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ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ АССОЦИАТИВНОГО ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТА В МЕТОДИКЕ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

Проблема взаимного непонимания носителями различных культур зачастую обусловлена различиями национальных и языковых сознаний коммуникантов. Этим объясняется интерес представителей различных научных направлений, в частности психолингвистики, к изучению языкового сознания и выявлению общего и специфичного в национальных образах мира. В данной работе особое внимание уделяется лексическому компоненту, так как именно лексический и семантический компоненты языковой компетенции служат пониманию национальной культуры, а знание национально-культурных коннотаций слов способствует формированию межкультурной компетенции, и как следствие, успешному межкультурному взаимодействию. В статье подробно рассматривается такой вариант модели обучения лексике, как лексические смысловые ассоциации, способствующие формированию семантического компонента языковой компетенции, приводятся результаты проведенного ассоциативного эксперимента и возможные способы семантизации иноязычного лексического материала на занятии, что в значительной мере может способствовать успеху в межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: языковое сознание, ассоциации, ассоциативный эксперимент, термины родства, преподавание иностранных языков.

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**PERSPECTIVES OF USING FREE ASSOCIATION TEST IN
THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN
LANGUAGES**

The problem of mutual misunderstanding between native speakers of different cultures often takes place because of the differences in national and linguistic consciousnesses of communicants. It explains the interest of representatives of various scientific fields, psycholinguistics in particular, in the study of linguistic consciousness and the identification of common and specific features in the vision of the world by carriers of different cultures. This work pays special attention to the lexical component, since it is the lexical and semantic components of linguistic competence that help to understand the national culture, provide knowledge of the national and cultural connotations of words that contributes to the formation of intercultural competence, and as a result, successful intercultural interaction. The article examines in detail such a model of teaching vocabulary as lexical semantic associations that contribute to the formation of the semantic component of language competence, it also introduces the results of the association test and possible ways of semanticizing foreign lexical material in the classroom, which can significantly contribute to success in intercultural communication.

Keywords: language consciousness, associations, association test, kinship terms, teaching foreign languages

Introduction

Efficient techniques for enhancing foreign language learners' language acquisition and motivation have long been in the focus of methodological studies (Mouhoubi-Messadh & Khaldi, 2022, Malyuga & Petrosyan, 2022). According to research findings, it takes a learner in average five to seven years to become fully competent in a foreign language, although students may vary in the speed with which they acquire this competence. Thus, Office for Standards in Education (Inspecting English as a second language with guidance on self-evaluation, London) claims that fluency in spoken English is usually achieved within two years, but the ability to read and understand more complex texts with unfamiliar cultural references takes much longer (OFSTED, p. 5).

One of the approaches to improve teaching a foreign language fluency is done through the appropriate content selection at each stage of learning, for example, the use of authentic material. Since language is known as a non-stative process whose changes are predetermined by various linguistic and extra-linguistic causes, such as migrations, cultural aspects, and technological innovations, there is a constant need for updated classroom materials (Can, Frazier, McManus & Rey, 2020). This approach is believed to facilitate a learner's foreign language usage in different contexts and develop students' perception of ethno-lingual awareness, disclose national and lingual peculiarity of foreign people, thus demonstrating the links of language education with psycholinguistics and linguocultural studies.

The process of decoding foreign language concepts in authentic texts, a flexible mental mechanism, can be initiated or stimulated through associations. Associative learning describes how two or more events or concepts can become associated (Kokkola, Mondragon & Alonso, 2017). The article will describe an associative approach to a foreign language teaching based on sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000) where associative mechanism is understood as one of the beneficial cognitive tools to be employed in the process of teaching a student as a cultural agent constructing knowledge within local environments. In comparison with definitions which state the associative method as emphasizing the connections between the new information and the background knowledge, which encourages learners to make full use of their

imagination, initiative, etc. Penny (2000) insists on this type of method performing a significant function by means of relative, similar or contrastive association arousing students' interest in a foreign language and promoting its understanding, recollection and application (You, 2001, pp. 124-126). We consider an associative approach as a means of gaining understanding of the active vocabulary through associations. By studying lexical and semantic structure of words with the help of free association test educators get a unique possibility to learn the types of links and connections with other words and learn about their significance for native speakers, which increases the possibility to teach students authentic foreign language (Malyuga & Orlova, 2016).

