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Methods of using onomastics in teaching language and culture

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Abstract

The Kazakh language is the state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Being in colonization for a long time Kazakhstani people had no need and chance to use the Kazakh language freely. With the independence proclaimed the opportunity to use the Kazakh language has increased: from primary schools to the universities. In the frame of European language teaching norms, special standards were developed to teach the Kazakh language in the functional-communicative direction. Its basics cover the national and cognitive directions. In this presentation the author shares the ideas of teaching national-cultural lexis, as well as using the onym units at the lessons. Proper names play a significant role in the Kazakh culture and the national mentality. They describe the long history of the Kazakh people through the centuries. The article considers languages' description and importance of teaching them.

Keywords: Lingua culture, onomastics, methodology.

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1. Introduction

We would like to start our article with pointing the source of significance of using onym units at the Kazakh language lessons. At the lessons students were given the following task: “if you produce a new product in future, how would you call it. Write the possible names for it.” In 10 minutes students should write 3 or 5 names. In 38 names of ten students only 2 belonged to the national characters (Nurclinic, Ayfarm). Other names did not describe the content of the products or were close to describe, but they contained indefinite, meaningless words without typical models. Although students’ native language is Kazakh, they get education in Russian primary schools or specially mixed language schools; their communication language in the family is Russian and English. These groups learn Kazakh as a second language. “In the language area or beyond, the second language is learnt as a foreign or international language for the individuals” (Zimnyaya, 1989).

Names are taken from the word fund. From the result of the task we have noticed that they do not know “the theory of giving names” and use of names in the Kazakh language is not proper. Step by step as a result of the exercising and doing various tasks we have analysed the methods of teaching the onym units.

Current Kazakh language study combines the language and culture, the national feature of the language, based on the national spirit, the cognitive linguistics and its lingua culture study; ethno-linguistics directions have been developed. Lingua culture study deals with the language influence on national culture with the comparison of modern point of view.

There are some scientific statements of lingua culture.

1) Lingua culture is a complex discipline synthesizing type, which studies the relationship and interaction of culture and language in its functioning and reflects the process as an integral structure units in the unity of their linguistic and extra-linguistic cultural content by means of system methods and with a focus on current priorities and cultural establishment (system of rules and universal values) (Vorobyev, 1997),

2) Lingua culture is the science, which arose at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies and explores the cultural manifestations of the people that are affected and entrenched in the language (Maslov, 2001),

3) Lingua culture is a discipline that studies the manifestation, reflection and fixation of culture in language and discourse, directly connected with the study of the national language picture of the world of consciousness, mental-lingual features of the complex (Krasnykh, 2002),

According to these statements the object of the lingua culture is cultural semantics of language symbols, and the cultural semantics are formed under the influence of language and culture.

The Kazakh language study also deals with this sphere, scientists write articles but there are no schools working particularly in this direction. Nowadays, using the lingua cultural units in teaching language helps to succeed. Onym units in the Kazakh language are formed in the lingua cultural character. From the ancient time Kazakh people had nomadic life, so names of lands and waters had important meanings. Each name combined the national point of view, psychology, customs and traditions.

Why do we consider the onym units separately in teaching the Kazakh language in the lingua culture direction? The onomastics plays an important role in the Kazakh people’s history. The Kazakhstan land area is the ninth in the world and is rich in considering geographical objects. In the history nomads gave the names to mountains, rivers, lakes, and forests describing their inner meaning. The main point of the theory of naming - the relation of the thing and word was followed by Kazakh people very well. They used the simple lexis in names well understood by people. Onym units are used a lot in the household, public, social and political life. Teaching names is an important tool in communication teaching method.

We aimed first to make a program of teaching onym units. The program is based on three methodical statements:

- Communicative direction;
- Cultural-cognitive statement;
- Integrational;

It was considered to create the real psychological area in different situations to help the learners use the onym units in the communication.

In the cultural statement the learners were provided with the cultural informational materials.

The integrational statement includes development of communicative, professional and academic skills simultaneously. The following methods were used to learn the onyms and will be discussed in the next sections.

1. *Levelled teaching methods*. Choosing lexis according to the European language teaching standards. In the elementary level the learners consider the history of naming, the meaning of their names, the names of heroes, historical individuals and their establishing history. The main motivation of naming is to bring up the children as brave and famous individuals. Thus the connection with the names of heroes and batyrs is considered in the “introduction” section. The names used now such as Alpamys, Kobylandy, Beybarys, Abylay, Kerey, Zhanibek, Abay, Zere, Domalak ana, Ulzhan, Aigerim, etc. have the great motivation of being like them, these images help to teach lingua cultural notions.

The following table can be filled with their life period and role in the history. On the basis of this table the lexis of ages in the Kazakh language could be found out. It will be continued in “season language”.

