

SCTMG 2020

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

CULTURAL DIALOGUE AS A METHOD OF CHINESE STUDENTS' LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL RUSSIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Lysakova Irina Pavlovna (a)*, Li Boyu (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, 48, Moika Emb., St. Petersburg, 191186, Russia,
lip1010@yandex.ru

(b) The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, 48, Moika Emb., St. Petersburg, 191186, Russia,
li_boyu@mail.ru

Abstract

The article substantiates the need for a linguoculturological approach to teaching Russian to Chinese students, on the basis of which the dialogue of cultures of the East and West is built. Relying on the idea of knowing a language through culture and knowing culture through a language, the article reveals a principle in which the basic concept of culture becomes the central link in working with film materials in the course of studying Russian as a foreign language. The linguoculturological approach to teaching Russian language proceeds from the need to form linguoculturological competence, which implies the presence of such an important component of the dialogue of cultures as understanding by the speaker / listener of the entire system of cultural values expressed in a language. Thus the basic concepts of culture act as a connecting link between culture and language and visualize, in working with feature films, both linguistic and cultural information in a harmonious unity. Using the example of A. Zvyagintsev's film "Loveless", the article describes the main differences in understanding such an important cultural object as the "family", and outlines an approach to overcoming the difficulties encountered by Chinese students in understanding it, since the family values of Russian and Chinese culture are different. It seems that the interdisciplinary status of the linguoculturological approach to the study of Russian language using as an example a modern feature film makes it possible to build a cultural dialogue between the values of East and West.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Dialogue of cultures, linguoculturology, Russian language, film.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

The globalization of life activities of various peoples, characterized by mixing languages and cultures, poses new challenges for the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language, since linguistic and cultural polyphony affects human communicative behavior. Therefore, the idea of Passov (2005) about learning a language through culture and culture through language becomes more relevant than ever. Acquaintance with another culture takes place within the framework of a dialogue of cultures, the principles of which Bakhtin started to elaborate in his works. Developing Bakhtin's ideas, Bibler (1990) states: "Culture, in its creations, allows us, the author and the reader, as though to live the world again" (p. 64). Any text, including media text, and feature film, acts as a means or basis of dialogue of cultures. Dialogue communication requires an important component - understanding. It is the formation of this understanding of another culture in the framework of the dialogue that is carried out when teaching Russian as a foreign language, the methodological basis of which is linguoculturology.

2. Problem Statement

The need to master simultaneously culture and language in their interdependence imposes special requirements on both the teacher and students in connection with the versatility and multidimensionality of such a phenomenon as culture, as well as the complexity of the multidisciplinary approach to mastering it. Encountering a "foreign" culture that is very different from the culture of their native country, students cannot grasp the deeper meanings, values and foundations of the culture of the language being studied, which is why the language itself seems inaccessible. Overcoming this intercultural barrier is an important task in teaching Russian language. In this regard, it seems important to consider the constituent elements of linguoculturological competence, justify the appeal to the materials of feature films and describe the work with the basic concepts reflected in the film, taken as the basis for the elaborated course of Russian as a foreign language.

3. Research Questions

The main function of culture is self-preservation and transfer of accumulated values. Thus, the development of the Russian language in the learning process will be considered as the development of the values of Russian culture, its spiritual and moral components. Culture for foreign students appears in the form of linguoculturological comments based on cognitive structures and on the cultural and moral experience of the people. At the same time, linguoculturological competence is formed in students.

Linguoculturological competence is understood as "knowledge by the ideal speaker / listener of the entire system of cultural values expressed in a language". That is why in teaching Russian language an important place should be given to such components of the formation of linguoculturological competence as: the ethnopsychological aspect of intercultural differences, the national specificity of the linguistic reflection of the world (i.e. linguistic mentality), the relationship of the meanings of linguistic units with the concepts of national culture and general characteristics of the conceptsphere of the language being studied.

Of course, linguoculturological competence is associated with the formation of “communicative competence”, being a part of it along with previously identified components such as linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, sociocultural, social, strategic. This multi-stage communicative competence is the scientific basis of the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language (Lysakova, 1999).

The situation of communication, being a key concept in the description of communicative competence, acts as part of the dialogue of cultures through the interaction of language and culture. In our opinion, the words of the outstanding Russian scientist Leontiev, who argued that culture in the framework of linguoculturology should be considered not only as a linguodidactic phenomenon, including information on the social environment, on the cultural stereotype of society, on the established system of values, but also as practical semiotics (symbolic environment and rules of behavior) (Leontyev, 2004). As we can see, the concepts of culture absorb all the components of communicative competence, since the situation of communication is built in the semantic field “language-culture”. From this, the thesis about the mastering any foreign language by the formula proposed by Passov (2005): “culture through language and language through culture” (p. 26) is becoming clear.

It seems to us that the most successful material for teaching Russian as a foreign language is video material. Firstly, in a film lesson we have a representation of different types of speech in a natural communicative environment; secondly, it is speech recognition, orientation in a communicative situation, speech generation, as a reaction to a speech stimulus (Bragin, 1980). The film lesson covers all four aspects of foreign language education: cognitive (cultural), developing (psychological), upbringing (pedagogical), educational (social).