The ethnicity of national consciousness is reflected through the system of meanings, social stereotypes, cognitive schemes which are mirrored in verbal associations of native speakers. Therefore, the results of association studies can be of primary importance for foreign language teaching. Such studies can help to prevent communication conflicts based on mutual misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication because association tests reflect the way of thinking and behaviour patterns of a certain society.

Misunderstanding in intercultural communication often occurs due to the lack of cultural diversity. Thus, socio-cultural context reconstruction in teaching foreign languages through associative approach can serve as one of the means to solve the abovementioned problem.

Theoretical background

The notion of linguistic consciousness

The term "linguistic consciousness" is closely related to the concept of "consciousness". According to Leontiev (1993) consciousness in its immediacy is a picture of the world revealed to people, in which they themselves, their actions and states are included.

Currently, the most famous models are those worked out by Leontiev and Zinchenko (1988). Leontiev (1993) identified three main constituents of consciousness: sensory perception of an image, meaning and sense. Zinchenko (1988) distinguishes two layers in the structure of consciousness (ontological and reflexive) and adds a biodynamic structure to the number of components that form consciousness.

The concept of linguistic consciousness adopted in modern psycholinguistics (Goroshko, 2001, Zalevskaya, 2015, Tarasov, 2000, Ufimtseva, 2011 etc.) is understood as a set of perceptual and conceptual

knowledge of the individual about an object of the real world, the image of the world mediated by the language, external to verbal associations of respondents. Language consciousness is a dynamic phenomenon that gradually changes over time from one generation to the next. The main factor in its transformation is the changes taking place with the concepts that have developed in it, the formation of which is significantly influenced by the media, literature, social and political transformations in the society.

The theoretical basis of the study is the existing position in psycholinguistics that the content of consciousness is culturally determined. It includes the whole complex of ideas associated with the ethnic picture of the world, which reflects and transmits the way of life characteristic of this linguistic community.

The theoretical basis of the current study is the idea substantiated in psycholinguistics that the phenomena of reality perceived by a person in the process of activity and communication are displayed in his mind in such a way that this display fixes temporal, spatial, causal relationships of phenomena, objects and emotions caused by their perception. In this regard, a certain set of associations can be a model of linguistic consciousness (Karaulov, 1994). This set of associations is considered to be a model of consciousness, which is a set of rules for operating with cultural knowledge (Dmitrenko & Makhmutova, 2021). As a result of this, the bearer of a certain culture forms ideas about a fragment of the vision of the world, a system of axiological patterns and value orientations.

Investigation of linguistic consciousness by means of free association test

Consciousness or awareness of something is always a limitation, giving a certain form to one or another generalization that stands behind the word. How and what forms this or that culture imposes on the perception of the surrounding reality can be understood through the results of mass associative experiments.

There are various ways to identify the specifics of the images of consciousness of the carriers of a particular culture. Among the experimental studies, a special place is occupied by the so-called associative norms. As a rule, associative norms (or associative dictionaries) are the results of the processing of mass experiments conducted according to the method of free associative test. The

associative field of a particular word - stimulus obtained as a result of such an experiment is not only a fragment of a person's verbal memory, but also a fragment of the vision of the world by an ethnic group reflected in the mind of the "average" carrier of a particular culture, its motives and assessments and, consequently, its cultural stereotypes.

