

**IFTE 2017**  
**III International Forum on Teacher Education**

**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION OF SCHOOLCHILDREN  
DURING RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Irina V. Khairova (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Kremlyovskaya Str.18, 420008, Kazan, Russia, Kazan,  
ira-hair@mail.ru, 89673632098

*Abstract*

In the modern world the importance of multicultural education is growing. This education is intended to form ability and readiness of young schoolchildren to live in multicultural, poly-ethnic environment. Research in the sphere of multicultural education is conducted by both foreign and Russian scientists. However, questions of multicultural education in primary schools within the process of different disciplines are still not well-developed. In this article, peculiarities of multicultural education in modern Russia and specific character of it in primary school are defined; results of poly-ethnic cultural diagnostics of primary schoolchildren in the Republic of Tatarstan are presented; methodological recommendations on efficient realization of multicultural education of primary schoolchildren within the process of Russian language learning are developed. Realization of multicultural education in primary school within the process of Russian language learning is possible on the basis of dialogue between cultures as a way to culturize aspects of Russian language learning. This method provides students with an opportunity to learn Russian language and culture in the system of dialogue with other cultures. In this article, we reveal the contents of “Russian language” as a subject which allows for the formation of cultural context and simulation of the process of meeting cultures in Russian language lessons; and we also demonstrate a developed didactic and methodological material. This research may be useful for primary school teachers who work in poly-ethnic classes and academics who study the problems of multicultural education of primary schoolchildren.

© 2017 Published by Future Academy [www.FutureAcademy.org.UK](http://www.FutureAcademy.org.UK)

**Keywords:** Migrational backgrounds, elementary school teachers.



## **1. Introduction**

Modern world is characterized by active globalization, integration and differentiation of cultures, and also by the intensification of migration processes. In this framework, the necessity of multicultural education grows. This education is intended to prepare the rising generation for life in multicultural and poly-ethnic environment.

The concept of multicultural education was first described in 1970s in works of Australian, Canadian and American scientists. The founder of the theoretical idea in the sphere of multicultural education in the USA is James A. Banks (Bessarabova, 2009). According to him, multicultural education is in some way an example of cultural diversity and opportunities (Banks, 2007). The theory and practice of multicultural education continues its development in pedagogical science. In works of such scientists as Amber, Benedict, Poisson, etc, the influence of cultural factor on a nation and the hierarchy of its values is analysed (Filatova, 2007). The questions of racial (national) prejudices and discrimination and possibility of its overriding are studied in works of Ball, S.J. (2003), S. Brock, C. Grant (2002), etc.

Russian scientists also conduct research of different aspects in the field of multicultural education. The concept of multicultural education expansion has been developed (Borisenkov et al., 2004; Suprunova, 2011, etc.); the process of multicultural education and the problem of its supplement to certain educational learning materials is described in the works of Arutyunyan et al. (1998), etc. The problem of tolerance in education and peculiarities of teachers' work with migrants' children are studied by Gukalenko (2003), Kukushkn, (2011). Some forms and methods of multicultural education in the context of regionalization of Russian education system have been proved to be effective by Dautova (2004).

It should be mentioned, that Russian multicultural education has some peculiarities. Teaching morality, patriotism and internationalism as the basis for the value principles of educational system were kept in practise for schoolchildren to understand the idea of multicultural education from the first stages of general education. This is a peculiar trait for comprehension of the idea of multicultural education in our country (Anokhin & Ilyinskaya, 2015)

The topicality of the research is also enhanced by the fact that in the educational provision of Russian Federation, multicultural education has been acknowledged as one of valued benchmarks within the implementation of Federal State Educational Standards. The necessity of multicultural education is also emphasized in such core documents as The Constitution of the Russian Federation, The Law of the Russian Federation on Education, The Conception of Spiritual and Moral Development and Education of Citizen of Russia, etc.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Analysis of multicultural education theory and practice in modern schools allowed us to determine contradictions between the need to implement multicultural education and growth in pedagogical basics, and methodological recommendations for its effective realisation in the process of teaching.

