EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF TOPONYMICAL DICTIONARIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This article is about the experience of using toponymical dictionaries in the process of developing communicative skills of the students at undergraduate level.

Methodology: The authors use toponymical dictionaries of the native language and of the learning foreign language as valuable sources in their work. According to our experience, the toponymical dictionaries help to motivate students for self-study, to find interesting information about their native places where they were born and grew up and about the English-speaking countries. Students research the names of the places with great interest.

Results: The authors analyzed the educational value of toponymical dictionaries. In the article, it is described the research of some successful methods and techniques of using toponymical dictionaries in teaching foreign language. It was researched pedagogical principals of using toponymical dictionaries in teaching and learning process; what results are possible to achieve and what exercises can be used working with toponymical dictionaries in teaching foreign language.

Applications of this study: This research can be used for the universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality of this study: In this research, the model of the Educational Value of Toponymical Dictionaries in Teaching Foreign Language is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: education, foreign language, toponymical dictionaries, teaching, learning, the names of the places, language activities.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to determine the educational value of toponymical dictionaries in developing the communicative skills of students in the process of teaching foreign language.

The objects of our investigation are:

1. To study the international experience of using effective methods in developing second language communicative skills of students;

2. To determine the educational effectiveness of toponymical dictionaries in developing communicative skills of students in the process of foreign language teaching.

For confirmation of the hypothesis we need to turn to a variety of methods:

- Study of theoretical and methodological literature on this theme.

- Study of historical and logical analysis of research works of leading pedagogues connected with developing communicative skills of the students by means of toponymical dictionaries.

- Analyses of experiments of the authors of this research.

The experiment of the following research was done at Kazan (Volga region) Federal University with the students of the second course at the Institute of Psychology and Education. These students were the future teachers at elementary schools.

The fundamental works of foreign and Russian scientists in the field of pedagogy and psychology became the theoretical basis of the study. These are humanitarian pedagogical ideas of the great German educator and thinker Friedrich Adolph Wilhelm Diesterweg; pragmatic ideas in the theory of knowledge of the American educational reformer John Dewey(1973); the principles of education of the founder of pedagogy as an academic discipline; pedagogical ideas about learning native language of the great Russian educator Konstantin Dmitrievich Ushinsky (1990). The works and experience of the modern domestic scientists in the field of teaching foreign language were researched by the authors of this article e.g., Gulnara F. Gali (2017), Marina N. Vinnikova (2017), Rimma R. Sagitova (2016).

The authors also analyzed the educational value of toponymical dictionaries which they used in their works during their experiments. (Belenkaya, 1974; Beletsky, 1972; Bukatov, 2003; Muscat, 2011; Mills,2011; Murzaev, 1984; Rose-Redwood, Reuben; et al. 2009; Tomakhin, 1984; Kadmon, 2004; Kurmanali, et al. 2018; Machado, et al, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are several definitions of the word "toponyms". Toponym is "the study of place names" (Varlamova, et al. 2016).

The toponym is "a place name, especially one derived from a topographical feature" (Khuziakhmetov, et al. 2018).

Toponymy is a science which studies place-names, based on etymological, historical, and geographical information. A place-name is a word or words used to indicate, denote, or identify a geographic locality such as a town, river, or mountain or hill, spring. Toponymy can uncover important historical information about a place, such as the period of time the original language of the inhabitants lasted, settlement history, and population dispersal. Place-name study can also provide insight into religious changes in an area, such as the conversion to Christianity. Information about the folklore, institutional conditions, and social conditions of a place can be understood as well. Linguistic information like words and personal names, not mentioned in literature, can also be found through toponymy. The word "toponymy" comes from two Greek words: topos which means place, and onyma means name. This scientific discipline is a branch of onomastics, section of linguistics that studies its proper names. Toponymy is an integral science, functioning at the junction of linguistics, geography, and history.