A generalized scenario of a free association test can be presented like this: the respondents are provided with a list of stimulus words, to which they, without hesitation, respond with one or more reaction words for a limited period of time. Then the data is statistically processed, the words-reactions are ranked according to the frequency of their appearance, taking into account the associations that were reproduced by at least three respondents. Nevertheless, the articles of associative dictionaries reflect all reactions, including single ones, their total number is indicated separately. Thus, researchers receive an ordered list of associations, which is considered to be the associative norm of the object under study. This associative chain reveals the most prominent features of the object in the minds of native speakers, making it possible to recreate the semantic portrait of the stimulus word. The Mass Free Association Test reveals the verbal associations of native speakers, which are recorded in the form of associative dictionaries and thesauruses.

The association test provides an opportunity to penetrate into the linguistic consciousness of a person, to analyze both the content of the concept itself and language stereotypes, as well as specific features of the mentality of people. The possibilities of association test as a tool for studying linguistic consciousness of different nations have been demonstrated by many modern researchers (Ufimtseva, 2011, Goroshko, 2001, Martinovich, 1989, Leontiev, 1993, Kubryakova, 1999, etc.), who emphasize the importance of this experiment for new research paradigms.

The perspectives of free association test implementation in the foreign language studying

In recent years, the tendency of linguists to study the linguistic personality from the point of view of readiness and ability to produce speech actions, has required a revision of the methodological foundations of teaching a foreign language. The revealed potential of an association test as a way of studying the specifics of meaning, is considered by many researchers (Zalevskaya, 2015, Luria, 1979, Ufimtseva, 2011) as a way to access consciousness, made it possible to conclude that the data

obtained as a result of such an experiment can serve as educational material for the formation of the lexico-semantic component of the linguistic competence of students.

Due to the fact that the task of teaching a foreign language as a means of communication (according to the communicative-oriented methodology of teaching foreign languages) inextricably merges both with the tasks of studying the social and cultural life of countries and people speaking this language, their linguistic vision of the world and linguistic consciousness, and with the readiness of a person to foreign language communication at the intercultural level, which is understood as an adequate interaction with representatives of other cultures.

When teaching interlingual and intercultural communication, it is important to compare the foreign languages and cultures under study with their native, familiar ones, since such a comparison helps to prevent the emergence of a conflict of cultures and languages.

Due to the fact that this conflict is most clearly manifested in the vocabulary (it is this part of the language that has - through lexical meaning - direct access to the real world, to extralinguistic reality), it is possible in order to optimize and develop the process of teaching foreign languages (when teaching vocabulary), to conduct experimental studies that reveal true semantics that could provide the teacher and students with the opportunity to use at their lessons the elements of comparative analysis of the concepts under study with concepts in their native language. One of the methods of such research is an association test.

Methodology

The theory of contextual learning developed by A. Verbitsky (2006) stems from the idea that context education contributes to creating psychological, pedagogical and methodological conditions for transforming educational activity gradually changing needs, motives, purposes, means and learning outcomes. By educational activity transformation the author means learning activity assimilation through modeling relevant content. Such a model is understood as a prototype of some real system, as a number of signs, which will transfer the peculiar properties of the original, alive context to a classroom (Verbitsky, 2006).

The above-mentioned transformation also manifests itself in the way the information is perceived. It is no longer a subject matter ready for consumption but a thought-provoking stimulus for the development of students' communicative abilities and skills. Obviously, the transition

from traditional education where the main goal is to accumulate knowledge to a competence-based approach is a requirement of our modern society. A traditional task-based curriculum presents the learner with the target language samples when a learner's attention is focused on task-completion and language practice primarily focuses on forms of the language, including syntax, morphology and phonology. In case of contextual learning, the classroom activities consist of meaning-centered and identifying tasks when a student is involved in the cognitive process of analyzing the communicative situations and formulating rules instead of memorizing them. It turns out crucially important to distinguish the context in which attention to the form (grammatical or lexical) takes place (Ellis, Simpson & Carson, 2008). A number of researchers note that the context-based approach has provided innovative parameters and a new dimension to the learning process, making it more transparent for a teacher and a student and focused on the specific level of communicative competence formation (Kim, 2015). The context serves as "the total environment in which a language unfolds" and a student, being actively engaged in learning, constructs knowledge in order to decode "the central code of another culture" (Kramsch, 2010, p. 67).

