SOME ASPECTS OF READING AND ANALYZING THE LITERARY TEXTS IN TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language cannot be complete without reference to the culture of the country of the studied language. The expansion of linguistic and cultural knowledge in the course "Reading" is possible due to a specially selected material, contributing to the formation of socio-cultural competences of the student, which is an important component of communicative competences – the goal of learning any language as a foreign.

The subject of this article is the problem of the selection of literary texts as the material for reading in the formation of socio-cultural competences of foreign students who speak Russian at the level of B1-B2.

The aim of the course is to master the basic skills of semantic and linguistic analysis of literary texts. The studied material, in our opinion, should contain a sufficiently high percentage of conversational structures, colloquial vocabulary for the most easy and quick inclusion of the student into the language environment.

Keywords: language and speech competence, literary text, the correct choice of the studied texts, semantic and linguistic analysis of literary text.

1 INTRODUCTION

Optimization of the learning process is very important in teaching Russian as a foreign language. It is important to arouse interest in a foreign language, to develop student’s language and speech competence through the study of literary text.

Foreign students often face problems of various kinds. They have to master a huge additional information array (new morphological and syntactic rules, lexical, phraseological units), and the difficulties of the grammatical system of the Russian language. The possibility of finding a commonality of correspondences between the native language and the studied language is minimal for a foreign student. For example, for many European students, the rules of Russian syntax (codified versions) are clear, but some changes in the order of words, omissions, the use of temporary forms, which are used in the colloquial version of the Russian literary language, lead to a dead end due to the lack of correspondences in their native languages.

In this case the task of the teacher is to make the correct choice of the studied texts while learning in the course of "Reading and analyzing the literary text" at the advanced level of training. The aim of the course is to master the basic skills of semantic and linguistic analysis of literary texts. The studied material, in our opinion, should contain a sufficiently high percentage of conversational structures, colloquial vocabulary for the most easy and quick inclusion of the student into the language environment.

The study of any text in a foreign language audience involves the output into oral speech anyway. It means the ability to debate, to prove their point of view, to share experiences, to compare the two cultures (sometimes the same content can be perceived differently). Thus, when studying literary texts we are approaching to the main function of the training texts - contribution to the development of speech skills and abilities with the help of the variety of language structures used in practice.

The question that is very important here is who should be the authors of the texts studied in a foreign language audience?

It is noteworthy that many foreign students have some knowledge of the Russian classical literature. These students are interested to read and understand the literature of the later period. Students often prefer to read the works of modern Russian authors.
At the same time, when teaching foreign students, it is necessary to remember that the process of training should not contain only some information about the Russian language and develop certain skills and abilities. The main task of the teacher is to arouse interest in a foreign language and love for the country, to show them the best literary works. Otherwise it is impossible to understand the culture of the country and to master the foreign language.

Due to the study of literary texts, a foreign student can easily enlarge his vocabulary and conversational structures, practice communicative skills. For a foreign student it will be very important to acquaint with the lexical and grammatical system of the Russian language with the help of reading and analysis of some samples of texts taken from the Russian literature. All these aspects in complex can be successfully used in a foreign-language audience.

2 METHODOLOGY

The main methods of work are a descriptive method, quantitative method, component analysis method. Based on the theoretical background of these methods, we have achieved the main goal - students must possess basic skills of semantic and linguistic analysis of literary texts. The use of the component analysis method has helped us in choosing educational material in groups of students with different levels of training.

The theoretical and methodological basis of this study is the position of anthropocentric, intertextual and culturological approaches to the study of literary texts, linguistic anthropology (Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Lyubov B. Nikitina, etc.).

The following methods were used in the research: analysis of methodical literature and analysis of dissertation researches on the topic; monitoring the process of developing foreign students' skills in reading classical Russian literature texts.

3 RESULTS

Literary text is the richest material that can be used with different purposes at the classes of Russian as a foreign language. "As is generally known, literary text can comprehend everything; at least the authors try to recognize the world through literary text. Literary text is the most difficult type of educational text material, lessons with its use require a serious teacher philological education, acquaintance with the peculiarities of psychology perception of literature, knowledge from the field of methodical science, as well as good literary taste and linguistic feeling" [1: 222].

The teacher should understand for what purpose he is going to use such a complex material as literary text at the lessons of Russian as a foreign language. Thus, the texts of fiction can be used for solutions of various problems (speech, language, linguistic), but in this case the purpose of the lesson is to work on grammar or vocabulary on the material of the text. We are interested in the actual text work, in teaching foreign students to understand the texts.

