The Method of Forming Sociocultural Competence: Hieroglyph as the Culture's Cognitive Memory

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Chinese writing, ideographic and pictographic, is a part of the linguistic picture of the world and concepts conveyed in it on the grammatological level may participate in the formation of social competence as one of the components of intercultural communicative competence. The implication of sociocultural analysis of Chinese hieroglyphics on the basis of the grammatological approach not only will allow language learners to acquire knowledge about the Chinese hieroglyphic concept sphere, cultural identity, cultural realia both in historical and contemporary perspective, but will also teach them to properly use this cognitive basis in further independent language learning process; such an approach can be viewed as an effective mechanism for memorizing which can promote to activate the mastering of hieroglyphic signs due to a relatively easy opportunity for reconstructing the image that is underlying the sociocultural analysis, as well as a method to contribute to the formation of a sustainable motivational component of learning.

Keywords: sociocultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, ideogram, phonetic ideogram, grapheme, concept, cognitive approach, grammatological approach, Chinese hieroglyphic picture of the world, concept sphere.

Introduction

Teaching foreign languages has recently become of special national significance in our country since a foreign language is not only a means of communication, but also the possibility for personal cultural enrichment of the students, their professional self-actualization, furthermore a successful intercultural communication and communication between individual members of society both contribute to the social and economic development and political stability of both individual states and interstate unions. An example is the creation of the European Union which was preceded by the tendency towards studying foreign languages by the majority of the population. The ability to speak two or more foreign languages during the formation of the European Union was not only "good form", but rather a good opportunity to quickly find a prestigious well-paid job which explains the fairly active migration of skilled workers in the early years of EU formation.

Methodical science of teaching foreign languages has also been given a new impetus to development under existing conditions, there has been an appeal towards the cross-cultural paradigm in the study of teaching process and the process of learning foreign languages and

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cultures, competence approach and learner-centered approach to teaching and learning that have finally resulted in a large-scale reconsideration of a conceptual and categorical apparatus of the methodical science, the nature of modern means, methods and techniques of language teaching and the functional load of a foreign-language teacher.

Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Context of Language Education

Defining intercultural communication competence as the ultimate goal of linguists' preparation has acquired axiomatic value substantiated by a large number of investigators by the moment (E. G. Tareva, G. V. Elizarova, N. D. Galskova, B. P. Furmanov, N. Gez, I. L Pluzhnik, S. G. Ter-Minasova), this phenomenon is also widely studied by foreign scientists (M. Byram, A. E Fantini, Y. Kim, J. Koester, J. Stier, R. L. Wiseman). This competence was established on the basis of foreign language communicative competence proposed by Jan Ate van Ek who in turn singled out in its structure the following sub-components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discoursal competence, strategic, socio-cultural and social. In the study by G. V. Yelizarova the need for introducing the term 'intercultural competence' is being substantiated, intercultural aspect within each sub-competence as a part of intercultural competence is being educed thus modifying the content of the latter and adding to them an intercultural dimension (Yelizarova, 2005). On the grounds of the studies mentioned above, in recent years there has appeared and has been subjected to intensive in-depth research the intercultural communicative competence, represented as an integration of the two competencies such as foreign language communicative competence and intercultural competence (T. Larin,

V. A. Bryleva, J. A. Pugacheva, A. N. Annenkov, E. S. Dikova).

In modern studies of the formation of intercultural communication competence there has been established the definition of this concept which is the ability and willingness of specialists to recognize, understand and interpret the native world picture and another picture of the world as they interact with each other and then to build on this basis foreign-language communication with representatives of a given society (Annenkova, 2010). This ability is acquired by language-learners in the process of assigning them a picture of the world in its close interaction with the native view on the surrounding world. As a result of this interaction complex cross-cultural knowledge is formed in the minds of language-learners (specific cognitive structure) which is actualized in the process of intercultural communication in order to achieve mutual understanding. It is the very competence that inheres in the 'secondary linguistic identity' (I. I. Khaleeva), which is the main focus of the learning process in a language institute of higher education. In recent studies in the structure of intercultural communicative competence viewed herein as an integration of foreign language communicative competence and intercultural competence the following competencies have been marked out:

⚔ linguistic – willingness and ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances of the studied language with regard to the knowledge about ways to express value orientations in relation to the mother tongue;

⚔ sociolinguistic – awareness of the selection and use of linguistic resources, taking into account the relevance of the social context of communication in a foreign language;

⚔ strategic – ability and willingness to overcome linguistic and psychological

difficulties with verbal and nonverbal communication strategies in the process of intercultural communication;

⋏ social – the ability and willingness to interact with native language users of a studied foreign language, to manage social situations in order to achieve common communicative goals;

⋏ discoursive – the ability to choose and to use suitable strategies for making and interpreting texts in the process of intercultural communication;

⋏ sociocultural – knowledge about universal and culture-specific values of the target language culture, forms and ways of translating them into verbal and nonverbal picture of the world.

The components of intercultural communicative competence have a mutual influence upon each other: discoursive competence viewed as a competence responsible for building up speech acts is inseparable from the linguistic, social and other competencies that are all within a relationship of mutual penetration. Intercultural competence is also a component that operates on all levels or units of the communicative competence. Over time some linguistic phenomena can receive additional cultural connotations. A bright example may be the appearance of a car model known as ''ё-Mobile'' on the automotive market in Russia when the creators of the brands, apparently, wanted to give an answer to the entire world market by selecting one letter from the Russian alphabet which is not found in other languages and has quite a bright connotative meaning. However, on Chinese news sites dedicated to the beginning of ё-Mobile plant construction, the brand was transferred by an interpreter as a "car model E" (http://chinese.ruvr.ru/2011/06/09/51511807.html), and it is worth mentioning that in this case the sociocultural connotations of this concept have been totally lost.

The ability to distinguish cultural values by monitoring the bearers of other languages and cultures and interacting with them without referring to them with direct questions (as in most cases they are simply unable to give an adequate response due to the unconscious nature of the commitment to the values of their native culture) is also one part of language-learners' social competence, the formation of which would make it possible to avoid such an interference (Yelizarova, 2005).

Relying on the analysis of different interpretations of the sociocultural competence (SCC), the following of its components may be evolved:

⋏ knowledge of the system of universal cultural values;

⋏ knowledge of the value system of a native culture, forms and methods of their display in public institutions, linguistic picture of the world, models of human behavior, verbal and nonverbal communication etc.;

⋏ knowledge of the principles of interaction between cultural beliefs, norms and stereotypes in different manifestations of culture clash;

⋏ knowledge of the cultural values of a studied language, forms and methods of their display in public institutions, linguistic picture of the world, models of human behavior, verbal and non-verbal communication etc.;

⋏ recognition of the fact that different cultural models have a right to exist;

⋏ ability to emphatically perceive the manifestation of other cultural patterns;

⋏ ability to isolate the general and specific informational issues in the cultural identity of different models;

⋏ willingness to constructively defend their own position without demeaning

others and not getting into direct dependence upon other people's priorities (E. N. Solovov, L. G. Kuzmina, T. N. Yarmina, E. Kompantseva, J. E. Risk, L. A. Milovanova, G. V. Yelizarova etc.).

Chinese Hieroglyphics as a Tool for Forming Sociocultural Competence

The last decade modern science has been actively suggesting new methods aimed at creating sociocultural competence. There is a number of theses in which researchers propose that the formation of SCC should go through culturally-labeled computer technologies (G. A. Vorob'ev, E. D. Koshelyaeva), studying food culture (E. A. Saveliev), training linguistic country study reading using mass media sources (L. E. Kahn), authentic texts (T. M. Ezhkina), videos (L. A. Voronin), humorous literature (T. N. Yarmina), poetic texts (I. E. Riskey) and so on. The basis for the formation of sociocultural competence in these works is mainly the discourse defined as "an essential component of social and cultural interaction" (Van Dyke), lexical units and the national-cultural semantics, socially and culturally conditioned communication scenario, adopted in some linguistic cultures as well as grammatical phenomena that reflect linguistic features of the world picture.