Empirical studies of applying associative method in English vocabulary learning proved that it is more efficient than a traditional one when teachers put emphasis on the meaning of a word and give explanations of the to-be-learned words, and only then provide examples to illustrate their usage. For example, participants taught with the help of associative method recalled almost 94.13% words in contrast with 86.86% words of those taught in the traditional way (Zhang, 2014).

In this study we propose a questionnaire based on the words denoting kinship in which the participants respond to a given prompt (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). We intend to illustrate that designing the associative connections within the meanings of these words will help develop communicative tasks for students studying foreign languages. In our view a paired-associate task is based on cognitive processes which provoke elaboration which is a verbal inductive process when a respondent selects relevant features and attempts to induce relationships.

Study and results

Free Association Test on kinship vocabulary in the Russian language

Being an important historical and ethnographic source, kinship terms are of great interest not only for the history and ethnogenesis of people, but also for psycholinguistics as a means of studying the linguistic consciousness of representatives of a particular culture. Given that the relevant meaning of a word in the linguistic consciousness of a native speaker, as a rule, does not coincide with the dictionary meaning of this unit, it can be identified by experimental techniques, in particular with the help of an association test.

The long-lasting interest of researchers in words denoting kinship (in addition to the designations of consanguinity, the designations of legal kinship, marital kinship and, to some extent, kinship according to the religious rite of baptism) is not random. Researchers notice the typical features of kinship vocabulary: the relative simplicity and harmony of semantic groupings, their tendency to closure and stability, the distinctness of paradigmatic connections based on a similar set of differential features (Trautmann & Whitely, 2012, Kronenfeld, 2009, Kemp & Regier, 2012, Jones, 2010, Bloch, 2016, Kachinskaya, 2011, Kurilov, 2019).

The name "kinship terms", which has become traditional for this group of words, should be considered simply a convention, a tribute to tradition, and not the use of the word term in its exact meaning (Moiseev, 1985, p. 120).

The kinship system, representing one of the social institutions, is used as a source of information about it and about society as a whole. The terminology of kinship is such a linguistic means that reflects a social structure of the society and should be considered as a phenomenon of national culture.

It should be noted that the terminology of kinship in a broad sense includes a subgroup of consanguinity (relative, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, parents, etc.) and a subgroup of property terms denoting persons in the relationship of intimacy arising as a result of marital relations of spouses (husband, wife) and their relatives (father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.). Kinship relations and properties differ quite clearly in Russian: connection by blood is kinship, connection by marriage is a property.

In order to obtain semantic implications of the deep level of the lexicon, 60 respondents were offered the following association test:

Please react to the following situations. In some of the situations, you may find more than one response/reaction appropriate. In this case, please write down all the appropriate responses on the lines provided. Please do not discuss this questionnaire or your responses with others while you are filling it out.

Your answer:

a)

b)

c)

d)

Male/Female _____ Age _____

Native country/city _____

Native language _____

Specialty/Job _____

Date of filling the form _____

*Please write a word or a phrase that **first** comes to your mind when you see these words. Try not to think for a long time, write your first association, which can be a noun, a person's name, a verb, an adjective, a phrase, any word or words that come to your mind. E.g. airplane – sky, rose – red.*

Жена (Wife)

Дети (children)

Внучка (Granddaughter)

Шурин (brother-in-law)

Деверь (brother-in-law)

Тетя (aunt)

Прабабушка (прадедушка) (great-grandparent)

Зять (son-in-law)

Племянница (niece)

Дедушка (grandfather)

Родственник (relative)

Правнук (правнучка) great-grandchild

Дочь (daughter)

Двоюродный брат (сестра) cousin

Свекровь (mother-in-law)

Теща (mother-in-law)

Сестра (sister)

Правнук (great-grandson)