Understanding is one of the key competences uniting such types of speech activities as reading and listening. In the document of the Council of Europe "Common European Competences of Foreign Language Proficiency" despite the fact that considerable attention is paid to understanding of written texts, such as reference materials, postal items, instructions, etc., is specially emphasized that the national literature is "a valuable common resource that should be protected and developed, and the study of fiction pursues not only aesthetic but also educational, spiritual, intellectual and emotional goals" [2: 58].

If the teacher chooses understanding as the main goal, then in this case it is necessary to pay serious attention to the selection of text material.

Reading fiction is not an easy process, in some cases even for native speakers, and the task of the teacher is to make the process attractive to the student, offering him a text that will cause interest, and the desire to read and understand.

These should be literary texts of interest to students. It can be both the texts of Russian classical literature and the texts of modern fiction. Properly selected literary text will motivate students to study the Russian language, making classes interesting, exciting.

And yet, what texts to choose for the work, which aspects of the text should be paid attention to in the course of reading? There is no single answer to this question. The choice will depend on the group in
which teaching is conducted; the main thing is to choose the material that meets the interests and the mood of the students. It is also important that the teacher himself should like the literary text.

The works of modern writers have a number of advantages in comparison with classical Russian literature. They allow you to use them successfully when working with foreign student. Foreign readers are interested to know about life in modern Russia, they are closer to the problems of contemporaries. In addition, these works are written in modern language, which is the subject of study, and it enhances the motivation of reading, as practice shows. However, if students want to read classical literature, the teacher, of course, should meet the desire. In this case, we think, it is more advisable to choose small genres of Russian classical literature. We frequently choose the stories written by I. S. Turgenev, A. P. Chekhov, I. A. Bunin. Short stories are very convenient for the lesson due to its small volume and limited set of key units, and the work on it will take one or two lessons. However, it should be borne in mind that the texts of small genres should describe the situations, which can be found in the life or reading experience of students, or they should describe the feelings, known to them by their own experience. "The reader can understand the text if the situation in the text is clear to him" [3: 223]. Thus, the understanding of the situation should be taken into account while making the choice of the text, as the situation is one of the important supports, used by the reader in the perception of the text. In addition, it is important to note that to understand the text, students must have texts with grammar which is known to them, and as a rule the main grammatical categories of the Russian language already formed at the level of A2. As for our own practical experience, foreign students are gradually losing interest in classic Russian literature stories. It is connected both with the difficulties of the perception of the spiritual potential of the classical literature, and also with the presence of historicism and archaism, stylistically outdated phrases, etc.

I would like to dwell on examples from my own teaching practice in order to demonstrate students' general attitudes and preferences in reading Russian literature at the lessons of Russian as a foreign language. At the Kazan Federal University most of the students are from China. Their level of Russian language proficiency is B2. There is an interesting trend in choice and interest in Russian literature can be traced in this audience. Five or six years ago Chinese students were interested in the works of Russian classical literature – L. N. Tolstoy, F. M. Dostoevsky, N. D.Chernyshevsky, for example. And they chose famous novel as a rule. At the lessons the students were eager to get in touch if not with the whole works entirely, but at least with the most important and well-known passages from this work. They were interested to read in the original language those pieces of literature that they knew from the lessons of Russian literature at Chinese universities. In addition, the works of Russian literature influence greatly on any human being despite of his age and nationality. And reading of Russian classical literary texts gave students a feeling of belonging to something elevated.

However, Chinese students’ interests have recently changed. When reading classical literature, we noticed that they pay greater attention to shorter texts and it is evident that small genres attract more attention. They wish to get acquainted with the traditions in style of a famous author with the help of his novels and stories. The completeness and small volume of the text attract students, first of all. How to explain the choice of students? We confirm that this is influenced by the time in which we live. Savings in everything becomes the main reason for choosing to read small genres of literature. Let's try to explain what we mean. It is no secret that the basic law of modern literature and journalism is the law of economy of language. In the era of mass use of computer technology, reading large genres of literature gradually fades into the background. People are used to getting basic information through photos or videos. During a thoughtful reading, you need to think about deep and serious topics when a person leaves the comfort zone. Nobody wants to do this. Therefore, the easiest and safest way to get acquainted with Russian literature from the point of view of psychology is reading stories.

