

**ISCKMC 2020****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****HERITAGE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: A  
RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS AND THE CURRENT STATE**

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**Abstract**

The article examines the process of formation of the methodology of teaching heritage languages as an independent scientific field. The formation of a new research area is a consequence of the intensification of migration processes in the modern world. The study covers the period from the middle of the 20th century to the present. The new direction appeared at the junction of a wide range of humanities. The key concept of the area under consideration is the term "heritage language", which has become widespread among researchers due to its neutral meaning. The term is devoid of negative historical associations indicating the inequality of the languages of certain ethnic groups in relation to the dominant language. The term itself was introduced into use in Canada, then spread to the United States. The appearance of the term marked the beginning of a new historical stage in the life of small ethnic groups. In many countries, the policy of forced linguistic assimilation of small ethnic groups has been replaced by an understanding of the need for linguistic and cultural pluralism as a factor in the further development and prosperity of states. Through the efforts of ethnic communities, religious institutions and foreign governments in countries with a high flow of emigrants and a significant number of indigenous peoples, language schools for teaching heritage languages have been organized.

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## **1. Introduction**

Intensive migration processes, being one of the key characteristics of the modern globalized world, contribute to the emergence of new socio-cultural phenomena in society. The formation of a new direction in the methodology of teaching modern languages is a vivid example of the ongoing changes. Heritage language teaching methodology is a relatively young and dynamically developing area in the theory and practice of teaching modern languages.

## **2. Problem Statement**

A retrospective look at the development of the methodology for teaching heritage languages allows revealing the essence of a new scientific direction, which is currently experiencing intensive development abroad and is still unfamiliar to Russian researchers. The identification of the historical preconditions for the formation of the methodology of teaching heritage languages and the driving factors of its formation at the present time will allow determining the ways of its development in the future. Theoretical comprehension of the general problems of the methodology of teaching heritage languages contributes to the development of the practice of teaching individual heritage languages that need to be preserved and revitalized in the globalized world.

## **3. Research Questions**

During the study, the following tasks were set:

1. To consider the historical prerequisites for the formation of the methodology of teaching heritage languages as an independent direction of the methodology of teaching modern languages.
2. To reveal the specifics of the research object of the methodology of teaching heritage languages by revealing the meaning and peculiarities of understanding by researchers of its key concept "heritage language" at the present stage of development of the scientific direction under consideration.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study is to determine the historical prerequisites for the formation of the methodology of teaching heritage languages and to study the current state of the scientific field under consideration.

## **5. Research Methods**

The study used theoretical research methods (analysis of foreign and domestic philosophical, sociological, cultural, ethnographic, psychological and pedagogical, methodological sources and normative documents).

## **6. Findings**

In the foreign research tradition, the term "heritage language" is widely used (inherited language). At present, the theory and practice of teaching individual languages is being actively developed in the methodology of teaching heritage languages: Korean Heritage (Song, 2019), Spanish Heritage (Llombart-Huesca, 2017), Persian Heritage (Atoofi, 2011), Portuguese Heritage (Flores, 2015), Italian heritage (Schmitz et al., 2016).

In domestic science, there is no generally accepted term for the described phenomenon, in view of the fact that research in this direction is just beginning. A few Russian studies on the topic under consideration suggest the terms "heritage language", "eritage language" and "inherited language" (Dobrova & Ringblom, 2017; Rakhilina & Marushkina, 2015; Vyrenkova et al., 2014).

A large number of foreign studies on the theory and practice of teaching heritage languages are based on the achievements of sociolinguistics, in particular on the works of one of the founders of sociolinguistics, Joshua Fishman. The scientific works of the American researcher, published in the 1940s–1960s, contributed to the formation and theoretical understanding of a new direction in the methodology of teaching modern languages (Guardado, 2018).

The term "heritage language" appeared in Canada in the 1970s (Montrul, 2016; Trifonas & Aravossitas, 2014). From the moment Canada was proclaimed the dominion of Great Britain in 1867 and until the early 1970s, the state language policy towards indigenous peoples was their forced assimilation (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Frank, 2017). The forced education of children in boarding schools in maximum isolation from families and tribal communities and the ban on the use of native languages in educational institutions have led to a significant reduction in the number of native speakers among the indigenous peoples. In the early 1970s, under pressure from socio-political organizations representing the interests of the indigenous peoples of Canada, reforms were initiated to support their ethnic cultures and languages. In 1977, the Government of Canada initiated the Multiculturalism Directorate's Cultural Enrichment Program, a state program aimed at supporting cultural diversity. The aim of the program was to assist the ethnic communities of the country in teaching the younger generation in ethnic languages, called "heritage languages" (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). The program provided representatives of ethnic communities with the right to participate in the development and implementation of educational programs in educational institutions and the training of qualified teachers from among the representatives of indigenous peoples. Over the next decade, government policies to promote language learning for ethnic communities received support from the governments of all provinces and were legislated in the 1988 Multiculturalism Act.

