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**CULTURAL COMPONENT IN THE MULTILINGUAL  
EDUCATION**

Natalia V. Novospasskaya (a), Natalia V. Perfilieva (b), Olesya V. Lazareva (c)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Associate Professor, RUDN University, 117198, Miklukho-Maklaia str., 6, Moscow, Russia,  
novospasskaya\_nv@pfur.ru

(b) Associate Professor, RUDN University, 117198, Miklukho-Maklaia str., 6, Moscow, Russia,  
perfilieva\_nv@pfur.ru

(c) Senior Lecturer, RUDN University, 117198, Miklukho-Maklaia str., 6, Moscow, Russia,  
lazareva\_ov@pfur.ru\*

***Abstract***

The article analyzes the cultural component of teaching in multilingual groups. The experience of teaching university programs has revealed the necessity to develop teaching recommendations which take into account the cultural component. This fact will allow foreign students to integrate more effectively into the system of training in a foreign university, as well as to remove psycholinguistic difficulties caused by the mismatch of cultural codes. An associative experiment was conducted at RUDN University to identify the cultural and linguistic component in multilingual groups. The hypothesis of the experiment is to reveal semantic components of emotives which are expressed by words of colors in the Russian and other languages and to identify the proportion of match/mismatch of the linguistic world-image. The analysis of the experiment results revealed the peculiarity of the emotional sphere of non-native Russian speakers. The development of the methodology including the cultural component is in line with the current psycholinguistic tendencies that apply the associative experiment as a method of understanding the language; creation of bilingual associative dictionaries; creation of the corpus of metaphors of the Russian language; creation of data visualization; work in the field of computational approaches to the visualization of abstract lexical units. The results of the associative experiment have demonstrated the discrepancy between the semantic codes of the emoticons of Russian and other languages. The materials of the study can be used in the lexicographic field, to create manuals for students.

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**Keywords:** Functional cultural codes, linguistic world-image, multilingual.



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## 1. Introduction

The article describes the experience of teaching the Russian language in multilingual groups at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University). The RUDN University was established in 1961 as a University focused on teaching not only Russian, but also foreign students from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Until 1999, the ratio of Russian and foreign students persisted as 30:70. At present, this proportion has changed significantly due to political and economic transformations in Russia in general and in higher education sphere in particular. To date, the total number of people who study at all forms of training at RUDN University is 32 000, the number of foreign students is 10 000. The number of educational programs in the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia is 472, including master's programs (188), specialty (7), bachelor's programs (74), post-graduate studies (145) and residency training (58). The number of programs in foreign languages (English, Spanish) is 73. Thus, the majority of students, including foreign students, continue to receive education in the Russian language.

## 2. Problem Statement

The specificity of the RUDN University lies in the fact that students from 155 countries of the world study there (see Table 1). In this connection, the issue of taking into account cultural traditions and mentality in the educational process is acute.

**Table 01.** Geography of educational and scientific contacts of RUDN University (UIN, 2017)

Parts of the world	Countries (amount)
Africa	44
Asia	42
Latin America	29
Europe	24
former Soviet republics	16

Here are statistical data on students and countries from which they come to study at RUDN University. In Table 2, 10 countries with the maximum number of students who are enrolled in RUDN University educational programs are listed.

**Table 02.** 10 leaders-countries by the number of foreign students at all forms of education of RUDN University (UIN, 2017)

Country and place in the rating	Amount of students
1- Uzbekistan	742
2-China	534
3- Kazakhstan	411
4- Tajikistan	308
5- Azerbaijan	300
6- Ukraine	293
7-Iran	257
8- Turkmenistan	185
9- Vietnam	175
10-Moldova	166

Such a distribution can be explained for a number of reasons. Thus, out of 10 countries with the maximum number of foreign students at RUDN University, seven countries are the former Soviet republics, which, naturally, is due to cultural and educational ties with Russia. Traditionally, students from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Tajikistan are well acquainted with the cultural traditions of Russia; in these countries, the organization of the educational process is similar, and Moldova, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan form a unified educational and scientific space with Russia. This accounts for a large percentage of foreign students from these countries.

