

# The "New" Strategy in Teaching Literature in a Multiethnic Environment (as exemplified by the Republic of Tatarstan)

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The problem of individualization and differentiation of the learning process is still relevant in the education. The Republic of Tatarstan is a special community where many nationalities live together. In this article the problem of the text interpretation at literature lessons is on the focus of view. Leaning on the provisions, provided by hermeneutic scientists, the authors regard the interpretation as a special dialogue between the reader and the text. The issue is also devoted to the problem of individual learning styles formation based on the psychological characteristics of the reader-student, the types of his representative system (auditory, visual or kinesthetic). Based on the facts found identified according to the experiment authors have developed the idea of forming individual ways for learning literature.

**Keywords:** interpretation, creation, reading subject, self-understanding, multi-ethnic sphere, personal experience, perception of the text, "method of problematization".

## INTRODUCTION

### The relevance of the study

Lately in modern school practice as well as in the methodical publications the problem of literary education quality is quite urgent. This problem is also connected to the questions of forms and methods organization in the multi-ethnic lingual sphere as the factor of multi-ethnics determines the choice of pedagogical strategies. Methodologists note the decrease of the interest to reading, they say there is no "coupling" in the dialogue between the bilingual reader, the literary work and its author; the aesthetic dialogue doesn't find its realization in the educational-creative space of literature lesson, the teaching dialogue is not realized in a proper way, including the multi-ethnic sphere, which creates the additional difficulties in the text understanding. This problem is still actual and is not solved yet from the practical

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point of view as well as from the scientific, that's why it is necessary to draw the attention to the theoretical aspects of this problem and to find the ways of its practical realization. One of the ways for the solution is a reference to the text interpretation at literature lessons and its realization in interaction with a traditional text analysis.

To start with, it's important to refresh the meaning of the term 'interpretation'. In literary criticism it refers to the elucidation of the text, "the understanding of the total meaning of the literary work, of its idea, of its conception" (Esin, 1998). It is a very complicated and many-sided activity of a creative character because "the understanding of art in many parameters is a very complicated process on a par with the creation". Proceeding from these statements it's possible to claim that education doesn't save a pupil-reader and a philologist from the literary deafness and therefore we need to take special efforts in educational process in order to form the basis of communication with the literary text" (Marantsman, 2003). In this case it's appropriate to recall L.S. Vygotsky who once in "The Psychology of Art" gave a very important idea for the teacher of literature: "... the act of Art is a creative act and it can't be reconstructed by only conscious operations; but when the most important in Art is unconscious and creative - does it mean that any conscious moments and powers are away of it? It's impossible to teach the creative act but it doesn't mean that the teacher mustn't contribute to its appearance and formation" (Vygotsky, 1986).

### Diagnostic stage

As we can see, Vygotsky's words highlight the activity aspect in the teaching of literature. Underlining individualization of studying as one of the ways for the humanization of education, the philosopher shows us one more aspect in it: transforming the teaching into student-centered process. The ideas connected with the individualization of studying are central in Russian and Western pedagogy (Biddle, 1989; Moody, 1971). In modern pedagogy the question of individual learning styles takes a special place. This problem is actually stated in recent pedagogical researches. But the technology of taking into consideration these styles in training process as well as using the abilities in cooperation between the reader and the text itself need to be developed and improved.

A special place in the formation of an effective model of learning literature belongs to the process of perception. The first researches on the perception of the text in the national psychology appeared in the 20s of XX century. The academics noted the active role of the reader in the perception of the text and treated the perception of fiction "as a creative act of the reader". Among those studies "Psychology of Art" by L.S. Vygotsky's (1986) would be allocated. This research became the fundamental in the study of the formation of aesthetic thought in the reading process. Since that time this question is on the focus of view. In the scientific works of Russian academics and psychologists (Zhabitskaya, 1974; Nikiforova, 1959; Rubakin, 2000; Rumyantseva, 2005) the aspect deals with problem of "the book and the reader in his age development" (Nikiforova, 1959). L.G. Zhabitskaya (1974) identified the main perception mechanism of creative individuality of the author of fiction. It was called in her work as the imaginative generalization's mechanism. N.A. Rubakin (2000) examined the influence of different "psychical features" on the books selection, on the attitude to the book during the reading process and on its assessment as well as the formation of reader's interests. E.M. Rumyantseva (2005) defines the criteria to identify the cooperation between author and reader. The effectiveness of this cooperation contains a triple mismatch: 1) the range of information, 2) the aspects of information, and 3) problems or facts which are grouped around the information (Rumyantseva, 2005). Key provisions

necessary to study this issue are provided work of M.M. Bakhtin (1975). His determination of the dialogue between the reader and the text, investigation the special interaction of the reader and the author in the course of fiction perception are important for our research. Thus, in empirical researches examining the perception of fiction three problematic issues are founded: author and reader interaction, the activity of the text perceiver, the ratio of the subjective and objective perception of the text.

