

ENHANCING STUDENT'S COGNITIVE SKILLS THROUGH THE STUDY OF LINGUACULTURAL CONTENT

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Abstract: *This article examines the role of linguocultural texts in developing the cognitive skills of students who are learning a foreign language. The author emphasizes the importance of the cultural and historical context for shaping learners' analytical, critical, and systematizing thinking. Various types of cognitive abilities developed through work with linguocultural materials are analyzed, and methodological techniques are proposed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the target language culture. The possibilities for assessing the effectiveness of this approach are considered, and prospects for its further improvement are outlined. The article is intended for specialists in foreign language teaching methodology, cultural studies, and intercultural communication research.*

Keywords: *linguocultural studies, cognitive skills, intercultural communication, analytical thinking, critical thinking, teaching methodology, cultural context.*

The current paradigm of foreign language teaching is increasingly focused on the comprehensive formation of not only students' linguistic competence but also the cognitive abilities necessary for a qualitative understanding of intercultural communications. The linguocultural approach to teaching, developed in the works of such researchers as E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov, expands the boundaries of traditional language instruction by introducing students to the cultural and historical context of the target language country. This not only enhances their motivation to learn the language but also contributes to the development of analytical, critical, and systematizing thinking. Both domestic and foreign scholars (M. M. Bakhtin, Yu. M. Lotman, H.-G. Gadamer, E. Said) have repeatedly emphasized the importance of the cultural code and intertextuality in understanding literary, historical, and journalistic texts. M. M. Bakhtin and Yu. M. Lotman, in particular, pointed out that any text is "embedded" in the semiotic space of culture and "interacts" with other texts, thereby forming complex cognitive structures of perception. Thus, using linguocultural materials gives students the opportunity to conceptualize language as a phenomenon closely linked to the history, traditions, and values of a particular people.

1. The Role of Linguocultural Texts in Cognitive Development

According to E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov, linguocultural materials help

overcome the “facelessness” of linguistics by endowing language with national and cultural specificity. Students working with such materials do not merely memorize words and grammatical structures; rather, they learn to interpret cultural codes and delve into the logic of native speakers’ thinking. This process activates their cognitive sphere: learners begin to analyze, systematize, compare, and critically evaluate new information.

From the perspective of L. S. Vygotsky’s cultural-historical psychology, human thinking is inseparable from cultural tools, with language occupying a central place among them. By working with linguocultural texts, students not only master new lexical units, but also learn ways of conceptualizing the world characteristic of another culture. This triggers cognitive mechanisms associated with expanding cognitive schemas and developing abstract thinking.

2. Types of Cognitive Skills Developed through Work with Linguocultural Materials

Researchers in cognitive linguistics (Z. D. Popova, I. A. Sternin) note that studying cultural context helps form complex semantic networks that allow for a deeper understanding of the meanings of words and expressions. As a result, students develop:

- **Analytical Skills:** The ability to identify and interpret key factors of a text, reveal cause-and-effect relationships, and understand cultural and historical prerequisites.
- **Skills of Systematization and Classification:** Integrating large amounts of cultural, historical, geographical, and artistic information into a single system of knowledge.
- **Comparative Skills:** The ability to compare the cultural realities of the studied language with those of one’s own culture, thereby fostering intercultural competence and mental flexibility.
- **Critical Thinking:** Evaluating the reliability, authority, and objectivity of sources; identifying ideological or propagandistic elements in the text; and distinguishing facts from opinions.
- **Conceptualization and Reflection:** Forming one’s own concepts, generalizations, and evaluations of cultural phenomena, and developing metacognitive abilities.

3. Methodological Techniques for Developing Cognitive Skills

Many methodological scholars (N. D. Galskova, G. V. Elizarova) emphasize that the successful development of cognitive skills requires varied and interactive teaching methods. Effective techniques include:

- **Preliminary Preparation of Vocabulary and Realia:** Students become familiar with key concepts, names, and dates before reading the main text. This facilitates comprehension and stimulates analytical activity.

- **Problem-Based Questions and Discussions:** Open-ended questions encouraging the comparison of cultural traditions and the examination of socio-historical contexts develop critical thinking and the ability to formulate well-argued conclusions.
- **Project Work:** Carrying out mini-research projects, preparing presentations, and comparing cultural phenomena in different countries helps students independently acquire, systematize, and interpret information.
- **Comparative Analysis of Texts:** Reading texts reflecting different historical periods or regional characteristics and comparing them with each other and with the students' own culture fosters a broad and flexible worldview.
- **Integration of Multimedia Resources:** Using films, documentaries, podcasts, and virtual tours broadens the information field and encourages students to engage in a holistic analysis of materials.

4. Evaluating Effectiveness and Prospects

To evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive skill development, various methods can be used: tests, surveys, analysis of written works, and oral interviews. Researchers also highlight the need for dynamic observation of students' cognitive progress, reflecting changes in their attitudes toward information, critical assessment of content, and the ability to form their own points of view. In the future, it may be possible to further expand linguocultural courses through digital technologies (online platforms, databases of cultural realia), the introduction of project-based and research-oriented methods, and the integration of interdisciplinary approaches (history, sociology, cultural studies, philosophy).

Conclusion

Leading scholars in linguocultural studies, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication agree that studying linguocultural texts stimulates the active development of students' cognitive skills. The educational process moves beyond the mechanical acquisition of language forms and becomes a dynamic exploration of the world through the prism of another culture. Such an approach fosters students' capacity for critical thinking, comparative analysis, reflection, and conceptualization, thereby increasing their readiness for intercultural dialogue and further professional development.

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