Sociocultural component of Chinese hieroglyphics is recorded on the "level of visually expressed meaning, synthetically united in the very form of hieroglyphic writing, the sign" (Sofronov, 2007). Chinese hieroglyphics is a complex code formation allowing the individual notionally and beyond the communicative situation to analyze cognizable objects and express their characteristics, properties and relations while not only categorizing them, but also determining their significance within the space-time continuum. The language reflects a system of cultural values and vice versa, and all the manifestations of cultural products are reflected in the cognitive structures of the individual and transferred by means of signs and symbols. Language mastering involves the conceptualization of the world as reflected in the language (Bayramova, 2005). Chinese writing that appeared more than four thousand years ago managed to illustrate some of the "hidden" mechanisms of mental structures verbalization in the process of the world cognition, thus has created the Chinese hieroglyphic conceptual picture of the world consideration of which is possible through the prism of the cognitive approach based on the study of the surrounding background and human nature, the language awareness and communicative behavior of individuals. In this context it is also quite reasonable to introduce the term 'concept' defined herein as "mental formation, which is presented by important pieces of conscious experience stored in memory" (Karasik, 2004). The concept is a multi-dimensional formation where the value component is of particular cultural significance, after which follows the metaphorical image and various means of language fixing.

In philological tradition there has been settled the structural division of Chinese characters into the pictographic, ideographic and phonetic characters. The basis for the pictographic characters is a pictogram – a symbolic picture of a real object. This type of hieroglyphs is the most ancient and the pictograms that it's made up of were the basis of the next type which is the ideographic characters – as their parts, or keys. As for the phonetic hieroglyphs one of their characters played the role of phonetics which means it was a determinant of phonetic sounds. Linguistic tradition has long considered that there is no semantic connection between the signs of phonetic characters, however, a recent study by V. F. Rezanenko, O. M. Gotlib,

A. A. Prutskih, N. P. Martynenko, S. I. Bayramova, A. F. Kondrashevsky has proved the opposite standpoint. Therefore we will assume the phonetic characters are a type of ideographic characters and will turn directly to the ideographic structure of characters. As is has already been mentioned, the Chinese character is composed of several symbols-graphemes, each of which, taken by itself, has little to do with the meaning expressed by an ideogram. However, "a set of symbols that make up a particular ideogram, the meaning of each symbol interacts with the rest, in which the semantic field of each character is specified in one or another aspect and complementary to all the other creates the particular characteristic that is by its quality aimed at the meaning attributed to this particular hieroglyph in relation to which it serves as a subsumption sign" (Rezanenko, 1985) .

Among the methods of teaching Chinese characters there is a settled approach implying that on the initial stage of learning one should memorize the simplest graphic elements that have a semantic meaning. Originally graphemes were picturesque images of separate items or combinations of items. During the development of Chinese ethnic groups these ethnicities were undergoing changes which also affected the system of writing by simplifying and unifying it. As a result the form of some graphemes has changed and thus today it is sometimes difficult to determine the image of an object a particular sign goes back to. In order to memorize graphemes Chinese methodologists suggest turning to their etymology.

Determination and description of internal sign relations of a hieroglyphic sign will help to understand the culture of the Chinese, their "peculiar" outlook on the surrounding world as well as their paradigm of values which was conceived more than four thousand years ago. The Chinese written characters "are the basic units of designative ethnic perception of the Chinese, they form a so-called "shell" which largely determines the entire typological specifics of the Chinese language and ideology" (Gotlib, 2005).

The most archaic Chinese characters ascend to the images of animals, the pictograms were a straightforward and vivid depiction of the main distinguishing characteristics of animals and these nominative units encounter the following meanings: cow (bull), sheep (goat, ram), horse, pig, elephant, dog, deer, tiger, mouse, worm, fish, bird etc. It seems amazing how ancient people's outlook was similar to the perception of the world by a child, the perception made in a clear and acute way: a long-nosed elephant, a deer with branched antlers, a pig with a fat belly and short legs, a mouse with sharp teeth, long tail, and so on. All these characteristics were reflected in the ancient Chinese pictograms.