In Russian academic literatures, questions of multicultural education in primary school, creation of educational environment which contributes to the formation of multicultural personality, and mechanisms of schoolchildren's multicultural education are still not well-developed.

The theme of the research was determined in accordance to the identified problems. In our work, we will deal with the multicultural education of primary schoolchildren within the process of the Russian language learning.

### **3. Research Questions**

In our research, we plan to answer the following questions.

What is the level of formed multiethnic culture among primary school students in the Republic of Tatarstan? Multiethnic culture is considered as a result of multicultural education in primary school

(Grineva et al., 2010).

On what kind of material (lexical, textual, extra-linguistic or didactic) is it possible to implement multicultural education in the process of Russian language learning? If the dialogue is considered as a merge of different cultures, to what other cultures can we combine the Russian culture within the process of primary schoolchildren teaching in conditions suitable for the Republic of Tatarstan?

What are the means, methods, and forms of multicultural education in primary school within the process of Russian language learning?

### **4. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to define pedagogical conditions of multicultural education by means of the Russian language teaching to primary schoolchildren.

### **5. Research Methods**

In the research we have applied a complex of methods. Theoretical methods: analysis of the main research concepts on the basis of studying philosophic, cultural, and pedagogic literature; structure-functional analysis of social and pedagogic problems of the schoolchild's multicultural personality development.

Empiric methods: supervision of teacher's works and schoolchildren's activity on the Russian language lessons, questionnaires, interviewing of teachers and students, pedagogic experiment, and statistical analysis of the obtained data.

To determine the level of children's multiethnic culture we applied diagnostic methods to both complex and separate components of multiethnic culture. Based on this, we used some famous methods which were revised considering age peculiarities of primary schoolchildren (Grineva et al., 2010). Questionnaire "Determination of culturological comprehension level among primary schoolchildren". Quiz "Determination of ethnic tolerance level". Test "Do you demonstrate ethnic tolerance", etc.

### **6. Findings**

We considered multicultural education as humanistic personality socialisations, which can combine national dignity and equal communication and cooperation with representatives of other ethnic groups.

In the scientific works of the last decade (Grineva et al., 2010), it is stressed that in modern conditions of multiethnic and multicultural Russia, there should not be a line drawn between interethnic and multicultural education: multicultural education forms the essence of multiethnic education. Multiethnic culture is considered as an exposure to the highest system of values, comprehension of native and foreign culture basis, and ability to live in multiethnic environment.

The research on the height of multi-ethnic culture among primary schoolchildren was held according to three criteria: cognitive, value and emotional, and pragmatist. Cognitive criteria include a complex knowledge about culture represented in the native language, and ascertaining the level of schoolchildren's comprehension of the similarities and differences between native and foreign cultures. Emotional criteria involve interest in the knowledge about other nationalities, empathy to people from different ethnic groups, ability and desire to communicate and have common social activity with them, competence to evaluate people, mainly from the point of universal human values. Pragmatist criteria characterize showing respect and tolerance to people from different ethnic groups or absence of negative attitude towards them, and the ability to control their behaviour according to the situation of interethnic cooperation.

126 students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade took part in the research held in the Republic of Tatarstan. They were from Nizhnekamsk (MBOU "Liceum № 14") and Kazan (MAOU "Gimnasium 37", MBOU "Secondary General School with advanced study of English language").

For diagnostics of cognitive criteria we used the questionnaire "Determination of cultural comprehension level among primary schoolchildren".

Before handing out the questionnaires we asked schoolchildren to define the word "nationality". Children gave the following definition easily: "Nationality is a person's belonging to some nation".

