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TÍTULO: La cuestión de la formación de habilidades fonéticas en el proceso de enseñanza del Ruso a estudiantes de países africanos.

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RESUMEN: El artículo está dedicado al problema de formar habilidades de pronunciación en estudiantes de países africanos que estudian Ruso como lengua extranjera. El propósito del estudio es considerar una serie de cuestiones teóricas sobre la formación de habilidades fonéticas al estudiar ruso, así como las principales dificultades que enfrentan los estudiantes extranjeros en el proceso de desarrollo de habilidades fonéticas, e identificar formas de superar estas dificultades. Se realizó una encuesta entre estudiantes de países africanos y un análisis estadístico de los datos. Los autores creen que el desarrollo exitoso de las habilidades fonéticas en ruso se facilita teniendo en cuenta las características de los procesos cognitivos, mentales y la mentalidad de los estudiantes extranjeros.

PALABRAS CLAVES: habilidad fonética, base articuladora, actividad articuladora, estudiantes extranjeros, el ruso como lengua extranjera.

TITLE: to the questions of forming phonetic skills in the process of teaching Russian to students from African countries.

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ABSTRACT: The article is devoted to the problem of forming pronunciation skills in students from African countries at studying Russian as a foreign language. The purpose of study is to consider a number of theoretical issues of the formation of phonetic skills at studying Russian as well as the main difficulties foreign students encounter at the process of developing phonetic skills, and to identify ways to overcome these difficulties. A survey among students from african countries, and a statistical analysis of the data were conducted. The authors believe that the successful development of phonetic skills in Russian is facilitated by taking into account the characteristics of cognitive, mental processes, and the mentality of foreign students.

KEY WORDS: phonetic skill, articulation base, speech activity, foreign students, Russian as a foreign language.

INTRODUCTION.

At all times, education fulfilled the order of society for a certain preparation of citizens of a country. The present is no exception. So, the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin raises the question of quality education in Russian on a global scale with a view to establishing Russia in the modern world (Putin, 2012).

It is important to note the priorities of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of Russian, as a result, for example, of increasing a number of foreign students studying in Russian universities (Bashkina, 2018). Indeed, mastery of Russian is an important factor for foreign students not only to successful adaptation to new sociocultural conditions, but also to effectively study and have practical training in Russia (Satretdinova, 2013).

In accordance with the opinion of modern researchers, we emphasize the need of the formation of a multicultural personality of foreign students who are able to adapt to new conditions (Gagarina, 2015; Gagarina, 2018; Zyazikov, 2016).

The experience of teaching Russian as a foreign language shows, that firstly, due to significant differences between the native or intermediate language and Russian, students encounter problems of mastering the latter one. Secondly, one of the difficult tasks in training is the formation of phonetic skills in Russian. At the same time, one should not forget that phonetic skills are an important component of the development of all types of speech activity: speaking, listening, reading, writing; in other words, speech in general (Bolinger, 1978). Despite the fact, that the problem of the formation of phonetic skills in foreign students was repeatedly discussed by Russian linguists (Gryaznova, 2012; Kasatkina, 2016), it does not lose its relevance in our days.

The purpose of this study is to consider a number of theoretical issues of the formation of phonetic skills at studying Russian as a foreign language as well as the main difficulties with which students from countries of eastern, central, western and southern africa encounter at the process of developing phonetic skills, and to identify ways to overcome these difficulties. In this regard, we have identified the following tasks:

- 1) Analyze the scientific literature on research issues.
- 2) Conduct a survey and interpret its results in order to improve the methodology of teaching Russian to foreign students from the above-mentioned countries.

DEVELOPMENT.

Methodology.

In the research process, we use some general theoretical methods: analysis of psychological, pedagogical, and methodical literature of domestic and foreign scientists (V. Putin, M. Zyazikov, V.A. Artyomov, E.G. Azimov, S.I. Bernshtein, D. Bolinger, N.L. Fedotova, D.B. Fry, E. Gagarina,

S. Magaeva, V.V. Gryaznova, D. Jones, A.Yu. Kasatkina, D. Ladd, N.A. Lyubimova, A.KH. Saretudinova, L.V. Shcherba, A.V. Ventzov, V.A. Vinogradov, L.R. Zinder), analysis of experience of many years of bilingual teaching of foreign students at Astrakhan State Medical University; and some empirical methods as: pedagogical observation, questionnaires, statistical processing, data analysis, and experimental teaching at different levels of university training.