Hieroglyph 'sheep (goat, ram)' also originates from the pictogram found on divination bones with six thousand years' history that depicted the ram's head with steep down-turned horns. In the style of the pictogram one can discern a kind of abstract thinking found in a simplified sign-symbol, unlike the other pictograms depicting the whole animal, such as horse, fish, tiger pictograms and so on: 羊 (yang) is a grapheme which is represented in a series of ideograms, such as: 样, 养, 详, 鲜, 祥, 翔, 姜, 羌, 洋, 恙, 善, 美 etc.. In Chinese culture the ram is an animal having a peaceful good character that eats grass and does not cause people any harm. Benefits of ram or sheep breeding are great as the meat can be consumed as food, the skin is used to make clothes thus this animal can both provide us with nourishment and warmth. Thanks to its exclusive utilitarian value to the ancient Chinese, the ram became the symbol of happiness. Two characters (吉 羊 "ram of happiness") are quite often portrayed on ancient vessels. These two characters are the basis for ideogram 祥 which

appeared later and consisted of the graphems "ram" and "altar of the ancestors" and had a semantic meaning "good omen", "good luck". The meaning of this ideogram has its roots in the ancestors' worship. The ancient Chinese used to bring the sacrificial lamb on the altar and to pray on their luck and prosperity, and in the minds of the ancient Chinese this action was associated with hope for a favorable outcome. Symbolic meaning as a savior ram is presented in the historical annals " Zuo Zhuan" (左傳, IV-III centuries BC). The State of Chu won the Zheng war and Prince Zheng came out to meet the army of the winners topless and leading the ram. Naked torso of the Prince testified that he was ready to take on the Prince Chu's beatings and insults, and the ram represented the sacrificial animal that brings good omen, thus Prince Cheng expressed his hope for the grant of pardon of his people by Prince Chu.

The taste of mutton and lamb meat in the Chinese tradition was the criterion of evaluation of the food taste. Ideogram 鲜 xian (delicious, fresh) consists of graphemes 羊 "ram" and 鱼 "fish." According to the Chinese' beliefs, taste of lamb meat and fish is most pronounced in comparison with other food types accessible to a wide range of consumers, their ability to excite the strongest sense of taste and availability were the factors that have made lamb meat and fish favorite food types in China for several millenniums.

Another ideogram 美 mei (beauty, beautiful) consists of graphemes 羊 "ram" and 大 "big". Grapheme 大 originally represented the human figure-a man who stood up to his full height spreading his arms, this grapheme is interpreted in Chinese sources as the physical beauty of a large, healthy animal, the source of wealth for an ancient man.

The ideogram 美 presented four concepts of the ancient Chinese associated with this animal: judging by appearance the ram is an animal with a noble bearing, while for sensory system of a human taste lamb meat is fragrant, tasty and fatty, for the organs of touch clothing made of sheep's fleece is warm, soft and comfortable, the ram or sheep is unpretentious in terms of breeding and possesses good reproductive characteristics of an animal that does not require large investments of money and effort. These ideas combined together finally created a sense of well-being and beauty represented in the semantics of the ideogram 美.

Such concepts as ''good, kind, kindness, goodness'' in the Chinese language are represented by an ideogram 善 shan, the most ancient version of this hieroglyph is a picture of a ram's head with large eyes which are depicted at the bottom of the character. Due to the evolution this part has been replaced by a grapheme 言 yan ''speech'', indicating a bleating ram. For the ancient Chinese meek, humble, peaceful look of the ram and its humble, gentle bleating also became a symbol of kindness.

Phonetic ideogram 群 qun (flock, group, herd, crowd) consists of a grapheme 羊 ''ram'' and the phonetic component represented by a grapheme 君 jun which determines pronunciation of this character and possesses a semantic meaning ''lord, ruler, head''. The cognitive aspect of the ideogram lies in the observation made by the ancient Chinese of hierarchical organization of a flock of sheep in which the whole livestock obeys to a single leader. According to "Lunuy" (論語) or ''Analects of Confucius'': 'Countless animals make up herds and flocks while people make up masses' («兽三为群, 人三为众»). Chinese culture is a collectivist type of culture where ''the notion ''we'' is of primary importance and achievements and progress are associated with shared group activity, furthermore group goals, views and needs dominate the personal ones, an individual fully depends on the group and society, such attributes as cooperation, collaboration, compromise and modesty are highly valued. It

is considered indecent to emphasize individual achievements and merits" (Yelizarova, 2005). Gregarious organization of a sheep community headed by the leader has become for the Chinese collectivist culture a wonderful symbol of cohesion, teamwork, cooperation and mutual support semantically embodied in the ideogram 群.