The questionnaire included the following questions:

1. Do you know people of what nationalities live in Russia and in the Republic of Tatarstan?
2. Do you know your nationality? What is it?
3. What is your father's, mother's, grandmother's and grandfather's nationality?
4. Do you know traditions and customs of your nationality? Which ones?
5. Do you know your classmates' nationalities?

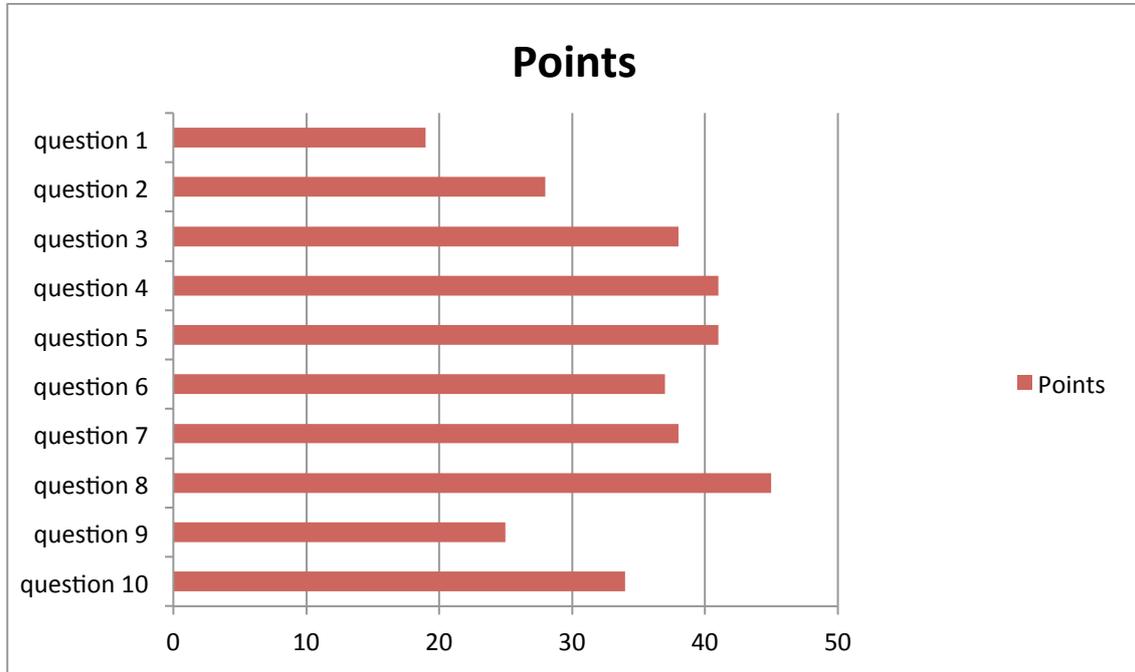
On the 1<sup>st</sup> question 80% of schoolchildren answered positively, 2% wrote that they knew, but not all.

96% of schoolchildren stated their nationality without any difficulty. Only one child wrote that he didn't know. The same percentage of answers was observed up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> question.