Муж (husband)
Внук (grandson)
Племянник (nephew)
Сестра мужа (sister-in-law)
Сестра жены (sister-in-law)
Прабабушка (great-grandmother)
Отец (father)
Дедушка (бабушка) grandparent
Сын (son)
Правнучка (great-granddaughter)
Тесть (father-in-law)
Свекор (father-in-law)
Брат (brother)
Родители (parents)
Родственники жены (мужа) (in-laws)
Внук (внучка) (grandchild)
Мать (mother)
Дядя (uncle)
Прадедушка (great-grandfather)
Невестка (daughter-in-law)
Бабушка (grandmother)

Having analyzed the associative fields of some kinship terms contained in the Russian Associative Dictionary (2002), and the results of an associative test, it should be noted that all kinship relationships and properties describe the same situation from two points of view, i.e. they have "counter relativity" for example, brother - sister, husband - wife, mother – daughter, grandfather – grandson, etc. It is not surprising that the most frequent reactions to many kinship terms are such converse terms. So, the father's stimulus is most often answered by the mother, the wife's response is given to the husband's stimulus, the aunt – uncle's stimulus, and vice versa.

Considering the associative fields of such commonly used words of the Russian language as father and mother it should be noted that the closest relatives for a person are parents. In the Russian language consciousness *father* causes the following associations: *mother* (the most frequent association) *family, my, son, dad, man, house, family*. The *father* is presented as *kind, good, strict, beloved, strong*. There are reactions such as *godfather, stepfather, single, alcoholic*.

According to the association test, *mother* in the representation of the Russian people is described like this: *mother* is *kindred, my, beloved, kind, mother, dear, the only, good, kindred soul*. The image of *mother* is bright, like the image of *father*, but "warmer", which is understandable, since the mother is usually closer, and the father is stricter; besides, often a woman brings up children alone without the financial and psychological support of the father. Typical are also cultural reactions of the stimulus, such as *homeland, land, heroine*, unrelated to kinship ties, or such as *Gorky* (association with M. Gorky's novel "Mother"). In folklore, a mother is a "*wet nurse*" (*mother earth*), a symbol that gives birth to all living things (life) and goes back to the pagan cult when the earth was perceived as a deity.

The generalizing term of kinship "*parents*" is represented in the Russian language consciousness by the following reactions: *my* (most frequent), *children, mom, dad and mom, folks and children, they are beloved, kind, good, relatives, strict, dear, close*. There are reactions such as *tormentors* or *drivers* (the words are rhymed in Russian), *educators, old people*. The analysis of the associative field of this term of kinship shows how important parents are for people, and what place they occupy in their life.

The terminology of kinship includes such words as *husband* and *wife*: marriage creates the basis for the emergence of property relations between their relatives. Most often in the Russian linguistic consciousness, *husband* is associated with *wife*, and vice versa, *wife* is associated with *husband*. The ideal image is of a husband and wife as a *couple*: a *husband / wife* should be faithful, beloved, loving, good.

Positive characteristics prevail: they want to see the *husband caring, reliable, gentle*, and the *wife – kind, beautiful, sweet, intelligent, affectionate*. Although there are such associations as *bad, gone, drunk, angry, fool and grumpy, unfaithful*.

The image of *mother-in-law* is interesting for the analysis. The most frequent reaction to the stimulus *mother-in-law* is *angry/wicked/bad-tempered*. It is characteristic that in the Russian culture *mother-in-law* is a mean, *angry, grumpy woman*. It seems that respondents most often rely on stereotypically prevailing opinions about the nature of *mother-in-law*, who *wants to kill, who screams and is the enemy*. The matter is *mother-in-law* often acts as a character in jokes. As a result, *mother-in-law* in the linguistic consciousness of Russian people is rather unattractive.

Although there are also positive reactions: *kind, beloved, dear friend*. The second most frequent reaction is *pancakes* (an association with the saying Mother-in-law's pancakes are sweet).

