



Culturological Ideas of Teaching a Foreign Language: Concepts and Theories (the end of 20th – at the beginning of the 21st Century)



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Abstract

The rapidly expanding international cooperation in the late 20th - early 21st centuries raised the question of foreign language learning as well as cultural understanding. Without these essential aspects, intercultural communication cannot be efficient. The high interest in foreign language learning contributed to the search for the most effective ways of teaching it. The concepts and theories appeared at the turn of two centuries in Russia, remaining relevant today. They became the essential basis for further research on foreign language teaching in the framework of the dialogue of cultures. The cultural idea is focused on learning both the Language and culture. Safonova (1993), developed a socio-cultural approach to teaching a foreign language as a specialty. She has proved the necessity of integration of the culture of the country being studied into the educational process. A methodical model of foreign language teaching was proposed as a basis for developing the bicultural personality of students.

Keywords

*cultural idea;
foreign language;
intercultural
communication;
language education;
socio-cultural approach;*

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1 Introduction

The review ideas were presented by V.P. Furmanova ([Furmanova, 1994](#)), in "Intercultural communicative competence and cultural and linguistic pragmatics in the theory and practice of foreign language teaching". She developed ways of integrating culture into the educational process by highlighting cultural and linguistic pragmatics, as well as analyzing the concept of "cultural and linguistic personality." The main principles of the program is the concept of communicative foreign language teaching, developed by E.I. Passov ([Passov, 2000](#)). The main issue of the concept was the idea that language education was the key to mastering the culture due to which the spiritual development of the individual occurs. Current issues of the concept of multicultural linguistic education by [Sysoyev \(2004\)](#), are reflected as well as the priority tasks faced by modern language pedagogy, the solution of which will contribute to the understanding of representatives of different linguistic cultures.

At the end of the 20th century, Russia became an open country with rapidly expanding political, economic, and cultural contacts with the whole world. The rapidly changing conditions of international cooperation entailed the necessity to address many issues of efficient interaction with other states and peoples. Therefore the problem of intercultural communication became a principal object of study for the humanities, the quality of which depends on the development of the entire world community. The interest in foreign language learning as the most important means of communication with representatives of other countries had grown. Following this, special attention is paid to enhancing the effectiveness of foreign language teaching in secondary and higher education. The culturological idea became the strategic one in organizing the educational process and defining the content of the discipline "Foreign Language." The pedagogical community expressed the critical idea that the people's culture of the country's target language should be the basis for teaching. According to the plan, the study of the language and culture would contribute to the formation of linguistic and cultural knowledge, give students the experience of socio-cultural and intercultural communication. Besides, there were more global challenges, such as integrating into the international community, fostering sustained interest, and establishing practical cooperation among nations, promoting stability in the world. From the perspective of cultural ideas concerning foreign language teaching, teachers and methodologists redefined existing traditional approaches to foreign language learning.

Moreover, more effective ways of learning a different culture were developed. New theories and concepts of foreign language learning from the cultural perspective appeared in Russian pedagogy. Later an essential modification of theoretical and practical foundations of foreign language teaching was revealed.

2 Materials and Methods

The basis for the development of new theories, concepts was the principle of the dialogue of cultures ~~and~~ which was revealed by M.M. Bakhtin, B.C. Bybler, S.Y. Kurganov, and other scientists. Some researchers were pointing out the fact that any training should be built as a dialogue of various logics and cultures, like ancient, medieval, and modern ones. M.M. Bakhtin wrote that "only in communication, during interaction of people, a person is revealed both for others and for himself. A person is alive when he interacts with others, which means that a person exists in a dialogue" ([Bakhtin, 1979](#)). During the dialogue, communication ~~between~~ people arises, where participants do not just "manifest certain facets of the ancient, medieval and other thinking, but, above all, "grop" their world view" ([Bakhtin, 1992](#)). This idea is fundamental, as ignorance of another nation's culture, and its mentality leads to interethnic misunderstanding and confrontation. As the great Russian culturologist, D.S. Likhachev noted, each of the past cultures of other countries became for an intelligent person "his own culture" since the knowledge of one's own culture was associated with the aptitude for a foreign language. Exactly this understanding of the open and tolerant process of cultural communication allowed D.S. Likhachev to assert that culture was the universal foundation of human existence, the primary source of human history humanization. Culture became the essential basis of education. It became a fundamental thesis that ethnic cultures had been the total wealth of all nations, and world culture had been a product of the historical process of mutual enrichment and interconnections of ethnic cultures.