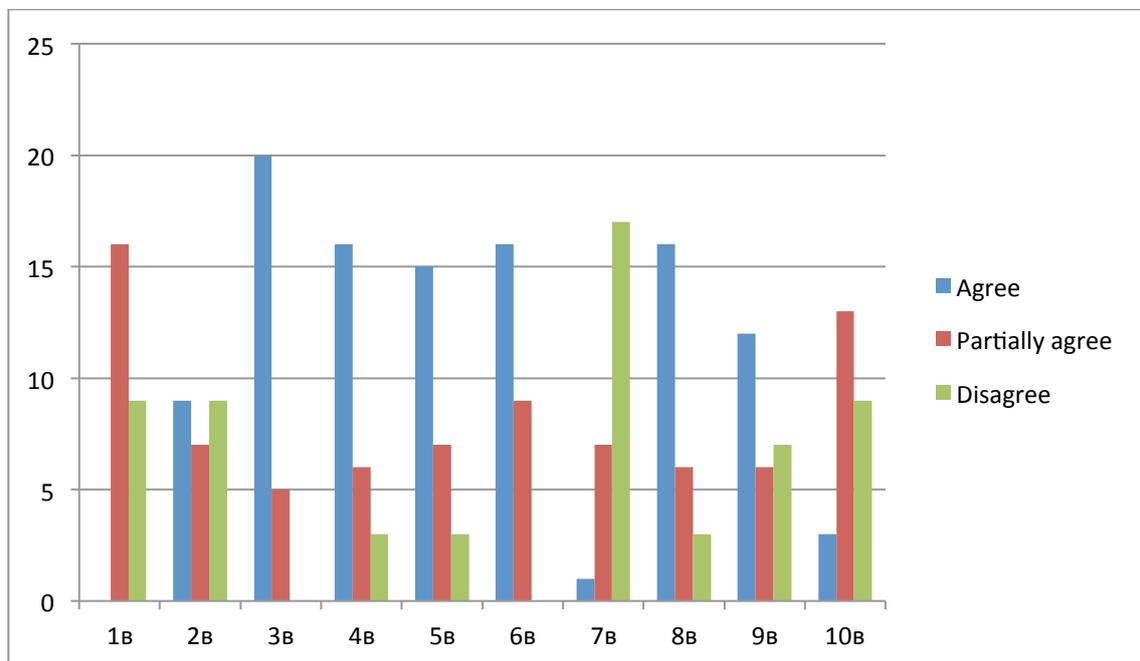
80% of students had difficulties with the 4<sup>th</sup> question. They wrote only names of holidays as the answer. Tatar children answered Sabantuy, Eid al-Fitr. Russian children remembered Maslenitsa, Easter, and New Year. Children of other nationalities also stated only famous holidays. The answers on this question demonstrate the poor knowledge primary schoolchildren have about traditions and customs of their nationality.

80% of children answered the last question positively and named their classmates' nationalities correctly. 20% of schoolchildren gave negative answer stating that they didn't have full answers to the question.

To determine value and emotional criteria, we used the quiz “Index of ethnic tolerance”. Students had several quotations on which they had to answer “agree, partially agree, disagree”. All questions were intended to elicit the levels of their tolerance to other nations and nationalities. The quiz was analyzed both from the point of individual and group indexes. The results are shown in Figures 03 and 04.



**Figures 03.** Analysis of ethnic tolerance level. Group results.



**Figures 04.** Analysis of ethnic tolerance level. Group results.

The analysis demonstrated that the answers on 6 questions out of 10 had high levels, and 3 – average levels. The question about how they felt when others spoke some unknown language in their presence the schoolchildren answered that they felt unpleasant and uncomfortable.

Analysing individual data of ethnic tolerance we obtained the following numbers: students with high levels - 51%, with average levels – 40%, low levels – 9%. In our opinion, these results are quite logical. Because the Republic of Tatarstan has always been defined by peaceful coexistence of eastern and Russian cultures, helping them to develop and mutually enrich each other.

At the same time, we think, it is necessary to notice big fragmentation in individual data: 12% of children with high level of tolerance obtained 18 points, and 5% of children with low level got only 7 points. So, there are children with quite low level of ethnic tolerance among primary school children.

When researching the pragmatist criteria, we used the test “Do you demonstrate ethnic tolerance?”. School children had to answer the following questions: what is your attitude towards appearance, would like to sit on a desk with a child of another nationality, or can you be in the same team with them, etc. The research showed that 100% of schoolchildren would not laugh at a person who wears hijab, tubeteyka or any other piece of clothes belonging to some nationality. However, at the same time 18% of students didn't want to sit at one desk with a child of different nationality and would ask to change seat.

Answering the question what national costume to put on a doll, 92% of children said “I will put on the costume I like the most”.