Working with film material in the lessons of Russian as a foreign language to the greatest extent contributes to the formation of linguoculturological competence, which in recent years has received more and more attention due to the need to stimulate dialogue and mutual understanding of cultures.

As a principle of studying a foreign language, the dialogue of cultures is most fully developed by Passov (2005) on the basis of a special understanding of foreign language culture as “a part of the general culture of humanity that a student can master in the process of communicative foreign language education in cognitive (cultural), developing (psychological), upbringing (pedagogical) and educational (social) aspects” (p. 42). An important condition for the dialogue of cultures is understanding as one of the foundations of human interaction with culture and the manifestation of human self-realization.

In using the dialogue of cultures as a methodological principle in teaching Russian as a foreign language, it is important to consider the following points: building a model of culture for its relaying due to the inability to encompass culture as a whole; appeal to the value consciousness of the student; appeal to live communication of bearers of culture; the inclusion of students in lively dialogue and communication activities. In our opinion, working with a feature film meets all these requirements for mastering Russian language through culture and Russian culture through language.

4. Purpose of the Study

Differences between East and West take place in many social practices discovered when studying Russian language on the basis of films. The material of the feature film by Zviagintsev “Loveless” allows us to understand the cultural differences between Russia and China in the field of family relations

(Malakhov, 2018). The purpose of our study is the linguoculturological methods of teaching Russian language to Chinese students based on the material of the film by Zviagintsev “Loveless” using a comparative analysis of family values of the Russian and Chinese cultures.

5. Research Methods

Working with video materials in classes on Russian as a foreign language, oriented to the linguoculturological methodology, requires attention to the selection of highly artistic films that are recognized in domestic and world cinema. For educational purposes, the selection of films that would contain the basic units of culture (concepts) of the country of the language being studied is important. Zviagintsev's film “Loveless” meets these requirements, as it allows one to illustrate such an important concept as “family” with the images and values of Russian culture (Malakhov, 2018).

The family, as a product of culture, often acts as a mirror of culture as a whole. However, family values do not have to be presented as part of their approval and presentation. The opposite case is also possible when cultural values are postulated and discussed in the framework of the statement of their loss. Such a case is demonstrated by Andrei Zviagintsev's film “Loveless” (Malakhov, 2018).

From the point of view of didactics, the proposed study uses a consciously comparative method, elements of ethnopsychological and sociolinguistic approaches to the analysis of material.

6. Findings

In the film under consideration A. Zviagintsev presents a crisis of family values. As the director himself observes, his main goal when working on the film was to show the unflattering side of modern reality, to encourage fellow citizens to recall the once important cultural foundations - family relations (Malakhov, 2018). Film critic Dolin (2017) states that the director achieves his goal by literally “knocking down” the audience, dousing them with the “icy wind” of indifference and emptiness that came to the place of love and attention.

The film tells about a couple in the process of divorce, which cannot decide what to do with their son, who, as it turned out, does not interest very much his parents, who are actively engaged in arranging their “new” life. The boy runs away from home, and the parents, in search of a child, are trying to understand why this happened and what was wrong with raising their son. However, the director is pessimistic, and we see that without finding a child, the parents did not find an answer to their questions either, passing “lovelessness” to their new families.

The artistic image, as can be ascertained from the statistics of divorces in Russia, unfortunately, is not very far from reality, which leads to the thought that there is a real problem of family values in modern Russian culture. Thus, in 2018, 923,000 marriages were registered on the territory of the Russian Federation, which were accompanied with 589,000 divorces, which is almost 64 %. Family relationships are an important socio-cultural component of a country and culture. Contradictions in the content of family values may become an obstacle for foreign students to understand not only the content of the film by A. Zviagintsev, but also the semantics of the words of Russian language, closely related to Russian culture. That is why it is necessary to compare family values and models of Russian and Chinese cultures, to consider the possibility of creating a dialogue of cultures.

Of course, we cannot say that globalization processes have not affected China in terms of expanding the model of family relations. However, like any changes, the processes of transformation of family values in dynamics from traditional to western ones are moving slowly and unequally in different parts of a large country. In contrast to Russia, in 2018, 10.1 million marriages were registered in China in 2018, which were accompanied by only 3.8. million divorces (Statistical Report of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (PRC)), which is 38 %. Therefore, we can safely say that in the PRC today traditional family values, and, therefore, the traditional family culture prevail.

The traditional Chinese family is characterized by such features as patriarchy, strict hierarchy, isolation, strong internal connection with the culture of their ancestors. As Ge Chenhong (2009) observes, China has not gone far from the clan structure of society, therefore, Chinese families, planning future marriage of their children, still pay great attention to the genealogical roots of their potential relatives.

In addition, the Chinese researcher in his article cites data from a special comparative analysis, which argue that “Western society, as a rule, is focused on an individual person, and family status and functions are relatively secondary, traditional Chinese society, as a rule, is family oriented, and the family is the main unit or unit of social life” (Chenhong, 2009, p. 9). It can even be said that all of China’s statehood is built precisely on consanguineous ties, since the country as a phenomenon is equated with the image of a large house or large family.