Based on cultural ideas, teachers developed the central thesis of the cultural approach to teaching humanities, defined new approaches to education, including language, studied the mechanisms of cultural learning. Thus, E.V. Bondarevskaya's concept justified the reason for education in the context of culture. N.E. Shchurkova considered the organization of education as a factor of integration of Russian society into the world culture. A research group of psychologists led by I.A. Zimnaya pointed out that education was a process of shaping a person's attitude to the world. Works of such researchers as I.L. Bim, M.Z. Biboletova, E.M. Vereshchagin, N.D. Galskova, V.G. Kostomarov, E.I. Passov, V.V. Safonova, S.G. Ter-Minasova, I.I. Khaleeva, A.V. Shchepilova, V.P. Furmanova, and others were devoted to the theoretical understanding of various aspects of integrating culture into the process of foreign language teaching. The works of V.V. Oshchepkova, A.N. Bogomolova, T.P. Popova, P.V. Sysoyev, and others were aimed at the methodology development of teaching a foreign language, considering its culturological component. Despite some differences in scientific approaches, the conclusion about the importance of foreign language learning as a component of culture is recognized.

3 Results and Discussions

The object of study, as well as education in general, is the formation of personality by transferring accumulated culture to him. The development of a value-based attitude towards another culture among students has become particularly important. Cultural assimilation involves the transformation of the products of social, spiritual activity, or social experience in the consciousness of the individual, due to which, the formation of a culture of personality occurs. Language culture has always been considered an integral and essential part of human culture, and teachers debate education issues. They prioritize language as a means of communication and learning about the cultural heritage of countries and peoples. The emphasis on the intercultural aspect of language acquisition is becoming a central feature of modern language education. Scientists, teachers, methodologists focus on issues related not only to teaching a foreign language but also studying such a complex and manifold problem as the relationship between language and culture. First of all, it is about specific features of a foreign language as an academic subject, which is that teaching involves mastering not only a foreign language but also acquaintance with literature as well: the history and the culture of the language in general.

An important point is integrating cultural information in foreign language teaching. The cultural idea changed the essence approach in foreign language teaching, which, according to S.G. Ter-Minasova, "requires an immediate and radical review of both the general methodology and specific methods of foreign language teaching" (Ter-Minasova, 2000). In this regard, scientists, methodologists, specialists in foreign language learning started to develop ways of foreign language learning in terms of culture. Researchers made a model based on a didactic-oriented sociological analysis of the linguistic environment, the socio-cultural context of foreign language learning, and special attention was paid to the socio-cultural characteristics of languages and cultures. It is necessary to mention the works of researchers devoted to the culturological idea of foreign language teaching like V.V. Safonova "Socio-cultural approach to teaching a foreign language as a specialty" (Safonova, 1993), V.P. Furmanova "Intercultural communication and cultural-linguistic pragmatics in theory and practice of foreign language teaching" (Furmanova, 1994), E.I. Passov, "The Concept of Communicative Foreign Language Education" (Passov, 2000), and P.V. Sysoyev, "The Concept of Language Multicultural Education" (Sysoyev, 2004). The need for a co-study of language and culture was the unifying principle of these works. Researchers recognized the necessity and importance of foreign language learning as a component of culture despite some differences in research works.

Table 1

The main ideas, "The Socio-cultural Idea of Foreign Language Learning as a Subject" by V.V. Safonova

Safonova V.V.	Review idea
	The concept describes socio-pedagogical, linguo- didactic, and methodological foundations of socio-cultural education using languages learned together (foreign, native). It aims at developing trainees as

The socio-cultural idea of foreign language learning as a subject.

subjects of intercultural dialogue and preparing them for intercultural interaction with representatives of different cultures and subcultures (Safonova, 1993).

Modeling variants of socio-cultural education using a foreign language involves a didactically oriented sociological analysis of the language environment, the socio-cultural context of a foreign language, and the socio-cultural characteristics of languages and cultures. V.V. Safonova believes that the sociology of learning and teaching a foreign language is considered as an integral part of the theoretical foundation of culture-oriented communicative foreign language teaching (Safonova, 1996). The idea of the socio-cultural approach by V.V. Safonova is focused on the comprehensive integration of the language and culture of the country into the educational process. The methodical model of foreign language teaching conditions forms and develops a bicultural personality. According to V.V. Safonova, the importance of a socio-cultural approach to foreign language teaching is that the culture is understood as a wide range of social phenomena representing the results and means of social functioning and development. A cross-disciplinary basis of socio-cultural education using all languages studied is culture studies as one of the culturological aspects.