On the test question - “In a competition, if you have to join together in a team, on what basis would you join? 1) the nationality of my teammates doesn't matter; 2) I will join with children of my nationality”. 25% chose the 2<sup>nd</sup> variant saying it was easier to communicate and work with people of their nationality.

Therefore, the diagnostics proves that it is necessary to continue conscious and systematic work on multi-ethnic culture formation among primary schoolchildren.

Realization of multicultural education in primary school within the processes of learning Russian language is possible based on dialogue between cultures to enculturate these aspects to Russian language learning. This gives students an opportunity to learn Russian language and culture in the system of a dialogue between cultures of other nations. The term “dialogue between cultures” is considered as a guided modulated process for learning the point of contact between cultures; and on its basis understanding their similarities and peculiarities, having a deeper cognition of their own culture and penetration into another culture (Bystrova et al., 2004). This dialogue aids co-learning of the language and national culture. It can prepare students for real dialogues in intercultural communications.

It should be stressed, that dialogue between cultures doesn't mean the evaluation of two cultures, but finding their originality and uniqueness by their comparison.

Dialogue principles in Russian language learning is put forward in fundamental documents of Federal State Educational Standard (2010). In the suggested principle of educational programme of primary general education, it is written: “As a result of Russian language learning, students...will start to perceive the language as...a phenomenon of national culture, positive value-emotional perception of Russian and the formation of native language will begin; they will seek to use them correctly. Russian and native languages will become the basis of the whole knowledge-obtaining process and a means for thinking, imagination, and the development of intellectual and artistic abilities in schoolchildren.” However, we suggest adding into a lesson not only dialogues with native language, but also dialogues with the culture of foreign languages learnt by children. In the Republic of Tatarstan, schoolchildren in addition to compulsory Russian and Tatar languages learn a foreign language from the 2nd form. This

foreign language is very interesting to schoolchildren. It is proved by the number of works, sent by children taking part in International Contest of Children`s Research Works “Otkrytie”, which is annually organized by Kazan Federal University. Schoolchildren write linguistic fairytales on, English grammar – “The Kingdom of English Irregular Verbs” by Gorbunova Darya from the 4<sup>th</sup> form of school 51; research works as Kolgin Dima from Chystopol (Tatarstan) - “Idiomatic menagerie” where he studied peculiarities of how to use zoomorphism in Russian and English phraseological units. Khisamutdinova Reykhan, a student from the 4<sup>th</sup> form (school 165), in Kazan, wrote quite an interesting work “Comparison of Tartar and Turkish words meanings and pronunciation”, etc. The number of such works is gradually growing. In 2017 they comprised 63% of all works nominated for “Young linguist”. Based on the level of their abilities, schoolchildren carry out comparison and collocation analysis of nationally marked language units, in linguistic fairytales they interpret laws of language, getting deeper knowledge in linguistic theory.

To simulate situations when cultures meet, it is necessary to form cultural context. It is possible if the content of “Russian language” discipline is amplified by extra-linguistic materials; texts with national and cultural component (first of all folklore texts: riddles, sayings, proverbs, etc.); speaking etiquette, information about culture, everyday life, traditions, customs of nations; nationally marked language units.

The methods of working with culture-bearing language units should be built in the following ways; definition of national and cultural content, comparison and elicitation of cultural and national peculiarities of language units under comparison in the aspect of value system which are typical for the mentality nations, and the use in speech.

Russian language course books for primary school, as our analysis has demonstrated, contain enough material for realization of cultural works, basically, only in the context of Russian culture. A teacher must come to the dialogue between cultures by himself. He needs didactic teaching materials to do it. For this reason, we have gathered corresponding linguistic material and have developed complex of exercises in this material.

In the article we will demonstrate the methodology of working with phraseological units in the context of dialogue between cultures. A summary table has been drawn. It was based on phraseological units of Russian language suggested in course books for primary schools, and we also took into account poly-ethnicity of classes which took part in the experiment.