### **Experimental stage**

The dialogue between the cultures occupies a special place in the literary education of Tatarstan. This issue is largely investigated both in theoretical and practical terms (including primary school, studying material of Russian folk tales - research of L. Kamalova (2015).

The study of works of literature in the context of dialogue between the cultures, according to R.F. Mukhametshina (2006), "helps us to see the common things in both literatures, and to realize the national identity of each of them, allows to overcome the defects of the traditional literary education of students in the bilingual education associated with a low level of awareness of their native literature and culture".

At the same time the problem of the dialogue is still significant in the development of new strategies in teaching literature. The question of the mechanism study of the literary text becomes important. Such a mechanism becomes a process of interpretation of the text.

Interpretation as a concept and as a process is theoretically comprehended in the researches of hermeneutics scientists (Ricoeur, 1969; Derrida, 1992). This is a process and a result – both concurrently objective and subjective. The scientists consider the various aspects of interpretation problem. So, there is a question of the range of interpretations. They express the idea of the infinite multiplicity of artistic meanings. At the same time the problem of understanding the specifics of the art object becomes important. Understanding "is always something more than just other's opinions reproduction" (Gadamer, 1989). According to the scientists, the process of understanding is built on the basis of question-answer activity (Bakhtin, 1975; Sekerci & Canpolat, 2014; Gadamer 1989; Bilgin & Aykac, 2016). Objectively the text puts a question to the interpreter. To understand the text is to understand this question (Gadamer, 1989). At the same time it is impossible to understand the text without knowledge of the historical and mental realities of the time and author psychological features. The particular role in the process of understanding is played by imagination. Literary image is formed in the subjective world of the writer, and then in the reader's, and in their creative imagination. The objective understanding of the text is almost impossible. Understanding is the insertion of our own meaning. Therefore, the interpretation of literary works depends on the ideological and aesthetic, moral and ethical position of its subject (of the bilingual reader). The comprehension of the artistic content accompanies the "mental community" of the reader and the author.

Interpretation is a personality-oriented process, since there are two subjects of reading – the book and the reader – and they specifically influence each other. The understanding of the literary work turns into an understanding of the "I" through someone else's text, through "decoding" it. At the same time the comprehension of the literary work is realized through the active individual aesthetic activity (Ricoeur, 1964), which can be expressed through the act of co-creation. Actually, interpretation is a creative process almost as creative as the creation itself. Perceiving creation as a process, we define four stages: 1) preparation, 2) maturation, 3) inspiration, 4) verification. A special place here belongs to the stage of inspiration. Inspiration is not only an intuitive grasp of the desired result, but also

a push, a burst to the creation of a new aesthetic value – the oral or the written comprehension of the text. Inspiration is also a push to the searching for something new, to the independent discovery, to a small but a contribution to the school literature studies.

Hence, the process of creation as a process of inspiration in the course of literary work interpretation is an essential stage in the solution of the problem. It is closely connected with such an important manifestation of the I-concept of personality as self-assertion, self-actualization, self-realization, which is very important in a multi-ethnic environment. As the literary work itself is based on fantasy of the author, so the reader as well should be guided by fantasy, by the creative imagination in the process of text comprehension. This is a process directly dependent on the person itself, based on a dialogical and personal moments in literature assimilation. At the same time bilingual students raised in the situation of national culture, upholding bilingualism perceives the other nationalities' text in a specific way, they mainly take into account national traditions and realities, and this fact cannot be ignored in the interpretation. At this point it will be appropriate to apply to the traditional ways of solving this problem, for example, to the method of "analogue image" searching in the non-native and native literary works of literature. However, the interpretation of the text at literature lessons cannot be carried out using only traditional methodical ways, which are mainly aimed to analyze the literary work in a way far from the realization of the personal approach to teaching. It is necessary to use the achievements of modern pedagogics, especially the achievements in the sphere of educational technologies and the modern lesson organization and the achievements in the sphere of pedagogical process formation in a multi-ethnic environment (Mukhametshina, 2014). Various elements of pedagogical technologies are used at the literature lessons: gaming, communication developing, person-oriented, project, etc. All these elements implemented according to the principle of reasonable sufficiency quite effectively contribute to the profound perception of the literary text, to its understanding (interpretation).

