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## CONCEPTS OF “NATIVE CULTURE” IN THE NATIONAL METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Tatyana Vladimirovna Basanova (a)\*, Svetlana Valerievna Manjjeva (b), Svetlana Manjjeva (c), Dolores Dorjievna Khalgaeva (d)

\*Corresponding author

- (a) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Elista Street, Pushkin, Russia, english@kalmsu.ru,  
(b) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Elista Street, Pushkin, Russia, english@kalmsu.ru,  
(c) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Elista Street, Pushkin, Russia, english@kalmsu.ru,  
(d) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Elista Street, Pushkin, Russia, english@kalmsu.ru

### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to the disclosure of the concept of "native culture" in the national pedagogical science. The concept is considered in connection with the concepts of "nation" and "ethnos". It reveals the specifics of its understanding by Russian researchers. Native culture is presented as a bi-directional phenomenon covering civil and ethnic identities. For example, it describes the situation of bilingualism and bi-culturalism in the Republic of Kalmykia, where the overwhelming majority of the population speaks two languages – Kalmyk and Russian. With regard to foreign language teaching, the use of cultural information is based on the principle of comparing the Kalmyk and English cultures and involves a wide range of information reflecting the national reality. Comparative cultural studies contribute to the development of the students' ethno-cultural status, which has a positive impact on the enrichment and self-determination of the individual and on the development of their ability and readiness for intercultural dialogue on the basis of respect for the identity of all participants. The article shows that the productive direction of the introduction of information reflecting the native culture of students is the comparison of ethnodifferentiating and ethno-integrating distinctive features of the cultures being studied, namely: material culture, traditions, values. Comparison of the features of material culture and traditions of foreign-language and own cultures, which are manifested in the everyday life of their representatives and form a special cultural space, in which empirical actions are value-oriented, contributes to effective preparation for intercultural communication.

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**Keywords:** Native culture, civic identity, ethnic identity, regional component.



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## **1. Introduction**

The inclusion of knowledge of the learners' mother tongue in foreign language teaching is seen as a prerequisite for the successful development of intercultural competencies that allow for intercultural communication based on the awareness of "self" and "other" and the mutual desire of the parties to transcend cultural boundaries and to transform them from dividing to unifying factors.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The definition of "native culture" and the development of technology for the use of culturally sensitive information remain among the least studied aspects of methodological science and require comprehensive study.

## **3. Research Questions**

The following tasks were set in the course of the study:

1. Examine and distinguish between the basic concepts of "nation" and "ethnos" and the related concepts of "civic identity" and "ethno-cultural identity".
2. Identify the essence of the concept of "native culture" for the citizens of the Russian Federation who are bilinguals, i.e. who speak two languages – Russian and ethnic.
3. Consider ways of integrating ethnocultural information into the Russian education system using the example of the Republic of Kalmykia as an example.
4. Identify a promising area for more successful introduction of information reflecting the ethnocultural belonging of students in the process of learning a foreign language on the example of teaching the Kalmyks English language.

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

The purpose of the article is to define the essence of the concept of "native culture" in the teaching of a foreign language in Russia, the selection of its ethno-cultural component and identify promising areas for its implementation in the educational process on the example of teaching the Kalmyks English language.

## **5. Research Methods**

The study used theoretical (analysis of philosophical, sociological, cultural, ethnographic, psychological and pedagogical, methodological sources and normative documents) and empirical methods (systematization of practical experience, pedagogical observation).

## **6. Findings**

As the study of the scientific literature shows, these terms "ethnos" and "nation", despite their semantic identity and interchangeability in many cases, are subject specific, covering one side or the other

of the objects under study. The concept of "ethnos" accumulates territorial-linguistic and cultural-psychological components, and the concept of "nation", in addition to the actual ethnic one, is relevant to the processes, the most important of which is the movement for the satisfaction of state and political interests (Simonovich et al., 2017). Tadevosyan (1998) points out that the concept of "nation" is constantly and widely used in two ways: a) as an ethnos, when, along with social class, socio-demographic, socio-territorial, socio-professional and other subdivisions of society into social groups, its social and ethnic differentiation is distinguished – the division into different national and ethnographic groups; b) as a co-citizenship, political union of citizens of a given state.

