METHODS OF TEACHING RUSSIAN BASED ON THE CATEGORY OF QUANTITATIVENESS

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Abstract

The proposed article deals with the peculiarities of teaching Russian to the speakers of Dari, Pashto and Farsi at the initial and advanced stages.

Several aspects of teaching quantitativeness in the languages of the Iranian group in comparison with the Russian language form the object of the research, which is interesting, primarily, because all the languages in question belong to the same family. However, there are significant differences in these language groups; this implies certain efforts to develop the skills of using words of quantitative semantics.

The subject of the study is the interference of quantitativeness expression and evaluating practical recommendations for overcoming it in teaching Russian to students who speak Dari, Pashto, and Farsi (Iranian languages).

In this article the authors investigate groups of quantitative words that convey the meanings of something small or large and lexical units of generalized quantitative semantics. All these mentioned above are of particular difficulty in Iranian languages.

As a result of many years of working experience in groups of students – native speakers of Iranian languages – studying Russian, a certain methodology has been developed at Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University). New teaching techniques described in the article make it possible to successfully overcome difficulties in perceiving and using words of quantitative semantics in Russian. The authors of the article also propose innovative models for studying the words of quantitative semantics in this research.

Keywords: teaching methods, the Russian language, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, innovative model, quantitativeness.

1 INTRODUCTION

The article discusses the methodology of teaching the category of quantitativeness at the initial and advanced stages of the learning the Russian language. We pay particular attention to the study of this category by students of native Iranian languages: Dari, Pashto, and Farsi. Despite the similarity of the expression of the category of quantitativeness in the Russian and Iranian languages, which is largely due to their belonging to a single Indo-European family, we find differences in the functioning of this category in these languages. Furthermore, they cause the appearance of typical mistakes [1]. Our research is based on the investigating a method of overcoming such mistakes and the article proposes several practical tips.

2 METHODOLOGY

Aristotle was the scientist who first identified and considered the quantity as a particular category that does not coincide with the number, size, figure, and other special mathematical concepts (384–322 BC). The basic ideas of Aristotle about quantity are as follows: “By quantity we call all that can be divided into parts, each of which, whether there will be two or more, is by nature something definite. Every quantity is a multitude if it is countable, and a magnitude – if measurable. The multitude is what can possibly be divisible into noncontinuous parts, but magnitude – into continuous ones” [2].

The linguistic expression of quantity itself is a universal feature, but the category of quantitativeness in the languages of the world has different grammatical and semantic content. The general theory of quantitativeness, the functioning of numerical forms in languages of various types, and the expression of nominal quantity in Russian and Iranian languages are described in the works by linguists A.V.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Contrastive analysis of the category of quantitativeness in the Russian language and in the languages of the Iranian group

There is a binary opposition of the singular and plural forms in both Russian and Iranian languages. Therefore, the principle of formation of singular and plural forms is clear to students who are native speakers of Iranian languages. Common to the languages in question is the widespread use of relative affixes. However, there is a significant difference, which is expressed in the fact that the inventory of affixal models of morphogenesis in the Russian language seems to be quite unified, while in Pashto, Dari and Farsi there is a significant variety of affixal models. Let us consider the inventory of affixal patterns of morphogenesis in the Russian language on the example of the grammatical group of the noun in more detail. All the examples are given in the languages under study. However, we offer the transcription and the translation into English for the better perception (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>стопл [stol] 'table'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>машин-ы [mashín-y] 'cars'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>окно [óknó] 'window'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most consistently the meaning of singularity is represented in nouns – the names of specific objects (as well as the names of events, phenomena, and facts) – which are to be counted. A means of expressing the meaning of singularity is the system of case inflexions, which differ depending on the type of declension [12]. Thus, for the nominative forms they are:

- inflexion -а (-я) for masculine nouns of 1st declension denoting males, for example: папа [papa] ‘father’, дядя [diádya] ‘uncle’, юноша [yúnosha] ‘lad’;

Nevertheless, in the languages of the Iranian group there are some peculiarities in the formation of number forms (see Table 2).
Table 2. Formation of plural form from singular nouns in Pashto.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Features of formation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نوﭘﺷ [shpun] 'shepherd'</td>
<td>[shpānə] 'shepherds'</td>
<td>the plural is formed by the stressed inflexion ɚ, the vowels [o], [u] are replaced by the long sound [ā]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words ending with the suffix [bā] ([bə]) کوربیه [korbā] 'host'</td>
<td>کوربیه [korbānə] 'hosts'</td>
<td>plural inflexion ɚ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monosyllabic nouns with a short vowel [a] غرونة، غره [grūṇa, ţra] 'mountains'</td>
<td>غرونه، غره [grūnə, ţrə]</td>
<td>inflexion ɚ, short [a] drops out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns with the suffix [gâr] ملگری [malgāre] 'girlfriend'</td>
<td>ملگری [malgəre] 'girlfriends'</td>
<td>the formation of the plural by replacing the suffix vowel [ā] by [ə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns ending in stressed [āy] or unstressed [ay] ملگری [malgeri] 'friends'</td>
<td>ملگری [malgeri] 'friends'</td>
<td>the plural is formed by stressed [i] or unstressed [i]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Peculiarities of teaching the category of quantitativeness of the Russian language at the initial stage of learning

At the initial stage of learning the Russian language, the main goal is the mastering of the norm and the development of skills to use the system of inflexions of two paradigms – singular and plural forms. Iranian-speaking students easily and quickly assimilate the plural forms of singular nouns, which we usually pay attention to at this stage:

- existence of three genders of the noun;
- occurrence of both hard and soft stems;
- specific system of alternating the sounds of the roots and stems of Slavic languages.