Referring to student-centered technologies of subjects study, we consider them the most full and fruitful contribution to the process of interpretation. They are united by common principles and approaches to schoolchildren training and educating, the main one being anthropocentric – the student's personality is placed in the center of the whole school educational system. In his research works G.K. Selevco (1988) points out the basic principles of such technologies – creating comfortable, conflict-free and safe conditions for the development of the child's personality. Amidst a sufficient number of currently existing technologies of student-centered teaching (anthropocentric, humanely-personal) we mark out the student-centered developmental education, developed by Professor I.S. Yakimanskaya (1996). Emphasis in this technology are placed upon such development factor as a subjective experience of life. We mean the experience gained by a child before going to school in a particular family, in a particular socio-cultural environment, in the process of his perception and understanding of the world and things. Personal subjectivity is manifested in the selectivity of world understanding, in the ways of working through the educational material, in emotional and personal attitude to the objects of learning. In learning this technology uses such forms as: – class-lesson, – individually differentiated. The main approach to the child is cooperative pedagogics. The educational process is based on the educational dialogue of student and teacher. The predominant method is the development and self-development method. The main objectives of this study are: - to develop individual cognitive abilities of each child; - to identify, initiate, use, "civilize" the personal experience of the child to the maximum (Yakimanskaya, 1996).

So, the technology of student-centered developmental education (Yakimanskaya, 1996) is directly related to the realization in the educational process of the subjective experience of the child, of his personal capacity and under the conditions of a multi-ethnic environment – of his national cultural experience (Konopackaya, 2015). Methods of literature teaching as a science has not completely developed this question and it remains open from the scientific point of view. However, in the practical work of English literature teachers such reliance on a subjective experience of the student, formed in the family or in other social institutions, is widely implemented in the classroom at the lessons of literary text interpretation. This is a technique of autobiographical questionnaire (Biddle, 1989; Kubiacko & Arik, 2014). In the native science innovative methods are only being developed. Subjective experience as an integral part of the person objectively affects the nature of perception and further interpretation of the literary work. In the 60s of XX century the scientist P.Jacobson (1964) drew the attention to this fact. Considering the essence of the process of artistic perception, he suggested the inseparability of life experiences of the reader while reading and understanding of literary work. These life experiences of a bilingual student also become apparent through his national attitude.

In order to monitor the perception of fictional texts of different genres (epos and drama) by different types of students (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) an ascertaining experiment were carried out in some schools in Kazan and in the Republic of Tatarstan (Baltasinsky district).

130 students participated in the experiment. The pupils were in their 5<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> year at school. Cooperating with the school psychologist in observing the students and with the help of Russian psychologist V.N. Pugach's tables (1997) the students were divided into the groups of auditorys, visuals, kinesthetic – with dominating left and right hemisphere. Each group of students received the questionnaire. Each question was connected with the comprehension of some structural component of the text (Questionnaire 1).

### **Questionnaire 1**

1. Determine the plot of fiction.
2. How can you describe the temper and behavior of the hero?
3. Identify the major episodes (semantic parts) in fiction?
4. What episodes in fiction do you like most of all: descriptive parts or connected with the plot?
5. What is this passage associated with: the pictures of nature or with the appearance of the hero?
6. Have you noted the artistic details (some images of things or nature) helping you to understand the character, the main idea?
7. What is the peculiarity of work's language? Does it cause any difficulties in reading?
8. Why was the text titled so? How do you understand it?
9. What author's ideas do you find in the text of the short story, story, play? What is the main idea of it, what is its meaning? (Golikova, 2007).

The experiment showed the following: quantitative ratio between auditorys, kinesthetics and visuals in each form may be different. However, there is the most common trend – auditorys and visuals form the majority in the form, kinesthetics are only a small part of it (20 - 40% out of 100 %). Almost all students belong to an interhemispheric type. There is also the following picture: the students in their 5 - 6th years at school form the movable kinesthetic type. Among the 7 - 8th grades'

students the prevalence is for auditory-visual type. School seniors are mainly auditories and visuals.

Students of different representational systems selectively perceive fictional text. This aspect is natural when we deal with the fiction containing "implicitly the incentive function that provokes the reader to an active mental activity" (Vafina, 2011). But the specificity of literary genre determines partial and incomplete understanding of the text, the presence of an individual trajectory in understanding.

