The Use of the Literary Text in Teaching of the Russian Language (in Terms of the Example of the "Assigned Reading" Technique)

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Abstract

The article demonstrates linguo-didactic means of a literary text in foreign students’ teaching of Russian. It describes an example of an interactive method of "assigned reading" - in working with the literary text by foreign audience. The "assigned reading" technique can be used in educational process in the initial and advanced course of language study, as it activizes the cognitive activity of foreigners.

Keywords: literary text, Russian as a foreign language, interactive teaching methods, the "assigned reading" technique, the story by A. S. Pushkin "The Blizzard".
1. Introduction

In compliance with the requirements of the Federal state educational standards of higher professional education of the Russian Federation interactive teaching methods should be included in the educational process. New approach to the organization of the educational process is required in the system of language training of foreign students. Interactive teaching methods allow to intensify students’ activities intended for mastering the Russian language, improving their language competence. In a living friendly atmosphere in the process of natural communication, the students master the Russian language.

Using interactive methods increases the requirements for the teacher of Russian as a foreign language (RAF) as an organizer of the learning process. The teacher is to choose the most appropriate methods, procedures and techniques of teaching of RAF, aimed at forming the communicative competence that allows foreigners to fulfill communication tasks in different areas of communication. With the use of interactive methods the students’ cognitive activity, intellectual independence develop, a basis for the work on solving the problems after graduation is created.

2. Problem Statement

This article analyzes linguo-didactic means of one of the interactive methods of the Russian language teaching – "assigned reading" in terms of the example of the story by A. S. Pushkin "The Blizzard". Thanks to the "assigned reading" technique being included into educational process, the students develop their abilities to perceive the foreign-language text in the process of reading and listening, as well as to independently produce spoken and written texts in a foreign language, i. e., oral form of speech (listening, speaking) and written form of speech (reading, writing) are developed, on the basis of which communicative competence in the socio-cultural, educational and scientific spheres of communication is further formed.

3. Methods of Working with Text

The unit of teaching of language and speech is a literary text, which has not only informative and educational functions but also gives great practical opportunities to work with the language. "When defining the range of problems to be solved the teacher of Russian selects a text to work with it in accordance with the goal of a lesson, analyzes the lexis, makes up the vocabulary, prepares assignments, formulates questions to the text and determines their order in consideration of linguistic and lingvo-culturological experience obtained earlier by foreign students. The text should be available and feasible for foreign students, contribute to developing creativity and included in the educational process without losing its systematic character and coherence"[2, p.120]. Using the technique of "assigned reading" in working with the literary text contributes to forming interest in reading the literary text on the one hand and is a stimulus to developing speech skills in the target language on the other.

The technique of "assigned reading" is offered in the textbook "Linguistic Comment of the Story by A. S. Pushkin “The Blizzard” (the second certification level) "[1] under the editorship of O. S. Fisenko [2014]. The technique in the activity approach actualizes the components (text and communicative relations that link it to the sender and receiver) and the relations between them that form the structure of the activity of speech communication.

The choice of the literary text by A. S. Pushkin to work with it is not accidental. Many foreigners are acquainted with its translation into their mother tongue, and the teachers of RAF often use the passages of the writer’s literary works in terms of the practical course of the Russian language.
The text of the story by A. S. Pushkin "The Blizzard" is divided into 20 logical parts, the end of which is graphically marked (with interruption sign), each ending in an intriguing moment.

In front of each student on the desk there should be a blank sheet of paper in addition to the text of the story which is used to cover the text of the narrative. Reading of the story begins at the teacher's word of command. While reading the story there is a constant interaction between the teacher and the students. Paralinguistic information, that is, facial expressions, gestures, etc., is of great importance. Students should read without anticipating. After having read the text, students are to put the text aside and lift their eyes. The teacher can judge the readiness of the audience to further work with the text from the students’ taking their eyes from the text.

The sender (the author of the work) and the recipient (the reader) are principal in the communicative act. The author by using the language communicates a sense to the reader who accepts and understands it through the signs of this language. The teacher acts as a facilitator, the organizer of the communicative act.

The work with each microtext follows the cyclic pattern: challenge, discussion and reflection. It is necessary at each stage to establish a connection with the students’ native lingvoculture by means of asking leading questions, thus realizing methodological principles of teaching of RAF, aimed at the correlated teaching of speech activity and formation of students’ communicativeness.

The challenge to the reading of the text is the question aimed at the development of critical thinking: "What do you think, what will be discussed in the story "The Blizzard"? The teacher acts as a "collector of information": listens carefully to all the answers without rejecting any of the proposed opinions.

Then there follow reading of the text and work on the questions to each part. At this stage there takes place the interpretation of the text and reflection on the text to be read. The last question to each part: "What do you think will happen next?" is a challenge to the next part.