However, before teaching students to form plural nouns, we must teach them to determine the gender of the noun, because the gender of the plural form depends on the gender of the noun. The definition of a gender does not cause great difficulties for Iranian-speaking students; they easily master the system of the gender of a noun in Russian. Nevertheless, quite often there are mistakes in the use of singular personal pronouns in the transformation of sentences. This is due, primarily, to interference. Especially often such mistakes are encountered in colloquial speech and stressful situations, for example, Iranian students, who speak Russian quite well, during the oral exam use he instead of female pronoun she. This is explained by the lack of generic opposition of nouns in Farsi and Dari. Therefore, our practical recommendation is:

- increase in the number of retellings with the replacement of the character name in the text with a third-person pronoun;
- retelling from different persons;
- use of the agreed definition in the singular form (see Table 3).

Table 3 provides a sample of texts for the formation of the skill of transformation and mastering this grammatical material.
Table 3. Types of text transformation at the initial stage of learning the Russian language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Transformed Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Маша идет на работу в университет. Маша преподаватель химии. Андрей идет в университет, потому что Андрей учится на подготовительном факультете. Андрей – студент.</td>
<td>Она идет на работу в университет. Она преподаватель химии. Он идет университет, потому что он учится на подготовительном факультете. Он – студент.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Masha goes to work to the university. Masha is a teacher of Chemistry. Andrei goes to the university because Andrei attends classes at the preparatory faculty. Andrei is a student’.</td>
<td>‘She goes to work to the university. She is a teacher of Chemistry. He goes to the university because he attends classes at the preparatory faculty. He is a student’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Это новые хорошие дома. Они находятся в центре города. Это очень удобно: всё очень близко – университеты, магазины, остановки трамваев, автобусов, станции метро. ‘These are new good houses. They are located in the city center. It is very convenient: everything is very close – universities, shops, tram stops, bus stops, metro stations’.</td>
<td>Это мой новый хороший дом. Он находится в центре красивого города. Это очень удобно: всё очень близко, мой университет, хороший магазин, остановка нашего трамвая, твоего автобуса и удобная станция метро. ‘This is my new good house. It is located in the city center. It is very convenient: everything is very close – my university, a good shop, a tram stop, a bus stop, a metro station’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After mastering the gender forms of a noun in Russian, the number of mistakes in the formation of plural forms of nouns is significantly reduced.

At the initial stage of learning, it is difficult to understand the formation and use of constructions of an indefinite large and small quantity with lexical units a little, little, a few. In Russian, there is a rule that requires the use after the words with quantitative semantics of the genitive case of the singular or plural noun, for example, немного сахара ‘some sugar’ (genitive case of the singular form), много студентов ‘many students’ (genitive case of the plural form). The choice of the form depends on the semantics of the noun: thus, real, collective, and abstract nouns are used in the singular forms, in contrast to words with specific semantics:

- real nouns: Этот немец всегда пил много пива ‘This German always drank a lot of beer’;
- collective nouns: На рок концерте было много молодежи ‘There were a lot of young people at the rock concert’;
- abstract nouns: Он делал в жизни много добра людям ‘He did a lot of good things in his life’;
- concrete nouns: Он построил в жизни много дорог ‘He built a lot of roads in his life’.

3.3 Peculiarities of working with the category of quantitativeness at the advanced stage of teaching Russian to Iranian-speaking students

At the advanced stage of learning, students are taught to use the constructions with numerals, for example, два яблока – пять яблок ‘two apples – five apples’. The difficulty in mastering such constructions is explained by the peculiarities of the noun incidence after the numerals in Russian. So, after the numerals 2, 3, 4 it is required to use the genitive case of the singular form, and after the numerals 5, 6, etc. – the genitive case of the plural form. This variety of forms is explained by historical factors – the existence of dual forms in the Old Russian language.

What is the complexity of such models for Iranian-speaking students? They easily remember the above rule. However, in the texts in which there are constructions such as 2002 студента ‘2002 students’, 5 033 дома ‘5 033 houses’, 5 533 книги ‘5 533 books’, students do not use the forms of the genitive case of the singular form in them.

Even more difficult for students are the similar constructions with adjectives, for example:

2002 новых студентов ‘2002 new students’: the adjective новых ‘new’ is used in the genitive case of the plural form, which violates the rule of compatibility of the noun and its adjacent adjective, that is always used in the same number, gender and case as the noun.
The rule of using the adjective in constructions of this type with a feminine noun brings about more mistakes: 2002 новые студентки ‘2002 new students’: the adjective новые ‘new’ is used in the nominative case of plural form, which also violates the rule of compatibility of the noun and its adjacent adjective.

Evidently, the students at the initial and advanced stages of learning are not explained the nature of this phenomenon in the Russian language. They are offered a rule that must be remembered. However, the work on the assimilation of these structures requires special attention, additional time and effective exercises.

We offer the following example of an effective exercise (see Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Types of tasks for mastering the structure numeral + adjective + noun.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>we have constructions with a masculine noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>тридцать три новых студента ‘thirty-three new students (males)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 новые студентки ‘twenty-four new students (females)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 CONCLUSIONS

1 The category of quantity is an important linguistic category, as it does not only permeates the entire system of a language, finding explicit or implicit expression in grammatical forms or in other linguistic manifestations, but also organizes our perception of reality in the coordinate system of a particular language.

2 Differences in the functioning of the words of quantitative semantics in the Russian language and the languages of the Iranian group are primarily due to background knowledge, cultural and historical traditions and experience, which is stored in language representations that form the linguistic view of the world.

3 At the advanced stage of learning, we necessarily teach the functioning of number forms that goes beyond the limits of standard rules. A particularly wide range of functioning is represented in the singular form that is often used in contexts and requires the meaning of plurality.

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