Table 1. About outstanding people in the Kazakh language

People’s names	sex	Popularity	Period of life
Alpamys	male	hero	ancient time
Kobylandy	male	hero	ancient time
Beybarys	male	hero	ancient time
Abylay	male	khan	age of Kazakh khanate
Kerey	male	khan	age of Kazakh khanate
Zhanibek	male	khan	age of Kazakh khanate
Abay	male	poet	19 century (educational)
Zere	female	Abay’s grandmother	19 century (educational)
Ulzhan	female	Abay’s mother	19 century (educational)
Aigerim	female	beloved	19 century (educational)

The elementary level of the Kazakh language covers all categories of Numbers. The names combined with numbers are widely used traditionally among the Kazakh people. The number names begin with number *one* till *one thousand*. Birbay (a rich man), Birzhan (a man), Cegizbay (eight rich men), Zhuzbay (hundred rich men), Myngbay (thousand rich men). But female names are few, and they have a special history. With the rise of level the name combinations will be considered in connection of legends and stories. There are onym units in their key words. You can read such stories in the internet sites. They can be adopted according to the levels. The following story is an example:

My real name is *Tort kempir bir shal* (four old women and an old man). My father’s children used to die one after another. When I was born my mother’s mother gave me a name. Right after my birth four old women held me one after another. I was taken under an old man. My umbilical cord was cut with an ax by 13 year old boy. Later he was my God father. The motive was to bring me up as sharp

mindful and strong as an ax. It was funny at school; later on I changed my name. The name in short is "Tortken" (*tort* means four) also means equal in four sides, (everything is very well). The famous Kazakh mathematician Askar Zhumadildayev called one of his tasks with my real name. In Germany he solved two tasks and one was called "Tort kempir bir shal". He wrote it is the daughter of Kene (great Kazakh poet) next to it. "It is amazing."

Students read this text and do the tasks. The text covers the grammar and has the cognitive cultural content:

- Custom of giving names;
- Name combined with numbers;
- Syntax structure of naming;
- Another famous person (mathematician) gives this name to the task etc.

The definite anthroponomical units with the adjectives make names that describe heroism (*batyr, batyl*), tenderness (*nazik, erke*), beauty (*sulu, ademi, kerbez, sylkym*), braveness (*ozhet, kaysar*), honesty (*adal, adil*), intelligence (*akyldy, zerek*) etc. These materials are included to the program and the defining structures of adjective names as well. The basis of onomastic units with the anthroponomical origin increases the lingua cultural direction. The names: *Asemgul, Korkem, Akkerbez, Symbat, Batyrbolat, Batylzhan, Adilbek, Akylbek, Kaysar, Ozhetken, Zerek* etc. are the examples of these adjective names.

2. *Communicative directed method*. This method includes four activities: reading, writing, speaking and listening. These four activities can be used in the content of proper names. The inner content shown in the onyms is different. The people's names have more symbolic feature than the content. This method is widely used in all activities.

Communicative directed method includes the anthroponomys, toponyms, and it helps to learn the grammar. In the Kazakh language the construction of toponyms were systematically used before the soviet period. As a result of cumulative function of the language it was passed from father to his descendants. Famous oriental scientist Sh.Ualikhanov (Ualikhanov, 1980) wrote: "names connected with ancient Turkic customs and traditions, historical evidences are still being kept by generations." M.Auezov: "Kazakh names of land and mountains were given characterizing that places, each small land or spring in the steppe has the mystery." (Auezov, 1979: 85).

Giving names among Kazakh people show erudite and intelligence. Building toponyms show not only the grammatical structure, but also different ways of word building. Toponyms made from the rich lexical fund of the Kazakh language can be well connected with the grammar structures and lexis.

3. *Brain storm method*. It is about collecting suggestions to solve the problem in a short period of time. This method helps to eliminate the psychological barriers in learning a language and give the opportunity to realize the knowledge properly. This method can be used in teaching onyms of foreign origin.

Kazakh onomastic consists of six big foreign covers:

- Chinese;
- Persian;
- Arabic;
- Mongol;
- Kalmak;
- Russian;

Most elements entered from Arabic and Russian languages. Up to now there are some difficulties in changing toponyms in these two languages in historical names of the country. The students' ideas concerning this problem are collected and given to the expert group to analyze and evaluate. The task: "Do we need to change the name Petropavl to its historical name?"

It is aimed to develop the speaking activity. The students' ideas are not criticized, not discussed. The idea is brief and clear.

4. Method of debates. It is one of the often used methods to establish the students' speaking skills. Debates help to revise all the material, ask questions, and choose the right answers. Creating the pleasant atmosphere it teaches to make a speech according to the definite principles. The anthroponyms and oykonyms are mostly used. The importance of choosing the name the baby's name and changing principles is the subject of the debate. The baby has no opportunity to choose the name. So he is given the name by others. Later, when he becomes an adult he may dislike his name. The debate can be organized on the basis of concrete questions. The teacher must give clear questions to have concrete answers. Speech regulations must always be kept.

5. Project method. This method starts in the intermediate level. It is used before the professional level. The student's search ability is very important. Each student studies the history of his native place, family and relatives; collects the information on the geographical objects; talks to local people; keeps the diary; prepares the video materials; organizes picture galleries, prepares the list of official documents; as a result builds a toponomyc map of that place. The teacher should prepare this method very properly. The teacher prepares the tasks in portfolio in the special program; informs where students can get the information; gives the directions. The research period can last from one month to six months. It could be resulted in dictionaries, manuals or other students' abilities.

2. Conclusion

In the Kazakh language classes teaching onomastics as a lingua cultural unit has the following importance:

- To increase the students' ethno cultural competencies;
- To establish the speaking skills;
- To establish writing skills;
- To create a pleasant psychological atmosphere;
- To enrich the active vocabulary.

Using the above mentioned methods help the learners to reach the aims in learning the language well.

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