Table 3 provides statistical data on the number of students by country without regard to the former Soviet republics.

**Table 03.** 10 leaders among far-abroad countries in terms of the number of foreign students at all forms of training of RUDN University (UIN, 2017)

Country and place in the rating	Amount of students
1-China	534
2-Iran	257
3-Vietnam	175
4-Afghanistan	136
5- South Africa	134
6-Namibia	130
7- Nigeria	110
8- Syria	101
9- Mongolia	74
10- Ecuador	72

The given statistical data are the testimony to the attractiveness for foreign students to study at RUDN University, as well as to the possibility of obtaining future political, economic, scientific, educational and cultural contacts.

### 3. Research Questions

In the proposed article, the focus of the research is on the connection of the emotional component with the color designation in Russian and Chinese linguocultures, in general the study was conducted on the base of the linguistic material of six languages (Russian, Chinese, Arabic, French, English, Spanish). To identify the difference in perception of reality associated with the peculiarities of the linguistic consensus functioning, we turned to the method of free associative experiment. It should be noted that these differences are usually not recognized by native speakers and are not identified by other means of investigation. N.V. Ufimtseva in the work "Linguistic consciousness as a reflection of ethno-cultural reality" states that the associative experiment is one of the ways to demonstrate linguistic consciousness ... Since linguistic consciousness cannot be an object of analysis at the time of the processes realizing it, it can be studied only as a product of the former activity, or, in other words, it can become an object of analysis at the moment of the processes that realize it, in their transformed forms alienated from the subject of consciousness (cultural objects and quasi-objects) (Ufimtseva, 2003). In the opinion of Yu.N. Karaulov, "the mutual information of the stimulus and reaction can be interpreted as the result of the native speaker's reflection. Reflexive act can be caused by various parameters of the stimulus – its linguistic characteristics,

denotative attribution, and standard relation to the phenomenon or the fact that is designated by it, and other features of it" (Ufimtseva, 2015).

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

The analysis of the research is reveal the peculiarity of the emotional sphere of non-native Russian speakers. The purpose of the experiment was to describe the functioning of emotives in Russian and Chinese linguocultures.

#### **5. Research Methods**

*Associative experiment.* The article presents data of an associative experiment conducted in paper is only printed in black-white color. The number of respondents was 100 people. The hypothesis of the study was the idea that there are discrepancies in color designation and nomination of emotions in the Russian and Chinese languages, in spite of the fact that the very presence of basic emotions is universal. Thus, the authors of various theories call the number of emotions in the range from 2 to 10. To analyze the correspondences, we proposed basic emotions (*joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, fear*) and the basic colors with which you can convey the emotional states of a person. This list coincides with the list of basic emotions in the works of Paul Ekman. The experiments carried out by P. Ekman and a group of researchers have proved that the expression of emotions with the help of vocabulary depends on cultural norms.

#### **6. Findings**

The article details the answers of Chinese students, obtained as a result of an associative experiment conducted in multilingual groups. The results were systematized and formed the basis for practical recommendations for teachers working in similar groups.

##### **6.1. Multicultural approach**

Traditionally, at the RUDN University, training groups and living in a dorm room were formed according to the multicultural principle. A multicultural approach is understood as such a principle of the organization of studies in higher education, when the cultural traditions of several peoples are organically combined. This approach was enshrined in the following normative acts: the Concept of multicultural education in higher school of the Russian Federation (Davydov, 2003), the Concept of spiritual and moral development and education of the personality of a citizen of Russia (Danilyuk, Kondakov & Tishkov, 2001), the Concept of multicultural education in Russia (The Concept of Multicultural Education..., 2010) and others, who lead work in the direction of multicultural education researches (Lipschultz, 2014; Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera & Cummins, 2014; Perflieva, Novospasskaya & Arsenyeva, 2017; Remchukova & Sokolova, 2017; Shaposhnikova, 2016; Verboord, 2014; Lee, 2014; Krasina, 2017; Guilherme, & Dietz, 2015; Cummins & Persad, 2014; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Belogurov, 2005).

