Culture-Specific Vocabulary in Teaching Children at Schools of Siberia, the North and the Far East of the RF

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ABSTRACT
The paper deals with culture-specific vocabulary as an organic connection of the native language with the versatile lifestyle, traditions and culture of the Evenki ethnos. The use of culture-specific vocabulary in teaching the native (Evenki) language and culture to the children is described. Scientific works on culture-specific vocabulary were analyzed. The research of Evenki culture-specific words in school textbooks and study guides was conducted for the first time. The paper gives examples of using the culture-specific vocabulary in teaching children at schools of the North. The culture-specific words were selected from the study guide "Lessons from ancestors" ("Hopkil binitēn"). The pilot testing work with the use of the author's study guide "Lessons from ancestors" containing the culture-specific vocabulary was organized and performed. Proceeding from the research, the special importance of the culture-specific vocabulary functioning in maintaining the memory, thinking and self-expression of the ethnos, as a means for developing the native (Evenki) language and its role in intercultural contacts, has been found.

1. Introduction
In conditions of the upgrade of general and secondary education, the priority focus areas have been determined for the current time span to be the preservation of lifestyle (both nomadic and sedentary), traditional knowledge and the native language of the Evenki ethnos.

The nomadically living ethnoses have amassed the traditional knowledge of the native language, folklore, folk crafts, customs and traditions; in the contemporary world, however, the real danger of losing both the language and the traditional knowledge persists.

Where there is no traditional knowledge, the rising generation loses the binding thread to the centuries-old culture of their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers.

The distinctive sign of the contemporary period is the Russian scientists' vast interest in the traditional knowledge. This is a convincing historical fact of longevity and relevance of the traditional knowledge of the ethnoses inhabiting the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation. This problem is discussed in the studies by O. A. Murashko (2005), K. B. Klokov et al. (2012), V. V. Podmaskin (1998), L. V. Khomich (1974), and G. P. Kharyuchi (2012) representing the traditional knowledge of the Nenets and Udege peoples associated with the nature and reverence of the environment, as well as the sacral aspects of the folk medicine, in
a broad, scientific and valid way.

It is in the culture-specific vocabulary bearing the distinctions of the national and cultural views of the world that the connection between language and traditional knowledge manifests itself the most vividly. Each people has its ethnic view of the world of its own. In Evenki, just like in other peoples, the view of the world is absorbed by the children from the earliest age without any specially organized institutions. It can be stated that it is learned naturally, every time and everywhere, too, during the most diverse processes of adults and children's interaction. So one's own image of the world is created having a certain structure and functional interrelation of all parts. The view of the world is expressed through philosophy, literature, mythology (the contemporary one included), and ideology. It manifests itself via people's actions and explanation of one's actions and intentions (Nikitina, 2012, pp. 19-20) that are reflected in culture-specific words.

2. Literature Review

Culture-specific vocabulary is studied in the works of E. M. Vereshchagin, V. G. Kostomarov (1990), S. Vlakhov, S. F. Florin (1986), A. R. Valeeva (2016), M. Benson et al. (1990), et al. Their studies are presented as classifications of culture-specific words incorporated in the vocabulary.

"Words containing the sociocultural component are called culture-specific. They are the carrier of information about the world view and traditional knowledge of speakers of the language so they are of a high interest from the standpoint of linguoculturology as well as lexical semantics, contrastive linguistics and other branches of the science of language" (Yashina, 2009, pp. 192-199).

There are several classifications of culture-specific vocabulary: thematic, syntactic. The thematic classification includes such sections as geographic realia, ethnographic, social and political ones. The names of physical geography objects, names of animals and plants belong to the geographic subgroup. In the ethnographic group, there are words of the daily life sphere: names of foods, beverages, clothes, housing, furniture, daily use articles, and transport.

In the contemporary linguistics, they mean by culture-specific vocabulary the words denoting realia, objects and phenomena of only one culture and people not existing in other cultures, e.g. in Belorussian / English languages: andarak, pan – there are designation for these words in various cultures but the national background does not coincide precisely (Gladkova, 1997).

In conditions of the information world, upbringing and teaching children are aimed at enhancing their culture-bound knowledge.

In order to work with culture-specific vocabulary of any ethnos, the difficulties of understanding another culture, lifestyle, traditions and customs have to be borne in mind, as well as ones associated with the lack of background knowledge. So, for eliminating the difficulties, it is essential to perform some preliminary work with the unknown realia using an etymological dictionary, visual aids, translating the interpretation of words in one's mother tongue and contrasting it with other languages, because children of the North speak Evenki, Russian, and sometimes the Yakut language.