As for the topics of the texts their interests in the subject of works remain the same: the eternal theme of love, friendship, the meaning of life. The most popular in this audience are the stories by A. P. Chekhov, in which a great number of psychological types of characters are represented. He is the author who shows in the texts his understanding of life through characters and psychology of heroes. His stories ("Evil boy", "Scamperer", "Gooseberries", "Student", etc.) are still modern nowadays. The theme of love attracts foreign students especially. Students adore classical A. S. Pushkin’s "Blizzard" and I. S. Turgenev’s "Rendezvous"; it causes great particular interest in the Chinese audience.

As for the preferences of European students, they are much more interested in studying modern Russian prose and its main representatives. The following themes are interesting to them: the themes of Russian post-Soviet life, the breakdown of traditions, mutual relations between cultures, changes in world outlook, the process of ideological changes, and the problem of the superfluous man. For
example, with the help of the story written by Tatiana Tolstoy "Russian world", students try to get reliable information about the life of Russian people in the period of postperestroika, the author’s attitude to this period and life of Russian people during this period.

Many students want to get the information about the everyday life of Russian people. The teacher can pay attention to the stories written by Victoria Tokareva. She is considered to be the continuer of A. P. Chekhov’s traditions and topical lines. With the help of the depiction of the characters and surroundings of the existence of these characters the writer tries to draw typical representatives of this time. We recommend you to pay attention to her stories "You are", "Flying swing".

The fairy tale written by Ludmila Petrushevskaya "Queen Lear" can tell us a lot about life and eternal themes of good and evil, the meaning of life. The author paraphrased Shakespeare's play "King Lear," and it especially intrigues European students. The plot and literary techniques used by writer also often attract students’ attention.

From the above it can be concluded that the interests of foreign students are gradually changing: their attention is attracted not only by the classical works of Russian literature, but also by truthful image of the contemporary in various life situations. The theme of a superfluous man and the loss of a dream due to the changes in political regime of the country are especially popular in foreign audience.

Pictures of everyday life of Russians, their dreams and the reality in which they live, of course, attract European youth. They consider modern authors to be such people who objectively describe the life and actions of their heroes without embellishment.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Fiction, both Russian classical and modern literature, always arouses interest among students of Russian as a foreign language. However, sometimes they are stopped by fear of possible difficulties and uncertainty in their abilities. Providing the text with dictionaries, all sorts of comments, explanations, etc., the teacher often makes it clear to students that they will never cope with Russian literary texts on their own. But it is the independent overcoming of lexical difficulties while reading Russian texts that develop the students' linguistic guess, forms the skills of using cognitive strategies.

An important issue in the choice of texts for reading are students' preferences. Although computer technologies and Internet resources make it possible not only to get acquainted with the work of this or that writer, students seek information directly from the teacher. The personality of the teacher in teaching reading of works of Russian literature in Russia plays an important role. A teacher must be not only a native speaker, a connoisseur of literature, but also a mediator between the author's world and reality. He must explain not only incomprehensible words and expressions, but also draw students’ attention to the reasons for the depiction of one character or another, an image a described story. Modern Russian prose attracts attention because under the mask of fiction, and hence fiction, hides the pain of the present, the past and the future of Russia. It is from artistic texts that people learn the real atmosphere of the life of a people, a country. Students are so fond of Russian literature, because with it they can understand the outlook of the Russian people, the mysterious Russian soul, the historical truth.

The teacher' analysis of text units before working with the text for the purpose of taking off difficulties is also not advisable methodically as it loses integrity and cannot be understood by students. In this case, the teacher should avoid this kind of work with the text for the purpose of taking off difficulties in text units before working with the text; he should avoid various comments and semantisation while working with the text. Instead of comments and explanations, the texts should be provided with "questions and tasks aimed at the reader's most independent work: thoughtful reading, semantic perception of the unknown text, getting the emotional experience, careful assimilating of this experience and development of their own reasonable attitude to what they have read" [1: 72].

It is necessary to add that the use of interactive learning technologies also contributes to the understanding of texts. Visual aids help to learn the text easily. Portraits of authors, brief biographical and bibliographic data will develop more interest in a particular person and his works.

Work on the text should be dialogical, similar to the exchange of views and reasoning. In this case, students will be free to express their point of view without fear of being misunderstood. It is advisable to give at the after-text work stage special tasks that help to generalize the experience, summarize some facts of culture and traditions, so that students can express their opinion about what they have
read. The teacher needs to activate the creative activity of students, asking them to make the image of what they have read about; to describe facts, objects, characters that arise in their imagination.

Thus, in teaching Russian as a foreign language, literary text can be used for different purposes. The main purpose of using literary texts at Russian lessons is to teach students to understand literary texts independently, to form all the necessary skills, develop their own reasonable attitude to what they have read.

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REFERENCES