Separately from a larger number of characters containing the grapheme 羊 there are the most archaic ideograms 羌 qiang and 姜 jiang which are the names of small nationalities that used to inhabit the north-east China in ancient times. 羌 nation in the process of evolution assimilated with the main nationality inhabiting China – Han nationality. The ideogram denoting this ethnic group is composed of graphemes 人 "people" and 羊 "ram". 羊 in this context is a totem of this ethnic group, a sacred animal, an object of worship, reflecting archaic cognitive mind of ancient people.

On the basis of the analysis of ideograms containing the structural grapheme "ram" presented in this article it is possible to conclude that this concept is an important element of the Chinese concept sphere symbolizing beauty, goodness, collectivism and a happy omen, it is also an object of worship and a measure of good taste. It is worth noting that among the characters containing grapheme "ram" there are almost no words with a negative connotation, and those words that have a negative connotation usually acquired it during evolution in the later historic periods, for example, the idiom "scapegoat and whipping boy" (替罪羊), which has negative connotations is borrowed from the Old Testament phraseology.

The difference in the interpretation of the ram concept in the intercultural approach is evident. In Russia the negative meaning of the concept of ram was observed by linguists in the late 19th century as the expression "ram's head" was used to determine the object's insignificance, and the thick frontal bones and ram's horns resulted in semantic transfer to the meaning "stupidity, bonehead, stubbornness of a human being" (Bayramova, 2005).

Conclusion

There is a great number of such cultural correlations of semantic meanings of graphemes included in the ideogram in Chinese hieroglyphics since ideograms and phonetic ideograms make up the majority of Chinese characters. Most of them are connected with archaic notions about the world shared by the ancient Chinese. The modern linguistic picture and hieroglyphic picture of the world in particular are reflected in modern hieroglyphics that has been fairly simplified but nevertheless has deeply preserved the roots of Chinese ethnic mentality.

In conformity with everything stated above it can be affirmed that the inclusion of sociocultural analysis of Chinese hieroglyphics on the basis of grammatological approach will not only provide students with knowledge about the Chinese hieroglyphic concept sphere, cultural identity, cultural realia both in historical and contemporary perspective, but will also teach language-learners to properly use the cognitive basis in further independent language learning; such an approach can be viewed as an effective mechanism for memorizing Chinese characters which can help the mastering of hieroglyphic signs due to a relatively easy opportunity for reconstructing the image that is underlying the sociocultural analysis, as well as a method to contribute to the formation of a sustainable motivational component of learning.

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Методика формирования социокультурной компетенции: иероглиф как когнитивная память культуры

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Китайское письмо, идеографическое и пиктографическое, является частью языковой картины мира, концепты, выраженные в нем на грамматологическом уровне могут участвовать в формировании социокультурной компетенции, являющейся одной из составляющих межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции. Включение социокультурного анализа китайской иероглифики на основе грамматологического подхода позволит обучающимся не только приобрести знания о китайской иероглифической концептосфере, национально-культурной специфике, культурных реалиях, как в историческом, так и в современном аспекте, но также научит правильно использовать данную когнитивную базу при дальнейшем самостоятельном изучении языка, будет эффективным механизмом запоминания, способствующим активизации усвоения иероглифических знаков за счет сравнительно легкой возможности реконструировать образ, лежащий в основе социокультурного анализа, а кроме того будет способствовать формированию устойчивого мотивационного компонента обучения.

Ключевые слова: социокультурная компетенция, межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, идеограмма, фоноидеограмма, графема, концепт, когнитивный подход, грамматологический подход, китайская иероглифическая картина мира, концептосфера.