The importance of developing a socio-cultural approach to foreign language teaching was pointed out by the well-known Russian methodologist I.L. Bim. In her opinion, the socio-cultural approach entailed a change in the goal of foreign language learning. The most crucial issue is that "languages should be learned in inseparable unity with the world and culture of peoples speaking these languages" (Bim, 1996). V.V. Safonova, analyzing the retrospective and perspective of the socio-cultural approach, points out that "the proposed approach to language learning in the context of the dialogue of cultures and civilizations (with mandatory reliance on native culture) has revealed the general theoretical foundations of intercultural training at schools and universities. Methodological reinterpretation of the principles of making curricula and textbooks, design, creation, and implementation of culture-oriented and communicative-oriented teaching and learning materials of a new type began in 1995" (Safonova, 2013).

As soon as a socio-cultural approach appeared, cultural studies began to develop in co-educational countries and cultural communities. It was seen firstly as an aspect of teaching foreign language communication standards, secondly, as a separate academic subject in a person's socio-cultural education, and, thirdly, as one of the theoretical and applied areas of modern language pedagogy" (Safonova, 2013). According to V.V. Safonova, "a socio-cultural approach, having emerged as a methodical approach to foreign language teaching, gradually acquired a general pedagogical value, not limited only to foreign language teaching and intercultural communication" (Safonova, 2013).

Thus, the culturological idea of foreign language teaching, which is the basis of V.V. Safonova's socio-cultural, influenced the whole system of foreign language teaching. It contributed to the awareness of a new role of a foreign language, change in the goal-setting of foreign language learning, and, therefore, the content, methodological organization of the material, the principles of teaching. The relevance of this approach was essential among cultural studies. V.V. Safonova's research had an impact on subsequent scientific research, as well as the principles of foreign language learning in the future.

From the perspective of culturological ideas as a new paradigm of learning a foreign language, V.P. Furmanova considers foreign language teaching as a type of intercultural communication. Her research "Intercultural Communicative Competence and Cultural and Linguistic Pragmatics in the Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Teaching" touch upon the methodology of teaching.

Table 2
Theory and practice of foreign language teaching by V.P. Furmanova

Furmanova V.P.	Review idea
“Intercultural communicative competence and cultural and language pragmatics in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages.”	<p>It refers to the philosophy of intercultural education, the development of a culture-centered paradigm of foreign language teaching, highlighting cultural and linguistic pragmatics as an aspect of methodology, and the development of the cultural and linguistic personality of a foreign language teacher. The work shows ways of integrating culture into the educational process by highlighting cultural and linguistic pragmatics, which is considered as an aspect of methodology studying the conceptual field of culture, which reflects the functioning of language systems and culture in their close connection with human activity. The notion of “cultural and linguistic personality” is dominant in the research.</p> <p>Based on the laws of the related sciences: linguistics, socio-, ethnic-, psycho- and ethno psycholinguistics, and the definition of content, that implies the dialectical unity of language, culture, cultural and linguistic personality, V.P. Furmanova makes a culture-centered paradigm of foreign language teaching and gives its theoretical grounding. V.P. Furmanova believes that the study of culture is not only the acquisition of a certain amount of cultural background knowledge but also the acquisition of cultural behavior. Therefore an activity is the dynamic beginning of the speaker in certain conditions with appropriate goals and motives, using available language means. Besides, students learned a foreign language within a completely different cultural context. The conditions of the students' native culture ensure that the learning process is in line with a dialogue of cultures, promoting the awareness of the universal “we” and the desire to get to know each other better. “Consequently, any study of culture, and especially those based on fiction texts, provides a comparison of our own culture and a foreign one. Exactly this aspect is of great interest in the methodology of foreign language teaching, as it allows us to make a scheme of studying culture in a comparative aspect” (Furmanova, 1994).</p>

Today, continuing her scientific research, V.P. Furmanova speaks about the need to include linguaculturology in foreign language teaching, since it is associated with the socio-cultural background of communication and cultural identity of communicative behavior, which is consistent with speech etiquette and spatial and temporal forms of communication. In her opinion, the indispensable comparison of linguacultural, the identification of the general and the specific, is also essential. It is essential because “the polyphony of their content contributes to a better understanding of various cultural phenomena and thereby to the development of a student's personality and his intercultural competence” (Furmanova, 2014).

Therefore, in the early 90s of the 20th century, well-known Russian experts in foreign language teaching focused their attention on issues related to language learning not only in the context of culture but also within the framework of the dialogue of cultures. Teachers pay much attention to such a complex and multidimensional problem as the relationship between a language and culture as well as the personal and cultural development of students in foreign language learning.