In the Russian scientific tradition, there are works on a multicultural approach at the secondary school level, for example (Borisenkov, 2006), higher education institution (Belogurov, 2005), but this problem remains relevant, cultural components awareness at various stages of the educational process is

not sufficiently presented. It should be noted that the multicultural approach fixed in 2003 at RUDN University has been applied since 1961, from the moment the University was founded.

During this time, a vast experience of teaching in such groups has been accumulated. How is the educational process for foreign students organized at RUDN University? Education at the University begins for a foreign student at the Faculty of the Russian Language and General Education, where 1700 people were studying at the end of 2017. The task, which is put before the teachers of the faculty, is to prepare foreign students for training in Russian together with Russian students at the main faculties in the course of the academic year. Therefore, along with the study of the Russian language, in which further on foreign students receive professional education, students start studying the language of the specialty two weeks after the commencement of studies.

## **6.2. The cultural component awareness in the course of educational programs of RUDN University**

The cultural component is associated with the concept of the cultural code, which is a synthesis of the etiquette of cultural code; social cultural code; various codes for modeling the world, including color code. The latter became the object of an associative experiment, which results are analyzed in the article.

Color code for modeling the world was revealed through an associative experiment, the type of research was first applied in psycholinguistics by C. Osgood (Osgood, 1960) and J. Deese (Deese, 1965). The very concept of cultural code was introduced by U. Eco. He viewed cultural code as an algorithm that allows you to decode texts. So, cultural code is a way of deciphering the cultural unconscious factor that is hidden from understanding. It is a certain type of culture, where features and unique social information are encoded. U. Eco distinguishes the following types of cultural codes: 1) etiquette; 2) world modeling systems including myths, legends, theological systems that create a single picture reflecting the global vision of the world from the perspective of a community; 3) models of the social organization of the society (Eco, 2004).

In the language as a semiotic system that stores and transmits information and is closely interrelated with culture, cultural codes are revealed in paremia of various types, in etiquette lexis, etc. According to A. Ya. Flier cultural code has the following characteristics:

- 1) self-sufficiency for the production, translation and preservation of human culture;
- 2) openness to change;
- 3) universality (Flier, 2000).

Cultural codes are found in ideological, national, gender, class traditions and stereotypes formed in a person from childhood.

It is known that a code is an algorithm for interpreting specific messages that can be read in different ways depending on the degree of decoding. Cultural codes are transformed; however, linguistic structures are always fundamental. In the linguistic structures the knowledge is accumulated based on perceptual experience obtained as a result of sensory and visual perception transmitted from generation to generation.

B. Berlin and P. Kay discovered the universal evolutionary law of color designation in languages and distinguished several stages in the development of color terminology, while they affirm that there is a certain sequence of appearance of each color designation.

At the first stage (I) in languages, there are two basic color designations nominating the *white* and *black* colors. At the next step (II), a lexical unit denoting red is added to the two colors. B. Berlin and P. Kay consider the triad *white-black-red* to be universal and primary. Most color terms have an object origin, except for the names of black, white and red: they were originally abstract.

In the following stages of color designation, *blue*, *green*, and *yellow* are added in languages (III–V). The seventh color (VI) always results to be *brown*, and the higher stage (VII) is characterized by the appearance of four colors: *pink*, *orange*, *purple* and *gray* (see Table IV). The following statement agrees with this result: "Many sources convincingly show the primacy of the binary opposition of white and black: originally human life was regulated by two factors – daylight and night darkness. Light was associated with active life and solar heat, and the darkness of the night – with passivity, cold and mystery. Hence, a complex of positive values for white, whiteness, light and negative – black, blackness, dark, is stable for most cultures" (Shemyakin, 1960; Turner, 1983; Vasilevich, Mischenko, Kuznetsova 2008).