Thus, it is possible to speak about two basic variants of modern understanding of the nation: ethnic and political (civil). In order to distinguish them, the concepts of "ethno-national" and "civil-national" are sometimes used in the Russian scientific literature. Taking into account the above definitions, in the current research we will adhere to the opinion that the nation is a social structure of a higher level and a qualitatively new public education in comparison with the ethnos.

The linguistic situation in each constituent entity of the Russian Federation has its own specifics and depends on a wide range of demographic and ethnic factors, as well as the number of population and religious preferences (Karaulov, 2002), but in most cases it is reduced to a situation of bilingualism.

Since natural bilingualism is a consequence of "prolonged contact and interaction between speakers of two languages in the process of their joint practical activities, without any purposeful impact on the development of this skill in the multilingual sphere" (Karaulov, 2002, p. 105), but in most cases it is reduced to a situation of bilingualism) (Muratova, 1987), it can be argued that the basis of the language situation in Kalmykia is the functioning of natural Russian-Kalmyk bilingualism.

The phenomenon of bilingualism is closely related to the concept of "biculture". Biculturalism is considered as a result of interaction with another culture and as one of the forms of its adaptation (Sverdlova, 2014), when the process of assimilation of elements of another culture by a person belonging to one culture takes place.

We will study the type of Russian-Kalmyk bilingualism under consideration in more detail. If we assume that the process of mastering the Russian language is going on simultaneously with the development of elements of the culture it represents, then there is a need to consider the interaction between the two cultures in the context of the study.

To clarify this question, we will address the research in the field of sociology. The relationship between the two cultures in the bilingual consciousness is considered through the concepts of "civic identity" and "ethno-cultural identity".

Civil identity is one of the basic ones, since "preservation of the integrity of the Russian Federation, achievement of civil peace and harmony in Russian society, possibility of sustainable progressive development in all spheres of life, directly affecting the interests of each individual, each ethnic community, directly depend on the state of civil identity, the level and nature of citizens' attitude to their country" (Nabok, 2010, p. 42).

The category of ethno-cultural identity implies awareness, understanding and assessment of one's own belonging to an ethnic community (Odegova, 2011). Ethnic identity reflects a person's conscious (or unconscious) relationship with an ethnic group and its culture (Nabok, 2010).

The problem of the correlation between ethnic and civil identity is relevant for Russia, as it concerns the ethnic policy of the state and affects the sphere of interethnic communication. There are two ways of solving this problem. First, civil unity can be achieved by uniting as a single Russian nation and "removing" the ethnic identity of citizens as a factor that destroys civil unity. Second, the state supports ethnic societies that serve as a foundation for building civil society (Nabok, 2010).

At the present stage of development of the Russian society, the last of the above-mentioned ways of nation consolidation is being implemented. One of the central ideas of the "Concept of State National Policy of the Russian Federation" approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of June 15, 1996 (No. 909) is the idea of the unity of civil and ethnic identity.

This approach is reflected in the development of the Concept of Spiritual and Moral Development and Personal Development of Citizens of the Russian Federation, which is the methodological basis of the Federal State Educational Standard. The document states that multicultural education should "provide for the familiarization of students with the cultural values of their ethnic or sociocultural group, the basic national values of Russian society, and universal values in the context of the formation of their civic identity" (Levitskaya, 2010, para. 4).

Achieving one of the goals of the reforming education system – creating conditions for the development of the individual as a representative of the ethnos and citizen of Russia – requires active manifestation of subjectivity in the educational space of the multinational Russian Federation: individual, ethnos, society and state. The dialogue of subjects of cultural space is possible only when each of them, realizing its own self-value and self-sufficiency, sees, understands and accepts the values of another partner in this dialogue, especially when communicating in a foreign language. Comparison of cultural peculiarities, which is assumed in the polylogue of cultures, requires from students, first of all, knowledge about their place of residence and skills to tell about it in a foreign language.