The importance of consistently including the culture-specific vocabulary into study guides is recognized. This is one of the important ways for shaping the national self-consciousness, character, for upbringing a linguistic identity. The author tried to select the culture-specific words reflecting the specific nature of traditional culture of the Evenki ethnos in textbooks for primary school, such as daily life, traditional clothes, food, and folk festivals. It should be emphasized that essentially, the native language textbooks have all of the above, although in a scattered way. The native language textbooks are designed for teaching the Evenki native language. The material of the textbooks is aimed at cultural and linguistic adaptation of the learners and allows organizing the
work on the basic vocabulary.

When classifying the Evenki culture-specific vocabulary, the author adhered to V. S. Vinogradov’s classification (1978, p. 1) that reflects the material culture of peoples. Based on this, the classification of culture-specific words of the Evenki ethnos into topics – dwelling, household buildings, property, clothes, food, names of deer according to age, names of harness items, holidays etc. – was opted for.

The culture-specific vocabulary of the Evenki language in primary school textbooks was studied. Examples:

1) dwelling: du – a dwelling, a house; ilumu – a chum (a cone-shaped tent) covered with reindeer skin etc.;

2) household buildings: iruka – poles for pitching the cone-shaped tent; nekun – granary and others;

3) clothes: oi – clothing; teti – outer garments (coat, kaftan, jacket); dudika – a long winter coat with fur outside (for men and women); muka – a women’s coat with fur on both sides; hakui – a national men’s winter coat; enēr – a hooded upper garment made of autumn reindeer fur without fastenings, and others. These words are realia naming items and objects that are characteristic for the life of the Evenki ethnos; being carriers of the national coloring, they have no exact correspondence in other languages.


The realia words are gradually updated and expanded in the textbooks of Evenki.

The textbook for grade 1 contains the following culture-specific words: 57 realias: du – the traditional dwelling of the Evenki, 7 cases repeated in the texts; oi – clothes – nelik (bib, apron), unta (footwear), avun (cap) – 14 realias (Burykin, 2002; Petrov, 2017). Attention is paid to communication, mastering the native speech, the development of speaking, reading and writing skills. For example: Nonan, herepčev avun, hairu, nelu, untav ičukenni (She showed an embroidered cap, gloves, apron and high fur boots). The Evenki national clothing is described which differs greatly in the material, sewing method, shapes and names of the clothes items from that of other peoples.

At grade 2, there is the highest quantity of realia words, 124. At this age, the understanding of the world and spiritual culture of the ethnos are passed on extensively. So the textbook features the most realia words on the topic du - the traditional dwelling of the Evenki (traditional buildings, names of places for sleeping) – 22 words; alik, nina, takaruk (kitchen utensils) – 11 words etc.

There are some exercises after reading the text: answering the questions on the content, explaining the meaning of words, for example, yavčidjak (night pasturing), yavčimŋa (a night herder), köščidjak (day pasturing) and so on. Such exercises motivate the students to use the culture-specific words (Robbek, 2008).

At grades 3 and 4, it is achieving the practical mastery of the language that is the aim. So the schoolchildren study out adjectives representing various types of attributes of objects in the exercises, work on verbs from the text, ask questions on the text, they learn to explain, analyze and make conclusions. The texts are oriented to studying the basic grammar and vocabulary topics of the Evenki language. E.g., Nelke njamičan tuggedireken, yavčidjak ovattan (In spring, when the deer are fawning, night pasturing is organized) (Krivoshapkin, 2002; Nikitina, 2015c).

The initial stage of teaching the culture-specific vocabulary contains the most common culturological material tailored into topics which make up the basis of speech practice and determine the content of the textbooks.
3. Materials and Methods

Objective: studying the culture-specific vocabulary in teaching Evenki to children.

Tasks:
1) studying the scientific works on culture-specific vocabulary;
2) studying and analyzing the culture-specific vocabulary in textbooks of Evenki;
3) exploring and using the culture-specific words in teaching children at schools of the North;
4) selecting the culture-specific vocabulary from the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide;
5) organizing the pilot testing work with the use of the author's "Lessons from ancestors" study guide built with culture-specific words on reindeer herding.

At the teaching stage, the technique of using the study guides implementing the culture-specific words at the classes was studied in detail by means of observation, research and practical work in conditions of the nomad camp.

4. Results and Discussion

Since the 1990s, the Concept of updating and developing the national schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has been there to play a positive part in the process of upbringing and educating the children of the North.

In these conditions, some positive change in the life activity of the small-numbered ethnoses had to be introduced for the natural and spiritual basic principles to continue in children and for their natural nomadic roots where they can outperform even the adults in their traditional knowledge and skills to never be lost. It is solving the language problem that has to rank first. Only in this case the spirituality and the cultural heritage will be preserved.

As Z. I. Kovaleva (1998), the leading editor of Saint-Petersburg Prosveshchenie publishers who has dedicated all her life to teaching the Evenki language, points out in her article, "For solving this problem we have to complete a number of tasks, the major of which is creating study guides to serve as a source of the children's knowledge about their ancestors, their centuries-old practices and spiritual culture" (pp. 237-239).

