 с.

¹² *Маслова В. А.* Введение в лингвокультурологию. М. : Наследие, 1997. 208 с.

¹³ *Степанов Ю. С.* В трехмерном пространстве языка: семиотические проблемы лингвистики, философии, искусства. М. : Наука, 1985. 335 с.



their education in Russian. On the other hand, all the classical textbooks for Russian language teaching are developed in Russia and, therefore, full of cultural information about the Russian Federation and Russian culture. The same can be said about Russian language textbooks published abroad. Without denying the importance of learners' exploration of Russian culture, we note that the latter is of the utmost significance in Russian textbooks. No wonder, Ukrainian philologists, specialized in teaching Russian, have a natural desire to create their own teaching materials including information about Ukraine, its cities, culture, traditions, and rituals. There is probably no university in Ukraine whose teachers didn't contribute to national studies. But here we enter into conflict with the principle of learning culture through the target language.

The question is whether we are coming back to 1960s, to the era of overwhelming national studies. And is it possible by means of the Russian language to convey the national peculiarities of Ukraine?

The answer to this question is given by the Russian literature whose language allows giving a picture of life of a certain country at the time. So, our great countryman N. Gogol in his "Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka" managed to portray, the way never seen before, the pictures of Ukrainian life in the Russian language. His full of gaiety and subtle humour stories made a deep impression on the great Russian poet, A. Pushkin, and they continue to fascinate us nowadays.

It is obvious that the above approach, which ensures learners' exploration of cultural values of Ukraine by means of the Russian language, is possible and quite productive. However, the following guidelines should be adhered.

1. The total number of vocabulary, bearing national-cultural component, should

not exceed 1–2 %, otherwise we are at risk to repeat the mistakes of linguistic and cultural studies approach. Study guides for international students in Ukrainian culture, of course, need careful selection of cultural realities, as well as appropriate vocabulary.

2. Following E. Vereschagin and V. Kostomarov, we believe that the array of historicisms, which are out of modern use, and the vocabulary, located outside the Russian literary language, should be avoided when practical language teaching, though cultural notes should be present.

One of important stimulus in the development of Ukrainian cultural studies for us was to work in a joint project with the University of Klagenfurt. Our findings show that learners' keen on national culture can be considered as one of the high-priority motivation factors to take part in a summer study-abroad program in Ukraine. The topics, attracted them most, cover the history of Ukrainian Cossacks, Ukrainian rituals, customs, traditions, philosophy (near Kharkov, there is a wonderful museum of famous Ukrainian philosopher Grigory Skovoroda; it is the place where he lived, worked, and where he was buried). Many Austrian students saw a monument to Ukrainian Cossack Yuri Kulchitsky in Vienna, but they did not know about the role of Ukrainian Cossack regiments in the defeat of the army of Ahmed II near Austrian capital. Ukrainian cuisine, Ukrainian national costume, and architectural monuments of the Kievan Rus are of particular interest to the participants of language summer courses in Ukraine.

As already mentioned, the foreigners, who receive education in Ukraine, seek to meet their educational needs related to exploration of Ukrainian culture. Therefore, we set ourselves, as the first steps to meet these needs, the creation of a series of study guides on the Ukrainian culture in Russian¹⁴. These study guides, in our

¹⁴ *Парамонова В. Ю., Седойкина Т. Н., Криволапова Е. В.* Праздники Украины. Харьков : Новое слово, 2002. 80 с.; *Романек Л. В., Снегурова И. И., Снегурова Т. А.* Выдающиеся люди Украины : учеб.-метод. пособие по рус. яз. для иностр. студентов. Харьков : НТУ «ХПИ», 2007. 80 с. URL: <http://repository.kpi.kharkov.ua/handle/KhPI-Press/22336> (дата обращения: 23.03.2017); *Романов Ю. А., Дубичинский В. В., Лаудин С.* Украина: страницы истории и современность : учеб. пособие для иностранцев. Харьков : НТУ «ХПИ», 2010. 148 с.; *Ясницкая И. А., Виноградова И. Ф.* От Киевской Руси до наших дней : учеб.-метод. пособие. Харьков : НТУ «ХПИ», 2001. 88 с.

opinion, may be of interest and also of use for the people learning Russian, showing interest in Ukraine, but living abroad. We believe that by awakening interest of international students in Ukrainian culture (albeit through a different language code) it is possible to encourage them in studying the Ukrainian language as well.

The purpose of these study guides is to shape international students' skills and abilities of reading texts on Ukrainian culture, exploration of Ukrainian history, culture, traditions, and customs of Ukrainians, Ukrainian cities and emblematic places. Selecting of language material was determined by program requirements for international students' proficiency in social and cultural realities of Ukraine and includes lexical and grammatical minimum the international students need to communicate in the sociocultural sphere.

These textbooks are used, when practical language teaching, not only at National Technical University Kharkov Polytechnic Institute, but also at universities of Austria, Germany, and the United States. These study guides do not cover, of course, the whole range of Ukrainian spiritual and material culture. However, the authors tried to describe the most iconic events of the Ukrainian national heritage.

Our findings imply that most of students place improvement of the Russian language skills as top priority of their sojourn during the study-abroad programme. To meet this need, language summer courses at NTU KhPI provide all kinds of educational activities, such as working on main course

books, readers, taking special grammar courses, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), etc.

At the same time, proper knowledge of the language is closely connected with intercultural competence which is to be considerably increased during summer courses. The specificity of teaching the Russian language to international students is that it takes place in the sociocultural field of Ukraine, and the students show particular interest in its cultural values. Meeting their cognitive needs can be accomplished by creating study guides devoted to Ukrainian culture, in Russian, and working on them during class. Intercultural communication between international students and Ukrainian students (who are native Russian speakers), taking place in the context of the study-abroad programme when project work and, in fact, 24-hour mutual contact, gives Austrian learners a good chance for proper Russian language learning. So, our teaching approach to ensure international learners' Russian language acquisition and gradual formation of their intercultural competence when having intercultural communication in Ukraine, in significant ways, is realised.

This integrated approach to teaching Russian to international students, including not only conventional teaching techniques, but also computer-assisted language learning and intercultural communication opportunities during immersion and work in tandem, can be of use for those organising language summer courses in the countries where the Russian language is spoken.

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