A special role in the process of forming the self-awareness of Russian citizens belongs to the higher education institutions that perform the function of linguistic, cultural and spiritual consolidation of multi-ethnic society in the unity of the three pillars (Shapovalov, 2005): a sense of belonging to one's own people, to one's own ethnos, love and respect for one's own traditions and the history of one's people, an aspiration to master one's own language and culture, a sense of belonging to a multi-ethnic Russian community, and Russian patriotism associated with the rejection of national vanity and the rejection of one's own ethnic claims.

As "native culture" is understood as "the whole set of works of human activity, both material and spiritual: the system of values, perceptions, norms of behavior, traditions, customs, beliefs and language learned in the process of socialization of an individual within the national society and reflected in the consciousness of an individual" (Vysokih, 1999, p. 55), it should be noted that in this case, the concept of "native culture" is a complex integrative entity characterized by a duality – a combination of ethnic and civic identity. It is not a question of "bifurcation" of an individual's consciousness, but of achieving his or her dual identity: the awareness of himself or herself as both a representative of his or her ethnic group and a citizen of the country (Nabok, 2010).

Integration of information reflecting the ethnocultural belonging of students is carried out within the framework of the national and regional component, which gets its content through the correlation with

the concept of "region". The "region" is considered as "a relatively independent spatial-geographical, administrative-territorial, institutional-political, economic, ethnic, social and historical-cultural dimension" (Strelova, 2002, p. 43).

In the course of the implementation of the national and regional component, the following features are being updated (Dyakieva, 2016): historical and national-cultural (traditions, morals, lifestyle and characteristic values); natural and geographical (landscape, climate, mineral resources, environmental problems); social and geographical (population density, character of settlements, traditional occupations, remoteness from other regions, means of communication); social and demographic (national composition, migration processes, sex and age structure)

The first group of features of the region records what is the result of cultural and creative activities of the ethnos, was formed as a result of ethnogenesis, expresses its special way of orientation in the world, in other words – "ethnic culture" (Nabok, 2010).

With the purpose of revealing the sphere of supposed comparison we undertook the study of sociological, culturological and ethnographic literature. The analysis has shown that at the present stage of development of science, the study of ethnic culture is carried out on the basis of the identification of its distinctive features, which simultaneously have an ethno differentiating and ethno-integrating character (Chang, 2011; Cole, 1993). These distinctive features give grounds to consider ethnic culture as a certain set of components present in the culture of each ethnic group, but differently expressed in different specific historical situations. The number of components put forward varies. In addition to language as the main distinctive feature of ethno-cultural community, the main ones are: material culture: economic activity, housing, clothing, food (Ahmad, 1998; Hess et al., 2012); traditions: customs, rituals, rituals, etiquette (Lynch et al., 1995; Kornishina, 2012); values (Vacha-Haase et al., 1994).

The comparison within the proposed cultural spheres is aimed at creating favorable conditions for ethno-cultural self-determination of a person by means of a foreign language, which is understood as an integral component of "a person's awareness of his or her place in the spectrum of cultures and purposeful activities to identify himself or herself with a particular cultural group" (Sysoev, 2004, p. 39). Thus, in the implementation of the ethnocultural component of the English language training for Kalmyk students, attention is paid to the consideration and comparison of the peculiarities of the material culture and traditions of the English and Kalmyk ethnic-cultural communities, which are manifested in the everyday life of their representatives and form a special cultural space, in which empirical actions have a value-oriented character.

## **7. Conclusion**

The study reveals that the concept of "native culture" for citizens of the Russian Federation who are bilinguals is a complex integrative education characterized by a two-pronged combination of ethnic and civic identity. The ethnic component of the concept of "native culture" is implemented in Russian education through the national and regional component, which includes a wide range of issues to be studied. The most promising way of introducing information of an ethnocultural nature in foreign language teaching is through comparative study of the culture of the language being studied and the ethnic culture of the students.

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