For resolving the language problem, studying Evenki by means of culture-specific words occupies an important place. Hence the Institute of national schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) conducted a research of the use of culture-specific vocabulary in teaching children at schools of the North. The toolkit of the research was the "Lessons from ancestors" ("Hopkil binitēn") study guide (Nikitina, 2015b).

The content of the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide is aimed at expanding the children's outlook, enhancing their interest in studying the Evenki language and traditional skills. The study guide consists of two parts. The first one contains a thematic selection of pictures with a plot and figural ones aimed at giving the children an idea about the specific nature of the hunting and economic pattern of life of their ancestors and their unique culture.

The study guide includes the most commonly used vocabulary reflecting the particularities of the traditional activity – reindeer herding.

The culture-specific words in the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide were selected. The culture-specific vocabulary is presented, with the minimum of culturological information to know for correctly perceiving and using the Evenki words included with the translation. It is clear from the examples that not all dictionaries explain the meanings of culture-specific words. While the culture-specific word "fur coat" (lit. shuba) is known to many readers and requires no additional clarification, in this case, "dudika", a culture-specific Evenki word, is difficult for understanding and requires a thorough translation for rendering the meaning: a long
winter coat with fur outside (for men and women). Such dictionaries are created in order to satisfy the students’ need of communicating with each other.

In Evenki, there are words and linguistic units that can reflect a particular cultural component on reindeer herding. For instance, the non-equivalent vocabulary rendering the particular cultural component on the topic "Work of reindeer herders": wilduke – deer caravan team, as for food: horča (smoked deer meat for long-term storage), kebel (thickened deer milk obtained by a folk method). These culture-bound words given in the native language textbooks and serving for expressing notions that are absent in other cultures are not translated. G. D. Tomakhin (1988) defines the culture-bound words as words serving for expressing the notions lacking in another culture and as a rule not translated with one word (p. 5).

Pilot testing work was conducted in three stages in grades 1-4.

In the 2015-2016 academic year, the first stage was completed: scientific literature was studied, the native Evenki language textbooks and study guides and a further reader on the research topic were analyzed.

In the academic year 2016-2017, summative stage was performed. The objective of this stage was to find out how study guides and textbooks containing the culture-specific words were used in the educational process. The "Lessons from ancestors" study guide for grades 1-4 was reissued that contains culture-specific vocabulary on the traditional economic activities of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North. At this stage of the research, the accessibility of using the culture-specific words at the lessons for the students was checked. Consulting sessions and individual talks with teachers were conducted for preparing and carrying out the third, teaching and control, stage of the research.

The formative and control stage of the research was completed in the 2017-2018 academic year. The objective of this research stage was to identify the efficiency of using for classes the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide that contains culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding.

So, at the control stage, the efficiency of using for classes the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide was checked and the validity was evaluated concerning the results obtained in mastering the words for shaping the culture-specific vocabulary.

Visiting the classes has allowed finding out that most teachers do use the culture-specific words when teaching the native language but regrettably the work is conducted in a fragmented way and the teachers have no clear program of work for achieving this goal.

At the summative stage, the Guidelines for the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide containing the culture-specific vocabulary on the topic "Summer nomad camp" Djugarap nulgedēk (Nikitina, 2015a, p. 32) was used:

– inuče - harnessed (transportation) one;
– kanka – a saddle for children (who can sit up independently);
– emgun – a saddle for riding a deer.

At this stage, it has been found out that the younger schoolchildren do not quite understand the essence of the content of culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding. This is due to the culture-specific words being used at the classes in an inconsistent manner.

Based on the summative experiment conducted, the following conclusions can be made:

– most students feature a low level of formation of culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding;
– on the part of teachers, the culture-specific vocabulary is included into the educational process without their knowing the key features at the necessary level.

The results of the summative stage show that students have encountered some difficulties when culture-specific vocabulary on the traditional economic activities of the indigenous peoples of the North, reindeer
herding, was used at the classes. Therefore, it is essential to teach them both independent and joint activity for
the younger schoolchildren to form their culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding. For this, the author of
the paper conducted the initial assessment of the formation level of the culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer
herding using the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide.

The following culture-specific vocabulary formation levels were determined as a means for checking at
the summative and teaching stages of this research:

Level I – the learners study the culture-specific words under the teacher's guidance and based on
reproducing activity;
Level II – the learners perform practical and research works for studying the culture-specific vocabulary;
Level III – the learners explore the culture-specific vocabulary.

The results of diagnosing assessment at the summative stage have shown that the knowledge of culture-
specific words is at a low level in the majority of students. Similarly, the diagnosing assessment results have
allowed making a conclusion about the fact that at schools of the North 79% of teachers have an idea about the
"culture-specific vocabulary" notion but most teachers do not use it to the full extent when teaching the "Native
language" subject.