By way of comparison, a number of reactions presented in the Edinburgh Associative Thesaurus (Moiseev, 1963) to the stimulus mother-in-law, are different from the meanings of the Russian word mother-in-law. The most frequent reactions are the following words: joke, wife, marriage, none (no), relation (relative), mother, son, etc. Negatively colored words are very rare: bad, danger, fear, hate, hell, horror. Gribach (2005) explains such a difference in the perception of Russian and British relatives by the specifics of the relationship between parents and children in British families and housing conditions, when there is no tradition of cohabitation of representatives of two generations. The Western way of life, she believes, excludes the "grandmother – educator of grandchildren" model, and, as a result, many potential intergenerational disagreements of this kind are excluded (Gribach, 2005 p. 134).

In its turn, *father-in-law* is associated primarily with *mother-in-law* and *son-in-law*. There are reactions that are neutral in emotional coloring: *father, relative, wife's father*. Perhaps, by analogy with the image of mother-in-law, father-in-law is also presented as *wicked, bastard*.

The image of *son-in-law* is closely related to the image of *mother-in-law* which is the most frequent reaction. *Son-in-law* is also a *husband, a daughter's husband, a man, a sister's husband, a father*. Other reactions are: *take, likes to take* (association with the saying Son-in-law likes to take).

In the linguistic consciousness of Russians, *grandmother* is primarily associated with *grandfather*. This stimulus causes the following reactions: *old, kind, beloved, dear*. As you can see, the positive characteristics of the *grandmother* prevail. It is noted that the *grandmother lives in the village*, is associated with *a scarf, pies, childhood, glasses, pancakes*. There are also reactions such as *side by side with grandpa* (words from a previously popular song), *knit, damn, yaga* (a Russian fairy-tale character).

Grandfather is perceived, first of all, as *old*. The *grandmother's* reaction follows next in frequency. Such associations as *Lenin, Mazai*

and hares (a Russian literary character), *Frost* reflect the culture-specific concepts belonging to the Russian culture.

The analysis of reactions in the associative field of *brother* revealed that brother is *my, birth (sibling), my elder, friend, younger, by blood, cousin, sworn*. The most frequent reaction is *sister*. It is noteworthy that there are practically no negative reactions probably because in the Russian culture anyone close in spirit, in any activity can be called a brother, such words in the Russian language as brotherhood, brothers in arms, do not imply blood kinship.

In the native Russian culture, the stimulus *sister*, in addition to the most frequent – *brother*, causes the following reactions: *mercy, mine, elder, younger, beloved, cousin*. Interestingly, the respondents often give a *Carrie* reaction (the title of the novel by Theodore Dreiser). There is also an association of *talent* (the saying Brevity is the sister of talent).

The analysis of the word *son* showed that this stimulus is most often reacted to by *daughter*. For most of the respondents, *son* is *adult, beloved, small, good, the only one*, he is also associated with his *father, mother, brother*. There are also such reactions as *prodigal, student, bandit, student/non-achiever*.

Similar reactions were caused by the stimulus *daughter* – *adult, native, beloved, eldest, little, youngest, only*. The most frequent reactions are *my son and (daughter), mine*.

It should be noted that strong emotional attachment to *children*, which can be traced in reactions like *beloved, native, mother's*, is characteristic of Russian parents. This reaction can be exemplified by Gribach's observation referring to various historical sources, that there is the tradition of guardianship, dating back to the pre-Christian era and deeply rooted in Russian culture, when parents were charged with the duty of taking care of their children (Gribach, 2005, p.132).

Guidelines on using free association test results in the process of teaching foreign languages

The concepts under study clearly represent the cognitive, linguistic and emotional experience of a native speaker of the Russian language, their understanding of the surrounding reality, as well as the connections and relationships inherent in this reality. This can contribute to the improvement of the mechanism of mutual understanding between representatives of two different cultures in intercultural communication, forming lexical, and at the same time semantic components of the

linguistic competence of the communicant, for whom the Russian language is not native, or for the native speaker of the Russian language who learns a foreign language.