See a fragment of the table.

**Table 01.** Phraseological similarities

<b>Russian</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Tatar</b>	<b>Uzbek</b>	<b>Ukrainian</b>	<b>Kazakh</b>
Гнаться за двумя зайцами (Run after two hares)	try to kill two birds with one stone	Икекөймәненкөйрыг ынтотарга.	Иккиқуённин гкетиданқувган, иккаласиданхамуруққолар .	Не женись за двома зайцями	Екікеменіңқұйрығынұст ағансуғакетеді
Знание – сила	Knowledge is Power	Белү–көч	Билим – кучда, куч – билимда (Knowledge is power, power is in knowlege)	Знання сила	Күш – білімде, білім – кітапта (Power is in knowlege, knowledge is in books)

Russian	English	Tatar	Uzbek	Ukrainian	Kazakh
Делать из мухи слона (Make a fly out of an elephant)	make a mountain out of a molehill	төймәдәндөясау	Пашшадан фил ясамоқ	робити з мухи слона	Түймедейдітүйедейету
Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей (Don't have 100 rubles, but have 100 friends)	A friend in court is better than a penny in purse	Йөзсумакчаңбулганчы, йөздустыңбулсын	Юз сўмпуллингбўлмасин	не май і сто рублів, та одного друга (Don't have 100 rubles and one friend)	Жүзсомың болғанша – жүздосың болсын.
Семь раз отмерь, один раз отрежь (Measure seven times, cut once)	Measure twice before you cut once	Жидетапқырулчә, бертапқыр кис	Еттиўлчаб, биркес.	Сімраз відміряй, а раз відріж	Жетіретөлшеп, бірреткес.
Седьмая вода на киселе (seventh water in jelly)	Second cousin twice removed	бикераккардәшиләртурында	Еттиётбегон (совершенно чужой)	десята вода на киселі	Тоқсанатаданқосылғанжакын

Here are some examples of exercises from our complex.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> part we gathered exercises intended to reveal the meaning of a phraseological unit, and explain it. Herewith, from the point of multicultural education realization, during the analysis of Russian proverbs and sayings, it is important to pay attention to their thematic similarities with the sayings of other nations.

Exercise 1. Find a phraseological unit from your native language similar to the foreign one:

- 1) Ukrainian: Такий, щойого й у кишенюсховавби (so that to hide it in a pocket)
- 2) Uzbek: Хар ким әкканиниўрап (each one will harvest what he has seeded)
- 3) English: Measure twice before you cut once

Exercise 2. Match Tatar phraseological units with their Russian equivalents.

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1) Телеозын      | А) Язык без костей (Lying pays no tax) |
| 2) Алтын куллар  | Б) Длинный язык (Loose tongue)         |
| 3) Телнеңсәягеюк | В) Золотые руки (skilful fingers)      |

Exercise 3. Divide these phraseological units into three columns.

**Table 02.** Division of phraseological units

Как две капли воды (Russian) (as two drops of water)	Как свои пять пальцев (Russian) (as my five fingers)	Зарубить себе на носу (Russian) (notch on the nose)

Phraseological units: as two peas (English), like the back of my hand (English), as two berries (Swedish), need to write it behind my ears (German), as an egg and an egg (German), know it as my own pocket (French), need to hummer into my head (French).

In the second unit, there were tasks aimed to teach how to use idioms in speech.

Exercise 4. Substitute underlined words by idioms (use the tables). Match sentences with idioms and the ones without them, what, in your opinion, has changed? Which sentence (with an idiom or without it) would you choose? Why? Are there in your native language similar sayings? Make sentences in your native language with one of them.