Geographical names do not arise on an "empty" place: noting certain features of the relief and nature, people living nearby called them, emphasizing the characteristic features. Over time, the peoples who lived in this or that region changed, but the names were preserved and used by those who came to replace it. The main unit for studying toponymy is the toponym. The names of cities and rivers, villages and villages, lakes and forests, fields and streams are all toponyms of Russia, very diverse both in time of appearance and in their cultural and linguistic roots (Khuziakhmetov, et al. 2018).

There is a different point of view on the classification of toponyms. But many linguists agree to take into the following classification: geographical objects (hydronyms, oronyms, drononyms and others); language (Russian, Chinese, Chuvash, Tatar and other names); historical (Chinese, Slavic and others); structure (simple, derivatives, complex, composite); the area of the territory (oikomyms (names of the settlements, agononyms (areas) etc.

At the first stage of the research, the authors decided to take into account just the names of the settlements (oikomyms) for some reason. The names of the places can explain the history of the settlements, the changes in the languages. Toponymical dictionaries are result of efforts of history, geography, and linguistics. They help to understand the history of peoples who settled their areas, places, terrain and characteristic of linguistic properties. That is why they are valuable sources in educational process. Each person tries to understand his or her roots. Researching oikonyms in dictionaries helps to find answers to many questions. Firstly, student can find an answer "Why was this settlement named this way? Secondly, "what does the name of the settlement mean?" "What was there in ancient times?" etc. So, these are the questions of all ages and cultures.

The idea of using toponymical dictionaries became actual when the authors tried to ask some questions about the origin of the place names where students were born, where they grew up and where their parents live. The students had pre-intermediate and intermediate levels of learning foreign language. 60 students from two groups from the Institute of Psychology and Education took part in the questionnaire. Two students remembered some little information about their native places which they had got from their visit to local museum. It was less than 2 %.

The next task was to find some interesting information about the origin of the names of the students' settlements in toponymical dictionaries. Students should try to give information in learning foreign language. Students learned to do some individual works. During lessons, students prepared short information about the names of their settlements. Moreover, some of them tried to perform linguistic analyses of the names of their settlements. The result was 100 % of preparation for the lessons and all students took part in discussions. Some of the students explained that they couldn't find enough information about the names of their settlements and they would like to continue to do individual works. The students decided to research the names of their local hills, bogs, meadows, etc.

At the end of the 1st term, 52 students (total: 60) passed their tests with good scores. This was practically 86 %. Before experiment there were 10 students who had good communicative skills.

Having learned to use domestic toponymical dictionaries students got tasks to get some information about the places of the foreign language country where they wanted to go someday. This task helped to use different interesting teaching foreign language methods and techniques: round table discussions, role-play games, method of problems, conferences, methods of projects, drawing a tour plan, making toponymical dictionaries, etc. Besides, there was more practice in speaking than grammar and vocabulary.

Students were actively involved and they collaborated. There were unrehearsed contexts, information, feedback, choice. Students got enough opportunities to use the second language. The communicative goal of teaching foreign language was achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to achieve several goals for teaching students to use toponymical dictionaries in their learning second language. Students learn lingua-cultural realities of the foreign language country and lingua-cultural peculiarities of their native places. Toponymical dictionaries expand the cultural horizons of the individuals (Azimov, 1999). In these dictionaries there is much useful information which it is impossible to find in textbooks. They are very good to develop student's cognitive research skills and to enrich their vocabulary. Studying the etymology and origin of the geographical

names, inner meaning of the words helps students to understand historical names of the places. Students easily remember geographical names and places. Some geographical names are very difficult to pronounce and to remember. Toponymical dictionaries can help students to make the learning process easier, more interesting, more educational, more communicative. It is possible to perform different methods and techniques in the foreign language teaching process.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The article is of special interest for foreign language teachers and linguists in further development of theoretical and practical issues on language teaching. It is also relevant for university students in the English course.

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