The experiment with the perception of epic stated the following:

- kinesthetics have some difficulties in focusing on out of plot (primarily "visual") text elements. They are descriptions of nature, other events and objects, portrait characteristics of heroes, author's excursus. At the same time the relationship between the heroes, the movement of the author's thought are perceived adequately, the plot and the features of composition, the originality of artistic detail, its symbolic content are well absorbed and in whole kinesthetics inclined to structural and analytical way of thinking;

- auditories and visuals focus on the descriptions, representational art details, speech characteristics of the hero and the stylistic features of the author's speech easier. However, it's difficult for them to master the type of plot and the creation of the text (composition) and the whole structural organization of the text. This type of pupils is concentrated on subject and a perspective of the literary work, its subject world which they "see" and "hear".

The analysis of the perception of dramatic works has identified the following:

1. Kinesthetics can hardly imagine the scene, see the direct image and present the characters, their costumes, appearance. It depends on the fact that drama is a special genre of literature, requiring the operation of "recreating" imagination. However, these students determine the specifics of plot, the interaction of episodes sufficiently.

2. It's difficult for auditories and visuals to uncover the relationship between the characters, the specifics of the composition. Auditories and visuals hardly understand the dramatic text. It is difficult for them to disclose the nature of the relationship between the heroes, the specifics of the composition. This pupils focuses on the speech of characters, easily imagine the appearance of characters, scene.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Methods of study**

The problem of the perception of fiction through the prism of a representative system of a pupil (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) was not studied purposely. Also it's actual for Literature as a school subject: the problem of forming the individual styles in training at literature lessons taking into account the pupil's representative system wasn't considered specially. At the same time the research by Betty Lou Leaver can be highlighted. The author in its work offers to differentiate questions and tasks, according to the student's representative system at English lessons (Leaver, 1995).

Obviously, the differences in the representative system of a pupil – auditory, visual, kinesthetic have a significant impact on the holistic perception of information in education, specifically in the literary text. These types of representative systems are linked to common types of consciousness in the psychology: left-brain and right-brain ones. In this case B.L. Leaver (1995) gives the following definition for the different types of learners. For the visual type it's necessary to see the information "what is best provided by possible ways of appealing to visual memory <...>. They are more receptive to written instructions – they are given verbal instructions to the texts". The degree of risk for such students in a school is reduced because "school

seniors are becoming more visually oriented". Auditories receive information aurally, prefer verbal explanation, they need sound. "Kinesthetics require in movements<...>. They need exercises during the breaks between lessons<...>. They need touching" (Leaver, 1995). The teacher often adapts to the learning style of the majority of the form. Students who do not suit this "middle" style are at risk. In this case it's important for the teacher not to adjust the student's work for himself or to adapt to the majority. His aim is to follow student centered process that requires adapting to each student. At the same time, it should be done by respecting and accepting individual style of learners as much as possible. This is especially important for reading and for the perception of fiction.

## **RESULTS**

Thus, while test interpreting it is necessary to use a subjective experience of the bilingual student and include it in the process of understanding the text in order to enhance the aesthetic activity. Reliance on a subjective experience of the bilingual reader-student can be accomplished through the application of the method of creative reading in the classroom. Such traditional for the school techniques as oral literary drawing, working with an illustration, creative, artistic storytelling, expressive reading. These techniques are a kind of "bridge" in the implementation of a "reader – writer" dialogue at a literature lesson. An important place is also given to techniques, developing the associative sphere of a student. This is an implementation of the chain of associations related to the image in a literary work, for example – the image of the war, the city image, the image of nature, etc. The technic of an annotated reading also plays an important role. And different interpretations related to literary work understanding through other forms of art (music, painting, cinema) are also used. The principle of enhancing the student's personal experience is as well realized through the questions put to the text by the students themselves – the "method of questioning". All possible ways of comparison of literary works (comparative analysis) also contribute to the activation of subjective and literary experience of students. One of the innovative teaching methods in teaching interpretation in a multi-ethnic environment, connected to the activation of a bilingual student's personal experience and to the implementation of a cultural dialogue is a "method of problem-raising", which promotes active inclusion into the process of interpreting of the discussions on the topics crucial in the literary work (Golikova, 2007). "Technique of "problematization of meanings" ("method of problematization") allows not only to take into account a personal experience of a student, to initiate it and to make it cultural, to reach the level of interpretation of the text, etc., but also to identify the subject of dialogue as the subject, which is a bearer of active "I" with the possibility of a reproduction of its "I" at a new level, the growth of its self-determination. This technique is perfectly combined with other methods and techniques in foreign literature teaching, for example, with a method of project and a research method. In general, the "method of problematization", becoming "the impulse" for the reader's interpretation and analysis, is that very foundation that allows to carry out at a lesson personally-active and axiological approaches in teaching the subject, to implement the principles of dialogism in teaching foreign literature" (Golikova, 2014). This technique assists the mainstreaming of the national personal experience, which dialogically joins in the process of interpretation, essentially forming a dialogue of cultural and literary traditions.