Teaching a foreign language involves students mastering the peculiarities of the cultural life of its native speakers with the help of associative lexico-semantic exercises and microtexts. The technique of microtexts worked out by Hiryoova (2004) can be considered as a new approach to the formation of the lexical component of the linguistic, as well as socio-cultural competence of students. Such microtexts, composed of associative words-concepts, interpret this concept, visually presenting the experience of a native speaker.

The outline of working with such microtexts include the following stages of learning activities: exercises for creating associative fields around the concept-stimulus; exercises with microtexts characterizing the given word and finally exercises aimed at identifying the semantics of the word in other texts.

The groups of associations highlighted in the microtext can be considered in it as the key words of the text, launching a scenario that develops a system of associative links with the concept-stimulus.

A clear interpretation of the concept with the help of an associative lexical and semantic microtext creates the most accurate image of a foreign word for students and prevents inadequacy of its perception (Hiryoova, 2004).

Further we provide a sample of lexical exercises on semantics, assimilation and consolidation of lexical units included in the word-concept "kinship" with reference to associations presented in 4.1. For associations reflected by the English speaking community we used the website <https://wordassociations.net/en/words-associated-with/KINSHIP>

First and foremost, to motivate students to study the proposed lexical unit, it is advisable to use extralinguistic objects that should be thought-provoking and meet age criteria. For example, a teacher can use visual aids (video, pictures, etc.) as an introduction to the topic and ask students to think what they have in common with the word "kinship".

Stage 1 (working with associative fields of the foreign language). Mastering the lexical concept of "kinship" and associations presented in microtexts in the form of keywords at different levels.

At the language level:

Task 1. Compare the words denoting members of the family in the Russian language (see the association test above) with their equivalents in the English language. Do you think the diversity of Russian words and the limited number of words denoting in-law relations and lack of words of common gender in the Russian language tell on the associations reproduced by the representatives of these two cultures?

Task 2. Whose linguistic consciousness, do you think, is characterized by the following associations of the stimulus word "mother" – Russian or English? Which group of associations (first or second) is more inherent in the Russian language consciousness, which one is English.

a) My, beloved, kind, mother, dear, the only, good, land, heroine?

b) Housewife, Teresa, maternity, governess, tongue, dear, upbringing, goose, tenderness, affectionate, loving

Task 3. There are 10 associations to the word "family" that exist in the English language consciousness written on the board, remember and reproduce them when they are removed.

At the speech stage:

Task 1. Try to combine a word with the previously selected associative series of words inherent in the English vision of the world to construct ten statements (phrases), e.g. the only beloved mother. Is it also typical of the Russian people to say that?

Task 2. Playing a *Snowball* game: the first student composes a phrase with a word and one or more associations connected with it. The second student repeats this phrase and adds their own, using other associations. The game continues until all the associated words are used. The winner is the student who can repeat all the phrases composed during the game.

At the communicative level:

Task 1. Find similarities and differences in the associative fields of the concept "kinship" presented by native speakers of the English and the Russian languages. Which similarities (differences) can be considered the main ones?

Task 2. Work in groups. Relying on the associative fields, create microtexts - characteristics of the concept a) from the point of view of the Russians b) from the point of view of the English people.

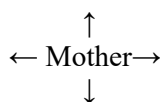
Task 3. Work in pairs. Come up with a situation (dialogue) on the topic, using as many associations connected with a word "family" as possible.

Stage 2. (working with ready-made microtexts) This task is based on associations presented in microtexts in the form of keywords. **At the language level:** the task can be performed in groups. Read the microtext describing the ideas of native English speakers about the concept ‘mother’, ‘father’, etc.

A) Find in the text the adjectives defining the concept “mother”, “father”, etc. For example, What person can be called mother, father, etc.?

B) Identify and name the nouns associated with the word ‘mother’, ‘father’, etc.

