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Educational Language Policy in Russia under Modernization

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Due to great shift in the Russian economic-political situation, there are inevitable changes to face in the national language policy. One of the key ways to adapt to the current international conditions is to tailor the ameliorated system of language education. The Lifelong Learning conception is regulated according to the Russian Federation strategy as a major trend.

Keywords: Lifelong Language Learning, integration, national identity, national language policy, the Common Educational space, principle, recent socio-political changes, educational opportunities.

Introduction

The issues of national identity are frequently debated in terms of recent socio-political changes of the last decades. It is especially topical when discussing the post-Soviet situation in the Russian Federation in conditions of the world consolidation and globalization. A nation faces overwhelming problems determining its cultural identity. Moreover, it is very questionable and complex process (Rawi, 2001: 8). Thus, there are not only economic and political problems, but also problems of national and state language determination as a device to create a new society in present day conditions.

The Role of the Education Policy

One of the main long term measures to disseminate and regulate the state language policy is the state language education system. It is considered to be very controversial and problematic

point at present, but still it is equipped to reflect the social demand of a contemporary society.

Thus, the Russian Federation had inherited the main theoretical aspects of the Soviet language policy (Federal Law on the State Language in the Russian Federation, 2005: 1), (Federal Law on National Languages in the Russian Federation, 1991: 2), (Model Law "on Languages" N 24-6, 2004: 3). Nevertheless, it had to look for some new ways to implement the policy. The contemporary system of the language education adapted some new forms due to new economic and political conditions, such as the economic recession on the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States, new international politico-economical relationships. Most ex-Soviet countries are looking forward to entering the league of European counterparts. So, they are re-examining the list of strategic partners not only among the ex-Soviet republics, but also the world nations (Rawi, 2001: 8).

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Functioning in the sphere of foreign language teaching reflects the common intention to belong to “the European house”. It can be fully illustrated in adapting dogmas of Lifelong Language Learning. It is known that this term was borrowed from various official documentations, which support educational and political processes. In November 2006 the European parliament resolution №1720/2006/EC was made in order to take new integrated educational «Lifelong Learning Programme» in the course of «Europass» project realization. The programme has integrated all well-known and used means and trends to create educational opportunities for different-aged students. Thus, «Lifelong Learning Programme» has become the next phase of long term European policy realization. This policy is aimed to reinforce the process of European consolidation. Today, the creation of the Common Educational Space is considered to be a basis of economic and political integration and cultural interaction (Telegin, electronic resource: 6).

A number of important socio-economic forces is pushing for the lifelong learning approach. The increased pace of globalization and technological change, the changing nature of work and the transformation of labour market, and the ageing of populations are among the main forces emphasising the need for continuing upgrading of work, everyday and professional skills throughout person’s life. The demand is for a rising threshold of skills as well as for more frequent changes in the nature of the skills required. Nancy Merz Nordstrom, M.Ed., lists the top 10 benefits of Lifelong Learning as such:

- Lifelong Learning helps fully develop natural abilities;
- Lifelong Learning opens the mind;
- Lifelong Learning creates a curious, hungry mind;
- Lifelong Learning increases our wisdom;

- Lifelong Learning makes the world a better place;
- Lifelong Learning helps us to adapt to change;
- Lifelong Learning helps us find meaning in our lives;
- Lifelong Learning keeps us involved as active contributors to society;
- Lifelong Learning helps us make new friends and establish valuable relationships;
- Lifelong Learning leads to an enriching life of self-fulfilment (Nordstrom, electronic resource: 7).

Principles of Lifelong Language Learning are becoming more frequently mentioned while discussing the ways to solve problems of Cross-cultural communication not only in domestic, but also in professional sphere. It is closely connected with problems of Russian integration into the European and world educational, cultural and economic and political community. This policy provides every person with an opportunity of an individually tailored educational path to get further professional, career and personal development.

Besides great amount of benefits, there are some disadvantages. Thus, the most obvious one is an effect of commercialisation of the education process. The brightest example of it is foreign language learning exactly. Moreover, as Olga Oleynikova, chief of the Professional Educations Problems Centre, claims that the term Lifelong Learning is very often substituted or confused with the term Professional retraining as a synonym. It is a point of misunderstanding in the core. But what is more important, it prevents accepting and tailoring the Lifelong Learning conception in the Russian Federation. The fact that there is no designed Lifelong Learning conception at necessary and acceptable level influences the forming of

national educational strategy. It seems to cramp the integration into contemporary process of international development. As a consequence, Russia is supposed to be at the same level of economic and social development (“Lifelong Learning – is it actual trend for Russia?”, electronic resource: 10).

The efficiency of Lifelong Language Learning realization depends on coordination, understanding of common strategy, goals and objectives sharing of professionals which are to implement this policy (Akaeva, electronic resource: 5). Nevertheless, despite the great significance of continuation principle, exactly this aspect is absent in a necessary amount to realize the policy of Lifelong Learning.

There are problems to implement the principle of continuation in Lifelong Language Learning policy due to consequences of the educational policy in the 1990s. Thus, the learner-centered approach announced at that period of time identifies the problem of time scarcity. It is obvious that there is not enough given time to study foreign language at any educational unit. Not only the differentiated, but also the individual approach to a student can hardly be implemented as well as to create a positive educational environment for study if there are only two or three hours a week (Rawi, 2001: 8). It also influences the process to solve problem of professional orientation and personal cultural identity that are crucial nowadays.

As a consequence, today there are students to come to universities that have different attainment

level of foreign language. A teacher should find a special individual approach to students which have some language problems. Such measures are taken to provide an opportunity for further education at university (Rawi, 2001: 8).

One of the ways to solve the given problem is a fast-moving turning back to out-of-classroom form of the teaching process implementation. It could create an opportunity to solve the majority of the mentioned problems.

Moreover, the huge impact as well as the means in teaching and learning process is supposed to be nowadays a high-tech informational and educational environment. There are great amount of various web applications, social services, agents at present to be not only a tool to form language, speech and cross-cultural competences, but also a real device to apply already achieved competences naturally. It could help a person to experience his or her own integration into contemporary world processes at different levels: personally and professionally.

Conclusion

On balance, the overall picture seems to be that the educational policy in the course of foreign language education is supposed to be one of the main means to implement the state language policy of the Russian Federation. The prime target of the policy in its turn is not only formation, correction and sustention of language norms and juridical aspect of it, but also creating conditions for cultural identity of a nation as a member of the world community.

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Реализация языковой политики в сфере образования в условиях модернизации современной России

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В условиях изменений, коснувшихся экономико-политической ситуации в Российской Федерации, государство столкнулось с неизбежными изменениями в государственной языковой политике, которые необходимо проводить в данный момент. Одним из основных способов адаптации к современным мировым условиям является тщательно проработанная, качественно измененная система языкового образования. Концепция непрерывного образования ассимилируется согласно современной стратегии Российской Федерации.

Ключевые слова: непрерывное языковое образование, интеграция, национальное самоопределение, национальная языковая политика, единое образовательное пространство, недавние социополитические изменения, образовательные возможности.