Results and discussion.

Of course, all forms of communication in a non-native language (oral or written) imply practical mastery of its sound system: sounds, methods of their combination, accentuation, rhythm, intonation (Fry, 1958; Ladd, 1996), because “communication between people, the means of which is language, is carried out precisely by its sound side and thanks to it” (Zinder, 1979, p. 4).

Indeed, in the process of oral communication, a person realizes the perception of the sound side of speech correlating the perceived sound with the meaning or transmits a message to the interlocutor, transforming it into the corresponding sound series. He does this, based on his hearing and speaking skills and knowledge of the language system. The degree of stability of skills indicates the level of formation of an individual's phonetic base of the studied language.

It should be noted that a person cannot understand the interlocutor's speech if his own pronunciation skills are not formed. It leads to a violation of the act of communication, since in this case, there is a dissonance between the internal pronunciation and the actual sounding speech. At first glance, the perception of foreign language speech can be carried out even with insufficient mastery of the sound system of the studied language. However, it cannot be argued that “insignificant errors do not affect the communication process” (vinogradov, 1989, p. 37). In our practice of teaching pronunciation, we pay great attention to the formation of auditory and pronunciation skills, the work with articulation of the sounds of Russian, the mastery of rhythm, stress, and intonation.

In psychology and the methodology of teaching foreign languages, different definitions of the term “phonetic skill” are used. In the work we adhere to the definitions of N.A. Lyubimova and N.L. Fedotova. So, N.A. Lyubimova points that auditory and pronunciation skills are “automated auditory and speech-motor operations” that provide “both the perception and implementation of units of different levels of the phonological component of a given language in accordance with its system and norm” (Lyubimova, 1993. 106 p.). In turn, N.L. Fedotova emphasizes that a complex phonetic skill is a structure that is organized in a special way and consists of a series of automated operations, aimed at identifying and reproducing segment and super-segment units according to the language setting in this language (Fedotova, 2013).

It is important to note, that on the one hand, oral speech is implemented more often than the written one, and the speed of information exchange is higher than with other ways (the visual, tactile, tonal-sound ones). At the same time, the speaker not only makes fewer mistakes and gets tired to a lesser extent, but he responds to questions faster. On the other hand, the perception of speech is complicated by the fact that there is no opportunity to “re-listen” to the heard speech. Along with this, in the process of perception and understanding of speech the human cognitive system does not directly transform the physical parameters of the signal, but it interprets the obtained information by subjective transforming with peripheral levels of the auditory system (Ventzov, 2016).

In the methodology of teaching foreign languages, it is generally accepted to understand pronunciation, firstly, as features of the articulation of sounds realized in speech, and secondly, as a set of orphoepic norms of a language (Azimov, 2009). Along with this, pronunciation in psychology is defined as “the correct production of phonemes and intonemes of the studied ... Language” in oral monological and dialogical speech in fiction, scientific, oratory, and everyday speech (Artyomov, 1969, p. 241).

Teaching pronunciation is more effective if it is done taking into account the specificity of a native language of students (Satretdinova, 2017). A comparative analysis of phonological systems helps to identify differences that may cause difficulties in learning Russian.

According to the conviction of L.V. Shcherba, in order to master the phonetic system of a new language, it is necessary to work out some new articulatory movements, to do the rhythmic-intonational design of a word, phrase, text by comparing with similar phenomena of the native language or the intermediary language (Shcherba, 1958). Particular attention should be paid to the phonemes that are absent in the intermediate language or in the native language of students (Jones, 2009). Studying the features of the phonetic systems of Russian and the native language of foreign students as well as intermediary languages allows us to diagnose and prevent phonetic disturbances in the perception and production of oral speech in Russian.

Undoubtedly, the peculiarity of the phonetic systems of languages is due to belonging to different languages families and groups; for example, Russian, English, and French belong to the indo-european family. By this Russian does to the slavic group; English does to the german group; French does to the romance group; arabic does to the afrasian family (Islamova, 2016).

For the first time in 1906, G. Sweet proposed the definition of an articulation base and its characterization (Sweet, 1906). The articulatory base of a language, the concept of which was introduced by S.I. Bernshtein (Bernshtein, 1975), is a combination of articulatory tendencies of a given language, and it is composed of specific features.