For example,



At the speech level:

A) Ask the members of other groups questions based on the microtext you have read. Finish the phrases:

Mother (father, etc.) is _____

Mother (father, etc.) is related to _____

Mother (father, etc.) is associated with _____

At the communicative level:

Relying on the comparative analysis of the ideas of Russians and Englishmen, reveal the most significant similarities in the understanding of the concept ‘mother’, ‘father’, etc. What discrepancies indicating differences in the understanding of this concept by representatives of different cultures could you identify?

The third stage of work on the semantics of the selected concept includes exercises aimed at identifying the semantics of the concept-words in other texts. For example, compare the Russian and English sayings on different members of the family. Is the attitude positive or negative? Or both? What cultural aspect of the concept do the sayings reflect in the Russian and English language? For instance:

Family: The family that (eats) prays together stays together.

Eat and drink with your relatives but do business with strangers.

В дружной семье и в холод тепло.

Вся семья вместе, так и душа на месте.

В семье разлад, так и дому не рад.

Children: Parents who are afraid to put their foot down usually have children who step on their toes.

If you want your children to have a peaceful life, let them suffer a little hunger and a little coldness.

Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time.

Giving your son a skill is better than giving him one thousand pieces of gold.

С детьми горе, а без них вдвое.

Кто детям потакает, тот сам плачет.

Маленькие детки — маленькие бедки, а большие детки — и большие бедки.

Дитячко что тесто, как замесил, так и выросло.

Grandparents: Some of our greatest blessings call us 'grandma' and 'grandpa'.

When grandparents enter the door, discipline flies out of the window.

Grandparents are, without a doubt, some of the world's best educators.

Для внука дедушка — ум, а бабушка — душа.

Люблю своих детей, но внуки милей.

У кого есть бабушка и дед, тот не ведает бед.

Mother-in-law: Once blessed with a wonderful mother; twice blessed with my mother-in-law.

The only thing more intimidating than a huge international film star is your mother-in-law.

A daughter-in-law cannot be perfect by herself. A beautiful mother-in-law helps her be one.

A car is like a mother-in-law — if you let it, it will rule your life.

Свёкор — гроза, а свекровь выест глаза.

Удивительное явление, когда меж невесткой и свекровью разумение.

У хорошей тещи зятек — самый любимый сынок.

Зять говорит с тещей до вечера, а послушать нечего.

Conclusion

As Tarasov indicates systemic qualities of cultural changes are not directly observable, they are supersensual and often symbolic. The symbolic character of the systemic qualities of cultural objects, which does not reveal itself in the objects themselves, is revealed only to a

person who has knowledge of the system in which a particular cultural object acquires these qualities. Thus, the supersensual qualities of the objects of a particular culture are revealed only to the bearer of this culture, who has knowledge of the cultural and social systems of which these cultural objects are an element (Tarasov, 1996, p. 33).

How and what forms this or that culture imposes on the perception of the surrounding reality can be understood with the help of mass association test. The associative field of a particular word - stimulus obtained as a result of such an experiment is not only a fragment of a person's verbal memory, but also a fragment of the vision of the world of a particular ethnic group reflected in the consciousness of an "average" carrier of a particular culture, his motives and assessments and, consequently, his cultural stereotypes. Studies of linguistic consciousness with the help of an associative experiment make it possible to identify both the systematic content of the consciousness behind the word in a particular culture, and the consistency of the linguistic consciousness of the carriers of a particular culture as a whole and show the uniqueness of the vision of the world of each culture (Ufimtseva, 2011, p.207).

Lexico-semantic exercises, in which the words-reactions that are part of the associative fields of the studied concepts are highlighted as key ones, open up wide opportunities for compiling various exercises that contribute to optimizing the process of learning a non-native language. Associative exercises used in the learning process do not only provide the development of associative connections of words in the minds of students, but also develop the skills of understanding, combination and implementation of lexical units, activate the mental activity of students, enrich their vocabulary, make it possible to use a comparative method with the material being studied, form background knowledge (knowledge of realities and culture) of students, provide an opportunity, along with language, to develop the linguistic and cultural competence of students, and, finally, introduce an element of entertainment and play into the process of study.

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