**Table 04.** Representation of the appearance of color designations in languages according to B. Berlin and P. Kay (Vasilevich, Mischenko, Kuznetsova 2008)

Stage	Color
I	white black
II	red
III-V	blue green yellow
VI	Brown
VII	pink orange purple gray

Nevertheless, students-native speakers of different languages at stimulus-emotive were offering unequal or even polar associations motivated by the realities of their native language, for example.

The yellow color is associated in Chinese culture with positive emotions and causes associative connection with such concepts as emperor, holiday, elegant, expensive. Clarifying questions have shown that this association is caused by the fact that the yellow color in the history of China is the color of the clothes of the emperor and his family members during the reign of the Qing dynasty.

The yellow color in Arab culture symbolizes fame, success, but also can have the meaning of digestive organs disease.

The yellow color in the Russian tradition has a negative evaluation; it is considered a symbol of death, even from pagan times. Later, at Easter, yellow eggs were brought to the cemeteries for the commemoration of the deceased.

In European civilization the yellow color was associated with the color of gold, i. e. of the ruling class, therefore, various shades of yellow become traditional for European and then Russian imperial architecture. This was the way the associative connotation with the yellow color in Russian linguoculture was changing.

The study of the problem of cultural codes and color designations showed that color categories are determined simultaneously by the objective material world, by the features of human biology, by human thinking and cultural factors.

### **6.3. The discrepancy in the perception of colors and transmission of emotions through color designations in the Chinese and Russian languages**

Even greater discrepancies in the perception of colors and transmission of emotions through color designations are found in languages belonging to different language families, in particular, in Chinese and Russian. A good example of this can be the fact that in modern Chinese there are 20 designations of white color and its shades. For instance, in Chinese, the white color can be transmitted by language units that are absent in Russian:

1. 皎皎 – sparkling, shiny, clear
2. 珍珠白 – the color of pearls
4. 盐白色 – the color of salt
5. 白玉色 – the color of white jade.

Some of the listed shades of white are also present in Russian, but these nominations are often not equal to the word, and values of white are conveyed descriptively, for example, white + *milky-white* shade or by comparison with the word combinations. In the Russian language there are lexemes, which contain the seme of the white color: *snow-white*, *whitish*, *poor*, etc.

Unlike the basic white color non-basic colors give even a greater discrepancy both in their designation and in the transmission of emotions through color, for example, the red color in Chinese is represented by a set of 47 hieroglyphic signs. In Russian, it is impossible to transmit the red color and its hues with the help of the given language units:

酒糟红 – red, like the color of the sediment in wine; the first two hieroglyphs designate wine sediment, the third – red.

茶红色 – the red color of red tea.

玛瑙色 – the color of agate.

鸡血红 – the color of chicken blood, the first two characters indicate the blood of a chicken, and the third hieroglyph – red;

莲红色 – the first hieroglyph stands for lotus; the second is red, the third is color.

赤红 – dark red.

醉红 – drunk blush.

血红 – blood.

杜鹃花红 – the color of azalea.

椒红色 – the color of red pepper.

猩红 – the color of a gorilla; the first hieroglyph means a gorilla, the second – red.

## 7. Conclusion

Modern society is marked by the interaction of processes of diversification and unification expressed in globalization and multiculturalism. These processes are reflected in higher education in Russia as the emergence and spread of the multicultural approach in the language education.

Many years of experience at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia of the authors of the article allow us to draw the following main conclusions:

1) rapid entry into the linguocultural specificity of the language being studied allows one to perceive new language information in blocks, which increases the speed of mastering the language;

2) color is an important semiotic code, which is reflected in the difference of color designation and color perception in the languages of the world and causes a wide range of color motivated associations. The coincidence or non-coincidence of this code for foreign students studying in Russia affects successful mastering of the language at the required level for further professional education.

The associative experiment conducted at RUDN University convincingly demonstrates the need for continuing the development of teaching methods in multilingual groups. Identified features of cultural codes must be taken into account when writing textbooks and developing study guides.

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