In the late 90s, the culturological idea of foreign language teaching becomes meaningful for the program-concept of communicative foreign language education developed by E.I. Passov ([Passov, 2000](#)). The introduction of a new term "foreign language education" follows from his idea that it is necessary to abandon the phrase "foreign language learning." This idea of a modern scientist coincides with the thought of the 19th-century German scientist Karl Mager – a teacher, philologist, philosopher, Wilhelm Humboldt's follower, who said that "the notion" of language learning "is not only inaccurate but also harmful" in the 40s of the 19th century. ([Nedler, 1894](#)).

According to Mager's theory, "it is impossible to learn a language at school; it is only possible to study it within certain limits." He was sure that the only aim of the school is to give general education (Humane Bildung): it is education that aims to take a person out of his rough state (Naturzustand) and bring him to a cultural state (Culturzustand), that is, to make a person cultural. Consequently, foreign language teaching, in his opinion, must necessarily contain general educational elements. He believed that "Learning a language does not mean learning only the language itself, its grammatical forms and vocabulary. Learning a language means learning the human spirit since the spiritual life of civilized nations and the works of their greatest geniuses reveal it" ([Nedler, 1894](#)).

The modern scientist E.I. Passov confirms this idea: "First of all, we learn not only the language (grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics), and not many languages, but something else. Secondly, it is impossible to "teach" people a language in general: you can only learn the language, master it" ([Passov, 2006](#)).

Table 3
The main ideas of "Communicative Foreign Language Education Concept"
by E. I. Passov

Passov E.I.	Review idea
"Communicative foreign language education concept."	<p>E.I. Passov indicates that the goal of teaching a foreign language is not only purely academic (ability to communicate, communicative competence), but also educational (education of a spiritual person) one. In this context, he suggests using the term "foreign language learning", but not "foreign language teaching." He considers a foreign language (because of the unique educational opportunities) to be not a "subject," but an "academic discipline" with great potential that can make a significant contribution to the development of a person as an individual. E.I. Passov determines the main goal of foreign language education as the development of a spiritual person. He believes that a spiritual person is not the one who knows something and can do something, but the one who has firm guidelines that define his activities in any sphere: the culture of creativity, the culture of rational consumption, culture of humanistic communication, the culture of cognition, the culture of worldview. He emphasizes that the ability to create and enrich culture distinguishes its individuality. It unites creative freedom and responsibility. Therefore, he believes that the education system is a social institution that is always aimed at developing individuality as a subject of culture.</p> <p>The goal of foreign language learning is not so much knowledge, skills, as the development of a person as an individual: development of his spiritual forces, abilities, education of a morally responsible, socially adapted, cultural person.</p> <p>It is what the scientist emphasizes in his concept. He believes that language education is the key to mastering the culture; therefore, foreign language education is the transfer of foreign language culture. According to the concept, the content of</p>

foreign language education is a foreign language culture. He points out that "a foreign language culture is the part of the humanity's general culture which a student can acquire in the process of communicative foreign language education in cognitive (cultural), developmental (psychological), educational (pedagogical) and educational (social) aspects" (Passov, 2000). In this case, the author points out that the term "culture" is not synonymous with the term "culture." Foreign culture is the culture of the country of the language being studied; that is, along with the language, it is an object of the cognitive aspect of the foreign language culture. He believes that a student acquires knowledge about the life of a foreign country while learning the language. He studies the dialectical attitude to the country and its people, language, the ability to communicate in different life situations, the motivation for language acquisition. He gains specific knowledge and ideas about the system of a particular language and enriches his native language (Passov, 2006).

That is why E.I. Passov relying on the culturological idea of foreign language learning, gave scientific evidence of the concept of communicative foreign language education, which influenced the development of the personality's culture. Thanks to the researcher, a new term "foreign language education" appeared, which combines the content component of education in the specialty "Foreign language," namely, the connection between learning a language and culture.

In search of a new direction in teaching the country's culture of the language being studied, the Concept of Multicultural Language Education is being developed by P.V. Sysoyev. The author points out that his concept arises from a socio-cultural approach to the selection of the content of foreign language teaching, developed by V.V. Safonova.