Analyzing the scientific literature and the data of the summative stage conducted have allowed developing
the content and technique of the formative stage.

The objective of the teaching stage was to prepare conditions for implementing the "Lessons from
ancestors" study guide for elementary grades of schools of the North.

At the teaching stage, it is important to teach the younger schoolchildren to study, watch, and explore the
culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding, as it is "an opportunity to promote in fact the preservation and
development of reindeer herding as an original culture of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North"
(Fedorov, 2018).

Meanwhile, it is reindeer herding that is the object of studying. In this respect, the most important part is
the joint activity of students and the teacher using the culture-specific vocabulary during the classes.

At grades 3-4, the schoolchildren directed by the teacher explore and use in practice the culture-specific
words, while also learning the new during such work.

At the teaching stage, the technique of using study guides that implement culture-specific vocabulary at
the classes has been described. One of the tools designed both for students and for the children is the guidelines
for the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide that are built around culture-specific vocabulary. Here is an
example of a class.

Class objective: upbringing a respectful attitude to the reindeer herders' work by means of the culture-
specific vocabulary.

Teacher's work methods and techniques: observation, description of objects, classification of deer
according to age and color, pair discussion, group discussion, generalization, making conclusions.

It is suggested to the children to watch the reindeer herders' work, to describe the places where the herd of
reindeer is pastured. Using the words oralčimŋa reindeer herders; oralčidai to pasture deer; kōsčimŋe a day
herder; yavčimŋa a night herder, the children make up a story about one working day of a reindeer herder.
– Badikar amanni yavran? (What does father (brother) do in the morning?)
– Ineŋ yav nekkōtten? (What does he do during the day?)
– Hisečin-ke? (And at night?)
– Dolbanji kōsčetten orarbu? (Who takes care of the deer at night?)
– Dolba orarbu yavčimŋa yavčivaattan. (At night the deer are cared for by the night herder.)
– Dolba yami yavčimŋa etutten? (Why does the reindeer herder keep a watch at night?)
– Oral djaluč bideten njan ometeldi edeten borgar gomi. (For the deer to eat well and not get away from the herd). Njan nēnčaktuk, koltekkenduk, nedemiduk dysutten. (Protecting them against wolves, wolverines and lynxes).

Practical work (Gurge)
The children take part in sorting the deer according to the age.
Hu yav tala ičes? (What did you see in the herd?)
Children: Tala hagdyl oral njanenkel. (There are deer and young deer)
Teacher: Hu tačin-da, hagdylybu oralbu njan honnačalbu hari odal. (So you can tell the deer by the age.)
Children: Ine (Yes).
Iročil oral bibette. (What deer are there according to the appearance?)
Children: yaldanja – black, bugdi – variegated …

At the end of the lesson they discuss and present the information to each other and the teacher about the work of reindeer herders and the culture-specific vocabulary.

The teaching stage confirms the children's gaining the culture-specific words on reindeer herding, the experience of observation, research, creative essays and judgments.

With students of grades 1-4, the final assessment was conducted using the culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding from the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide on the topics "Djugarap nulgedēk". "The summer nomad camp" (Nikitina, 2015b, pp. 84-85):
– donqja – a special saddle for carrying children aged 5-6;
– ōnēruk, ōnēsjak – a deer for carrying children tied to the saddle;
– hampjidade – to kindle the smoky bonfire.
Tugerep nulgedēk. The winter nomad camp (p. 85):
– njogusut – the lead deer going in the same harness with the guide;
– toŋalra – a harness ring, straps;
– turki – a pulka, sleds.

Then, the validity and efficiency of results obtained at the summative and formative stages of the research was evaluated and the results of the stages were generalized and systemized.

As the results of testing out show, the use of culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding create the conditions for developing an ability to think creatively, to lead a dialogue and to provide grounds for one's viewpoint in the younger schoolchildren.

The control stage has confirmed that using the "Lessons from ancestors" study guide at the classes expands the functions of the native language and improves the students' level of development of the culture-specific vocabulary on reindeer herding.

5. Conclusion

Analyzing the culture-specific words is of a great interest and enables the children to plunge into their native language and culture more profoundly as well as to get acquainted with background knowledge of other cultures.

As the research has shown, culture-specific vocabulary conveys the priceless experience of a particular ethnos", "the experience gaining shape as a result of learning the external reality by the ethnos and reflecting the particularities and the originality of their interaction and communication" (Zykova, 2011), in this case, in
shaping the culture-specific vocabulary of the Evenki ethnos.

Thus, culture-specific words act as a carrier of information, expand and enrich the linguistic knowledge.

Further ways for exploring the culture-specific vocabulary in the Evenki language course of mainstream school have been outlined.

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