In the 2018 - 2019 academic year, the authors of the article conducted a survey and questioning of foreign students from countries of eastern, central, western, and southern africa as well as analyzed and interpreted the data. Students indicated their gender and age. They reported which foreign languages they know and what difficulties in Russian pronunciation they experience or experienced in

the process of learning it. Along with this, respondents noted factors, contributing to the improvement of pronunciation skills.

The study involved 100 students of the Astrakhan State Medical University from the 1st to the 5th courses from the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Zambia, the Republic of Botswana, the Republic of Congo, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of Namibia, the Republic of Guinea–Bissau, Republic of Zimbabwe, Republic of Angola, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Uganda, Republic of Chad, Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Mali, Federal Republic of Somalia, United Republic of Tanzania, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. It should be noted, the wide age range of participants (from eighteen to twenty eight): thirty five students are from eighteen to twenty years old, fifty nine students are from twenty one to twenty five years old, six students are from twenty six to twenty eight years old, and of them fifty four young men and forty six girls.

According to the questionnaire data, there are three groups of students by the number of knowledges of foreign languages. The first group includes seventy-four students, they know one language:

A) Sixty nine students know English, of them thirty nine young people in age groups from nineteen to twenty six who came to Astrakhan from Botswana, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Nigeria, and South Africa; and thirty girls aged eighteen to twenty eight from Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Chad, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and South Africa.

B) Four students from Botswana, Ghana, Congo, and Namibia speak French.

C) One student from Zambia knows Spanish.

The second group consists of twenty-four students, they speak two languages:

A) Eighteen students know English and French, of them thirteen young people in age groups from eighteen to twenty four, they came to Astrakhan from Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya, Congo, Mali, Nigeria, and the Republic of South Africa; and five girls aged twenty to twenty six from Zambia, Congo, and Chad.

B) Five students from Namibia, Ghana, Mozambique, and the Republic of South Africa speak English and Spanish.

C) One student from Somalia speaks English and Arabic.

The third group included two students from Guinea-Bissau, they speak three languages: English, French, and Spanish.

Consequently, 74% of respondents speak one foreign language (English / French / Spanish), 24% of foreign students speak two languages (French and English / English and Spanish / English and Arabic), 2% speak three languages (English, French, and Spanish).

The difficult sounds of Russian are [bɫ] (96%), [ʏ] (92%), [ɲc] (88%), [ʏ] (83%), [ʏ] (78%), [ʏ] (69%), [x] (60%), etc. It should be noted that students called some difficult sounds. The students' opinion about factors contributing to the improvement of their pronunciation skills is a matter of particular interest to us. So, 72% of the surveyed foreign students prefer to listen to songs in Russian. We can explain such a high percentage by the fact that people from African countries are very artistic, and they have good musical ability.

In turn, 46% of foreign students listen to Russian speech, talking with Russian students, friends, Russian people in a taxi, public transport, in a store, in a market, in a bank, in a pharmacy, i.e., immersion in the language is no less important. Foreign students have not only to listen, but also clearly and correctly pronounce the words in order their speech would be clear to the interlocutor. Along with this, they watch Russian films and television programs. Thus, students receive a certain

practical basis for perfecting the correct pronunciation of Russian sounds in extracurricular time. At the same time, students noted that they not only listen to music and Russian speech, but also realize communication in different speech situations when they make every effort to correctly pronounce on which the result of communication depends.

Survey data indicated that only 18% of the surveyed foreign students optimally use all the possibilities of immersion in the language. It is important to note the significance of work on phonetics at Russian as a foreign language classes at which a teacher emphasizes each sound and pays attention to the features of its pronunciation.

CONCLUSIONS.

Our study shows that there is a scientific basis for pronunciation formation. However, in the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language, there are a number of difficulties of the formation of phonetic skills at students from countries of eastern, central, western and southern Africa. This is evidenced in the results of the survey.

It is especially important to emphasize that students actively analyzed their problems of Russian pronunciation. Such analysis contributed not only to their awareness, but also to putting forward some certain ways to solve them.

At Russian as a foreign language classes, it is important to select tasks for practicing difficult sounds using tongue twisters, proverbs or a simple set of words with these sounds. Taking into account the limited learning time, teachers should organize extracurricular activities that help motivate the correct Russian pronunciation. Thus, the high level of formation of phonetic skills in Russian at foreign students contributes to their effective communication in a foreign language environment and the achievement of professional goals.

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