Table 4
The main ideas of "The Concept of Multicultural Language Education"
by P.V. Sysoyev

Sysoyev P.V.	Review idea
	Linguistic multicultural language education is a form of education using multicultural issues. The aim is to prepare students for active interaction in the modern multicultural world using a foreign language (Sysoyev, 2004). "Linguistic multicultural education is a process of acquiring knowledge of the cultural diversity of the surrounding world of the countries of the studied languages and communication among cultures in the modern multicultural world, as well as the development of an active life position and the ability to interact with people from different countries and cultures according to the principle of the dialogue of cultures" (Passov, 2009). The crucial task in multicultural language education is the formation of ideas about culture, the diversity of modern multicultural communities, similarities, and differences of different ethnic, social, linguistic, territorial, religious, cultural groups within a particular region, country, and the world. Besides, it is essential to develop the abilities of positive interaction with representatives of other cultures and cultural self-determination of an individual using

"The concept of multicultural language education."

the native and studied languages. Integrating with the curriculum and teaching materials, the information about the culture of various ethnic, social, religious, and other groups in the countries of the languages studied contributed to the construction of stereotypes and generalizations. It is essential to show the place of this cultural group in the spectrum of cultures of the country, its contribution to the cultural and historical development. P.V. Sysoyev emphasizes that it is necessary to allow the student to get acquainted with the diversity of cultures of a particular country, to compare them with his native culture to find similar features. Precisely the search of the things in common rather than contradictions between cultures will ensure the real dialogue of cultures. By proclaiming the dialogue of cultures as a philosophy and one of the goals of foreign language teaching, it was necessary to develop in students the ability to resolve conflicts that are inevitable in real intercultural communication. Learning the cultures of native and foreign languages is qualified as learning in the context of the dialogue of cultures (Sysoyev, 2009).

According to P.V. Sysoyev, the implementation of the main idea of the language multicultural education concept is that "introducing students to the whole range of cultures of the multicultural community plays a positive role in getting rid of generalizations and stereotypes, contributes to creating ideas about the world as a single multicultural community where each culture has a right to exist and to be represented" (Sysoyev, 2008). N.D. Galskova believes that issues related to the content and organization of multicultural education are of particular importance since it implements an approach to training and education that takes into account cultural, ethnic, and religious characteristics of students and develops their tolerant attitude to representatives of linguistic culture, and other phenomena. Moreover, multicultural education gives young people a better understanding of their own culture and its role in the development of global cultural space (Galskova, 2008). She also emphasizes that "knowledge of any language is a kind of mechanism for turning linguistic and ethnocultural diversity into an instrument of mutual understanding." N.E. Bulankina and S.Yu. Polyankina expresses an idea about the significant role of education, which in terms of multiculturalism, "acts as the main integrating factor and condition for familiarizing the student's personality with cultural values, transferring social and individual experience, developing a humanistic worldview" (Bulankina & Polyankina, 2011).

The perspective of cultural studies in foreign language learning, which is aimed not only at mastering the norms of intercultural communication both with native and non-native speakers, but also "strategies of cultural research allow students to independently explore any other culture that may be of personal and professional interest to them" (Safonova, 2013).

According to M.S. Shirina, "to know culture means to have experience in understanding cultural facts, comparing the facts of a foreign language culture with the facts in your native culture, analyzing their value, including them in the knowledge system." (Shirina, 2013).

Currently, one of the essential tasks in foreign language teaching, expressed by V.V. Safonova is a more intensive development of such an area of scientific knowledge as language pedagogy, which reveals the essence and patterns of bilingual, as well as multilingual, multicultural education. Language pedagogy defines "the range of variability in ways, principles, strategies, and ways of learning languages and cultures depending on socio-cultural factors that significantly affect the effectiveness of intercultural interaction of people in a multilingual, multicultural world of the 21st century, somewhat controversial, burdened by political-economic and cultural conflicts and global interdependence" (Safonova, 2014). She believes that the dialogue between cultures and civilizations should become a fundamental methodological principle of modern language pedagogy.

4 Conclusion

Thus, at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, a significant increase in intercultural interaction has set the task of forming a personal ability of effective interaction with other peoples and cultures. Much attention was paid to the issues of preparing for intercultural communication, which contributed to scientific interest in a foreign language. It led to reviewing approaches to language learning, raising questions about the goals and content of foreign language teaching. An essential change occurs in the values of its teaching. Studying the culture of people speaking a foreign language is an essential point without which effective intercultural communication is impossible. In this regard, the main aim is to learn not only a foreign language but also to study the culture of people speaking this language.

The emerging cultural paradigm of linguistic education has identified a strategic object, which is the compulsory learning of a language in the context of culture. Understanding culture as the essential basis of education required new ideas. These ideas influenced the development of concepts, theories, models, the potential of which had a significant impact on the renewal of foreign language teaching. The review presented in the article by well-known Russian scientists leading experts in the field of foreign language teaching methodology, became innovative, united by a common culturological idea – the idea of studying language and culture, which had a significant impact both on the content component of the Foreign Language discipline and its methodology. Teaching has initiated numerous scientific studies to improve the teaching of foreign languages.

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