During the taskwork on the text the teacher combines the similar viewpoints of the participants, finds out the audience’s attitude, which promotes different interpretation of the meaning content of the text, filling it with new content and formation of new meaning. There takes place a gradual formation of knowledge, skills and abilities, intended for work with the text. The teacher should give an opportunity to each student to speak. Acting as a "collector of information", the teacher listens carefully to all the answers and does not reject any of the proposed opinions. The students must realize that there are no wrong answers, any opinion is taken into account.

Consider some of the stages of work with the text.

First, the students familiarize themselves with the epigraph to the narrative by A. S. Pushkin "The Blizzard".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERRUPTION 1.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Кони мчатся по буграм,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Топчут снег глубокой…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Вот, в сторонке божий храм</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Виден одинокой.</td>
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<tr>
<td>.........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Вдруг метелица кругом;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Снег валит клоками;</td>
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</table>
The students are proposed to pick out the main words having the basic meaning; to reflect upon what idea is expressed in the epigraph; to find the symbols in the text of the epigraph that point to sad, tragic events. It is necessary to constitute a link with the students’ native living culture by the use of questions: What are the symbols of your native culture which predict the tragic events?, What are the symbols from the Russian culture that coincide with the symbols from your culture? To the extent possible, each student should be given an opportunity to speak.

After the work with the epigraph will have been finished, there takes place a challenge: What do you think will be further? The task to express their thoughts, to become participants of real communicative situations is assigned before the students. The more cultivated oral skills the students have, the more focus will be on the content of the utterance.

This is followed by the reading of the text till the next "interruption". The material should be presented simultaneously with the vocabulary, which can cause difficulties. Such material presentation will save time on consulting dictionaries for a word meaning.

For example:

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Черный вран, свистя крылом,
Вьется над санями;
Вещий стон гласит печаль!
Кони торопливы
Чутко смотрят в темну даль,
Воздымая гривы…

The horses are running through snowdrifts
Stomping the deep snow
Here is a God’s temple alone,
Rising to view.

Sudden impenetrable blizzard;
Flocks of snow;
A black raven with the wings whistling
is hovering around the sledge;
Prophetic dream tells about the sad!
The horses are hasty
Looking keenly into the dark distance,
With their mane bristling…

Zhukovsky
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The words to be interpreted are placed to the right of the text. After reading a selected text the students are proposed to answer the questions to the text. At this stage, the students are tested on their mastering the material on the one hand, and on the other hand, straightforward and easy questions contribute to the students’ being involved into the learning process. Every foreign student contributes to solving the problem. The ability to retrieve information from the text, to transform a sentence, the ability to reproduce the text having been read and listened with certain conciseness are developed in the process of the work; a mechanism of equivalent substitutions, semantic and linguistic guesswork are developed. The task of the teacher is to prompt the students to give complete, polysyllabic replies that focus on communicative proficiency in language. The foreign student’s awareness of his achievement makes learning process to be productive. Since text reading assumes 10-15% of new words, the text snippet is provided with a new vocabulary with explanation of the general and contextual meaning alongside of it. Such material presentation allows to save time for looking the words up in dictionaries. The following questions can be asked to the text selected above: 1. What books did Mariya Gavrilovna read? What genre?; Prove that the author’s attitude to his character is ironical.; Whom was Mariya Gavrilovna in love with?; How does Mariya Gavrilovna’s beloved treat her? Give an example from the text.; Did the parents know of their daughter’s love?; What did the parents of Mariya Gavrilovna do, when they saw young people being in love?; Why were the parents against their love?

Then the students are asked to do the tasks. For example:
1. Choose a synonym for the word dear.
2. Choose a synonymous expression for afire with equal passion.

The work ends with challenge to the next part: What do you think will be further? The teacher should encourage any students’ responses.

Cyclicity of the "assigned reading" technique allows the students to be quick at understanding the nature of the work and involved in the process.

Since the teacher is often limited in time, some tasks can be left to individual reading. In the class one needs to work out only those snippets of the text that contain key information: acquaintance with the main character and her family ( Interruption 2.) → acquaintance of the readers with Vladimir (Interruption 3.) → preparation for Maria Gavrilovna’s escape (Interruption 5.) → blizzard (Interruption 9.) → news of Vladimir’s death (Interruption 13.) → victory of the Russian troops in the war of 1812 and meeting with Burmin (Interruption 14.) → happy ending (Interruption 20).

4. Conclusion
Thus, "assigned reading" helps to work up the students’ interest in the Russian language; establishes the interaction between the students, is conductive to be on the level of conscious communicative competence. At the challenge, discussion and reflection stages there takes place searches for solutions to the assigned task, practising tolerance towards another’s point of view. Each of the stages of work with the text is characterized by the systemacy and concentric features. The material has a situational-thematic organization. Cyclicity of the "assigned reading" technique allows the students to quickly understand the nature of work and be involved in the process.

During the work with the text using the technique of "assigned reading”, an unfailing interest in the study of the Russian language and lingo culture is formed in foreign students.

As a result of working on the technique of "assigned reading", the skills of proving the standpoint, putting issues of concern, responding to an ability to present own utterances in linguistic form are developed.
References


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