In the 1990s, the term "heritage language" became widespread in the United States (Cummins, 2005; Peyton et al., 2001). It should be noted that the practice of teaching ethnic languages existed in the United States long before the spread of the term in question in the country. In official documents, information about the first schools for teaching ethnic languages is extremely rare. Often, the only reason for mentioning them was the comments of supervisors on technical deficiencies, such as insufficient windows or no fire escape (Edwards, 2008). The conditions for teaching ethnic languages in the United States were created for a wide segment of the population, including representatives of the indigenous peoples who inhabited the country before colonization, the descendants of the first European colonists

who arrived from France, Germany, Italy and Spain, as well as the children of later emigrants who came from China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam.

Language training was initiated and implemented mainly by the forces and means of ethnic communities. The history of teaching Chinese to members of the Chinese community dates back to 1848, when, with the help of Chinese Americans living in New York, Cantonese Chinese language schools were established in a number of major American cities (Edwards, 2008). Financial and organizational support to language schools was also provided by religious institutions and representative offices of foreign countries. For several decades, the tsarist government of Russia provided assistance to Orthodox schools operating in Alaska and teaching Russian emigrants (Edwards, 2008).

At the moment, teaching the Spanish heritage language is one of the most developed areas in the methodology of teaching heritage languages in America. According to the 2010 census, the Hispanic population in the United States was 50.5 million, which is 16.3% of the total population of the country and represents the largest ethnic community (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). The period from 1970 to 1990 is regarded as one of the most fruitful in the development of the methodology for teaching the Spanish heritage language (Valdés, 1997).

The term “heritage language” is more common in Canada and the United States, while the term “community language” is preferred in Australia, UK and New Zealand (Wiley, 2005). Researchers using the term “heritage language” emphasize the neutrality of its meaning in comparison with other well-known terms. While the very meanings of the terms “minority language” (minority language), “indigenous language” (language of an indigenous people), “immigrant language” (language of immigrants) contain an indication of the deliberate inequality and alleged oppression of the languages of small ethnic communities by the language majority (Hornberger, 2005), the term “heritage language” is devoid of the negative connotations associated with its meaning that have appeared throughout the historical development of society. The term “heritage language” is unambiguous and presupposes the consideration as a research object exclusively of the cultural and linguistic heritage of representatives of small ethnic communities, regardless of their attitude to another language, endowed by a higher social status due to historical development (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012).

The specificity of the research object of the methodology for teaching heritage languages is determined by its complex nature. On the one hand, the methodology of teaching heritage languages requires the involvement of a wide range of data from theoretical, experimental and applied linguistics, which for a long time made it much more difficult to separate it as an independent discipline (Montrul, 2016). On the other hand, the object of research of the methodology of teaching heritage languages is focused on the native language as an integral part of the cultural identity of a linguistic person – a representative of an ethnic group immersed in everyday communication in a different, dominant language (Brinton et al., 2008) – which significantly complicated the distinction between the method of teaching heritage languages and the method of teaching foreign languages. In this regard, researchers warn practitioners against blind copying or adapting foreign language teaching methods in relation to teaching heritage languages (Valdés et al., 2006).

## 7. Conclusion

In the course of its formation as an independent research discipline, the methodology of teaching heritage languages has passed a difficult path. The key prerequisite for the emergence of a new scientific direction was the rejection of the policy of forcible assimilation of the linguistic minority. Strengthening the social and political positions of ethnic communities representing the interests of immigrants and indigenous peoples made it possible to put into practice the ideas of preserving and developing the languages of small ethnic groups. The basic concept of the direction under consideration is the term "heritage language". The term is devoid of negative historical associations indicating the inequality of the languages of certain ethnic groups in relation to the dominant language. At the center of the study of the methodology of teaching heritage languages is the native language as an integral part of the cultural identity of a representative of an ethnic group immersed in everyday communication in a different, dominant language.

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