## DISCUSSION

Thus, these findings prove that the integrity perception of fiction is not only connected with the age of the students, with the level of their literary development, but in general with the type of innate perception of external information (auditory, visual, kinesthetic). The types of external information perception influence on the selectivity in the text perception, as well as on the doing certain tasks depending on whether the exercise matches the student's perception type. For this reason, there is the need in differentiating the questions and tasks in the analysis and interpretation of the text and personalizing them.

So, if the right-brain visuals prefer to have the information in the form of graphs, cards, various demonstrations, analyzes from whole to part, it is possible to use these qualities in the process of the fiction analysis by using tables, support schemes, text analysis algorithms according to its genre modification (epic and drama). Left-brain visuals analyze from parts to the whole, repeat factual information very well (Pugach, 1997). Therefore, it is possible to use the reproductive techniques (note-taking, presenting the information in the textbook, in the literary-critical articles, paraphrasing, retelling the text etc.).

Auditories with the predominance of the right hemisphere feel the need in strong step by step instructions, prefer to execute these instructions by themselves, it's pleasure for them to create these instructions, they tend to analyze the situation "from the surface to depth". These specify allows choosing such tasks as the selection of quotations for characterizing the hero, creating a scheme to analyze the specific character or a specific product, its subsequent reasoning. Auditory with the predominance of the left hemisphere prefers to analyze the situation consequentially, focuses on the inner world. Here it's possible to use "the author following" analyze, use some techniques to facilitate comprehension of the hero's inner world depth, to create a psychological portrait of the character.

Kinesthetics with the predominance of the right hemisphere like to demonstrate their emotions, prefer large-scale motor work, play, like to sing, recite, speak in public. Accordingly, these pupils can be offered the same kind of job: memorization, expressive reading of the piece of fiction, demonstration or dramatization, hosting the literary game, creating an artistic interpretation.

Kinesthetics with the predominance of the left hemisphere like to "dig" in details, "get to the bottom", prefer step by step instructions, willingly rework, they are self-organized and self-disciplined. The teacher can offer some activities that guide these students to find the artistic details (characterological, psychologized, symbolic), to think over their role in the text, to understand the meaning of the title, its relation with the problems and issues relevant to the work.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, the interpretation of a literary work, characterized in many ways from the traditional analysis of the text, is a productive alternative to traditional approaches to teaching literature and contributes to more effective training and education – enhancing creative thinking and imagination, the formation of the communicative competence of the student-bilingual, correction of his values, moral ethical and cultural spheres.

Teaching interpretation of a literary work at literature lessons with implementing the presented above methodological tools contributes to the literary development of a student, enhancing personal dialogue "reader – writer", "reader – text" and nowadays it is undoubtedly the innovation in teaching literature to modern students in terms of multi-ethnic environment.



The teacher needs to know not only about the psychological characteristics of the student's individuality, but also to understand how the certain psychological characteristics may influence on the perception of the external information and what students can be "out of" pedagogical impact. It's important to take into account the different ways of learning the information according to the representative system of a student, skillfully use them in the analysis and the interpretation of the text in the classroom Literature. The obtained data on the in sighting the peculiarities of the esthetic information by the student-reader according to the representative system of perception lets to identify the ways of forming individual learning styles at the lesson with the help of individually designed assignments.

Thus, an effective model of the literature learning process formation should be based not only on the data on the characteristics of the national mentality, but the experimental data of the individual ways in the text perception, which have a special influence on the process of interpretation of a literary work.

The development of effective learning methods associated with individual and national peculiarities of the student' personal individuality in a multiethnic environment is still one of the most important problems facing the modern literature teacher.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Research materials and results may be used by Literature teachers to improve the communication connected with finding the meeting points between the author and the reader.

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