У него какая-то путаница в мыслях. (каша в голове)

He has some mess in his thoughts. (head is in jumble)

Этот мальчик маленького роста. (от горшка два вершка)

This boy is short. (knee-high to a mosquito)

Эта женщина очень болтлива. (язык без костей)

This lady is a chatterbox. (talks for mile in a minute)

Сегодня Наденька проснулась очень рано. (ни свет ни заря)

Nadyenka got up very early today. (bright and early)

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> unite there are tasks of creative character.

Exercise 5. Each of you is an individual. I suggest you, young writer, to create your own phraseological units and describe them using the following chart:

1 – Write a new phraseological unit

2 – Say your nationality

3 – Explain the meaning of the idiom

4 – Give examples of sentences when it is used

5 – Share it with your classmates and make up a phraseological dictionary for your class.

Exercise 6. Ask your relatives what phraseological units they use more frequently. Prepare a presentation in your language “Favourite idioms of my family”.

Phraseological units represent the mentality of their creators and have didactic character. Therefore, they should be used in poly-ethnic classes as efficient means of teaching and upbringing of schoolchildren of different nationalities.

## 7. Conclusion

During our research, we found out that multicultural education of primary school children on lessons of Russian language can be carried out through dialogues between cultures. The dialogue in

Russian language learning becomes an important means for students to understanding how diverse the world is. It helps them to accept and realize values of another culture, and by doing so, get a deeper penetration into their own culture and understand the uniqueness of it.

We have developed didactic material which may be used in the process of Russian language teaching of primary schoolchildren, aimed to fulfil multicultural education. The educational material which demonstrates similarities and likeness of languages takes an important place in our study. The dialogue between cultures in modern primary school can be built on philological integration of Russian, native and foreign languages which are studied.

The problem of dialogue between cultures in language teaching is not new, but it obtains greater importance in modern schools as education becomes multicultural and oriented on cultures of different nations.

## Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## References

- Anokhin, D. G. , Il'inskaya, I. P. (2015). Multicultural education of younger schoolchildren by means of folk art. *Vestnik Kostroma State University*, 2(21).
- Arutyunyan, Yu. V., Drobizheva, L. M, Susoklov, A. A. (1998). *Ethnosociology: Textbook. Manual for universities*. Moscow: Aspect Press.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). *Class strategies and the education market: The middle classes and social advantage*. Routledge.
- Banks, J. (2007). *Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Bessarabova, I.S. (2009). *Current state and development trends of multicultural education in the USA: Abstract. Phd Dissertation*. Volgograd.
- Borisenkov, V. P. , Gukalenko, O. V. , Danilyuk, A. Ya. (2004). *Multicultural educational space in Russia: history, theory, design principles*. Moscow-Rostov-na-Donu: Publishing house of the Russian State Pedagogical University.
- Bystrova, E. A, Lvov, S.I., Kapinos, V.I. (2004). *Culturological function of the Russian language in the system of teaching it. Learning the Russian language in school. Textbook. A handbook for students of pedagogical institutes*. Moscow.
- Dautova, G. Zh. (2004). *Development of multicultural education in the Volga region: PhD Thesis*. Kazan.
- Filatova, M. V. (2007). *Multicultural education of junior schoolchildren in Ireland. PhD Thesis*. Moscow State Pedagogical University.
- Grant, C. A., & Gomez, M. L. (1996). *Making schooling multicultural: Campus and classroom*. Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers.
- Grineva, E. A., Belonogova, L. N., Zabbarova, M. G. (2010). Polyethnic culture of schoolchildren: diagnostic aspect. *Science and school*, (5).
- Gukalenko, O. V. (2003). *Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*. Rostov-on-Don: Publishing house of the Russian State Pedagogical University.
- Kukushkn, V. S. (2011). *Education of a tolerant personality in a multicultural society. A handbook for the teacher*. Rostov-on-Don: Gingo.
- Suprunova, L. L. (2011). Priority directions of multicultural education in a modern Russian school. *Pedagogy*, (4), 16-28.
- The federal state standard of basic general education (2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.ru/db/portal/obschee/>