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ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИТЕ НАУКИ

Методика на обучението по език и литература

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THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS AND TRAINING AIDS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE BEGINNER'S LEVEL: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS

Studying and teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language has definitely become more popular and relevant nowadays due to constant increase in the number of international students attending various higher education courses taught in Ukrainian. Analyzing key advantages and disadvantages of methodological materials for international students, the emphasis should be made on major achievements and prospects.

Since late XX - early XXI century, Ukrainian linguodidactics (language education) has been annually enriched with scientific achievements in the teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language field. For instance, different curricula and educational programs have been elaborated for diverse categories of international students, using specific principles of scientificity, accessibility, adequate complexity, consistency and professional orientation to disclose the actual content of these materials, which are primarily based on the intercultural approach in education, as well as ideological neutrality and use of the language as means of intercultural communication. In addition, many specialists continue effective research in the field of differentiated instruction theory and practice.

It is worth noting that elaboration of textbooks, training aids and methodological materials for international students is one of the most important tasks set within the

system of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language, as well as an important factor contributing to modern effective education of foreign citizens enrolled in Ukrainian higher education.

More than six dozen textbooks, training aids and workbooks have been recently published. Such educational literature is designed for both international students who only begin learning the Ukrainian language and for those who have already mastered some basic and practical grammar covering 1500-2000 lexical units.

Having analyzed current situation regarding general practice of the Ukrainian language courseware development, we should conclude that the great portion of published materials are mainly intended for international students at the beginner's level.

The first manuals for students enrolled in pre-university courses (the preparatory faculties/departments) in Ukrainian higher education institutions mostly required a small number of academic hours (for example, only 32 lessons) and lecturers were able to simply introduce some elementary grammar of modern Ukrainian language to international students. Eventually, these educational materials have reached volumes sufficient enough to provide decent knowledge to students attending pre-university courses. Teacher-methodologists have gained vast experience and elaborated training materials, textbooks and even entire educational curricula covering 650-710 academic hours in the first and second semesters. Since 2003, methodologists have started developing educational materials for basic lexis and grammar courses in full compliance with the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Competence implemented within the framework of the so-called European Language Portfolio (ELP) and in accordance with -The Ukrainian language pre-university course curriculum for international students in Ukrainian higher education institutions. At the same time, the form of educational material presentation is subject to the most essential communicative goal – necessary oral and written communication skills development by international students.

Phonetics (oral speech skills and phonetic articulation) is the mandatory course included in almost all textbooks, as it is focused on international students' development of articulatory and auditory images of Ukrainian vowels and consonants, their changes in language flow, the main types of verbal accents and intonation patterns, which are all inherent parts of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language to international students.

The recently published textbooks can be distinguished by thorough and serious approach to their elaboration [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. In addition to fundamentals in phonetics and graphics (written communication) of the Ukrainian language, including basic rules and grammar tables, these educational materials introduce grammatical paradigms of nouns, adjectives, numerals and pronouns conjugated forms according to the systems of cases in the Ukrainian language, as well as categories of type, tense, number, gender and person of verbs; they also explain and illustrate the appropriate use of adverbs in a sentence. Lesson organization stages usually correspond to phases of students' educational and cognitive activity: presentation, orientation, training and practical activities, summary, therefore, the most important objective of each lesson is to achieve the main communicative goal of such education. Most texts in these textbooks integrate colloquial and sociocultural components to help international students achieve decent coherent speech level, develop excellent communicative and linguistic skills, while dialogues and polylogues included in these educational materials serve to illustrate diverse speech behavior models in everyday communication situations.

We should also mention that specialists tend to organize additional practical activities (practicums) aimed at providing international students with knowledge of Ukraine as the country, its culture-specific notions and traditions. For instance, there are biographical texts that describe key events and achievements in lives of remarkable Ukrainians – writers or personalities with high distinctions in science and technology, or texts reflecting various Ukrainian culture-specific realities [6].

Moreover, some textbooks contain texts of communicative and social nature, the main purpose of which is development of cognitive interest among foreigners. There are also workbooks with assignments for individual student work or with exercises for consolidation of the learned material, which enable university teachers to generalize or correct knowledge and skills acquired by international students.

Unfortunately, most textbooks' structures rarely comprise a system of modules where each module contains grammatical and lexical content and is intended to form students' linguistic and communicative competences [1].

Considering positive features of modern textbooks, we should distinguish translation dictionaries in English, French, Arabic and Chinese that contain approximately 1500-2000 lexical units.

Let us express several wishes and requests for further attempts in elaboration of decent textbooks for international students attending pre-university courses (preparatory departments/faculties). To begin with, one of the main objectives of any language teacher is to introduce the specifics of academic language to students. In the first weeks of language learning activities, a very important task is to reduce a number of linguo-psychological difficulties encountered by students (especially, non-philologists) when coming across well-known scientific terms used in a linguistic manner that is new for these students. Elaboration of high quality methodological materials for mastering Ukrainian as a foreign language in objective conceptual manner or learning the basics of scientific style should enhance learners' motivation, allowing international students to smoothly pass to complete understanding of texts presented in educational materials for studying certain professional specialties. Unfortunately, there are only few decent textbooks in Ukrainian as a foreign language taught as a separate subject during pre-university courses at present [7].

All in all, we believe that there is an urgent need for elaboration of textbooks designed taking into consideration the international student body, in particular: foreigners who speak Russian and live in the former Soviet Union countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan), foreigners who do not speak Russian (China, Vietnam, Africa, the Middle East and South America) and foreigners who attend courses taught in English.

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