Another Chinese researcher, Wang Yongxiang (2017), in his analysis of both the positive and negative aspects of Chinese traditional family culture, notes that the main component of family values is parenting. He states the following main features of this traditional family education:

- emphasis on earlier development (including prenatal);
- promoting positive education;
- attention to the upbringing of proper behavior in the family and society (training in “fidelity and filial piety”);
- consistency in education (“Do what you can, step by step”);
- respect for nature in terms of learning in accordance with the abilities of students;
- equal attention to love and parenting (the middle ground between “pamper and educate” - “blind” love is not favorable for the development of the child).

The child is the heart of the Chinese family, and its main function is to raise it. In the film by A. Zvyagintsev, Chinese students are presented with completely different values related to the relationship between parents and children, where the child is not the central subject of family happiness. In the film, the boy is so unnecessary that they are trying to get rid of him, in an effort to start a “new family life.” This attitude towards the child does not correspond to the norms of Chinese family culture, and therefore the background and complexity of the feelings and messages disclosed in the film remains lacunar for Chinese students.

Thus, working with the film “Loveless” in the course of studying Russian as a foreign language (II certified level) allows us to reveal and fill out several important concepts of Russian culture: love, lovelessness and family. Students, in comparison with their native culture, get acquainted with the Russian culture, mastering the Russian language not only at the communicative, but primarily linguistic and cultural level. Differences in the culture of East and West are found at the level of family

interpersonal relations, which requires the inclusion of sociological, psychological and cultural knowledge in the commentary on the film.

7. Conclusion

The concept of “not liking”, being in close connection with the concept of “love”, is a very capacious and complex concept of Russian language (Balashova, 2005).

The core of the Russian concept “not liking” is such strong feelings as indifference, hatred, disgust, aggression, enmity. The whole palette of complex and vivid emotions, which are the content of the main concept of the film in question, is not close to Chinese culture, the values of which are based on the doctrine of the “golden mean”, i.e. moderation and harmony in the manifestation of feelings. In addition, a huge difficulty for Chinese students is that this negative emotional state manifests itself against the background of the concept of “family”, which has friendly connotations in Chinese culture.

For Russian culture, the “family” is a place for not only positive, but also complex, in various shades, feelings, which was highlighted by Rukhlenko (2006), who identified two basic models of the family: 1) with the dominance of positive emotional states; 2) with the dominance of negative emotional states. Thus, the family in Russian culture is a complex and dialectically contradictory concept, associated with the conflicting and indirect relationships of such concepts as “love – not liking”. Chinese tradition fills the concept of “family” with more uniform emotional content.

The dialogue between East and West can be studied through an analysis of the basic concepts of culture, which, in turn, require the use of an interdisciplinary approach. The culture through which language is learned cannot be revealed on just one side – it is necessary to reflect the phenomena of culture multifacetedly in order to be able to create an effective, living model of the culture being studied. Therefore, along with the film of Zviagintsev, it is necessary to invite students to watch other Russian films, which show different relations in Russian families.

References

- Balashova, E. I. (2005). Love and hatred. In V. I. Karasik, & I. A. Sternin (Eds.), *Anthology of concepts* (vol. 1, pp. 150–174). Volgograd: Paradigm.
- Bibler, V. S. (1990). *From science to the logic of culture. Two philosophical introductions to the twenty-first century*. Moscow: Political Publ. House.
- Bragin, A. A. (1980). Film lesson: purpose, means and stages of the educational process. *Russ. Lang. abroad*, 1, 77–82.
- Chenhong, G. (2009). *Chinese traditional family culture and its contemporary significance*, no. Z1, pp. 9–10.
- Dolin, A. (2017). “Loveless:” A film about emptiness. Anton Dolin viewed in Cannes a new movie by Andrei Zvyagintsev. Newspaper Meduza dated 18 May 2017. Retrieved from <https://meduza.io/feature/2017/05/18/nelyubov-film-o-pustote>
- Leontyev, A. A. (2004). The subject of linguodidactics through the eyes of a philologist and methodologist. *Man. Consciousness. Communication. The Internet*. Warsaw: Instit. of Russ. Studies (University of Warsaw), pp. 13–18.
- Lysakova, I. P. (1999). Theoretical foundations of the modern methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language. *Vestn. MAPRYAL*, 27, 29–33.

- Malakhov, I. (2018). Andrei Zviagintsev: about film meanings and “Loveless. *Interview with the director of the film ‘Loveless’ for “The Herald of Toronto”*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu6OFnX5zNY> (Date of publication: 02.16.2018).
- Passov, E. I. (2005). *Technology of dialogue of cultures*. Lipetsk.
- Rukhlenko, N. N. (2006). Family. In. V. I. Karasik, & I. A. Sternin (Eds.), *Anthology of concepts* (vol. 4, pp. 28–39). Volgograd: Paradigm.
- Yongxiang, W. (2017). *Family education in the context of Confucianism*: Cand. Dissertation.