

THE SPECIFICS OF TEACHING METHODS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, CONSIDERING THE LINGUISTIC TRANSFORMATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The problem of methodology of teaching a foreign language in constantly changing realities of modern global world is of current interest. This is due primarily to the fact that along with the changes of historical realities the lexical-phraseological language base is also changing. New words and expressions are taking the place of the existing ones. It is mostly expressed on the example of the texts of social and political subjects. Considering these factors teachers of a foreign language should regularly update their training materials, as well as teaching methods.

It is important to understand that the main purpose of teaching subjects, such as reading newspapers and modern historical texts, is the acquisition of skills of translation and interpretation by students. It is necessary to get the idea of the basic processes of linguistic transformation and the proper use of new words and expressions.

It is possible to identify some common trends: abbreviation, simplification of the text, borrowing from foreign languages along with the emergence of new concepts, etc. In case of Japanese there is a number of specific features. A figurative way of thinking of the Japanese people based on characters influence the tendency to visualize a text. Speaking of new concepts a lot of loan-words are used as they are. The so-called "mixed" terminology (when only a part of the phrase is a loan- word) is also used.

The common use of Internet resources and the globalization have a great influence on the word formation. This fact may be illustrated by the wide spreading of blogs in which the most of linguistic innovations are somehow reflected.

Understanding the processes of lexical transformation is an important part of teaching of any foreign language. Knowledge and ability to use the new terminology will be useful in professional activity of students.

Key words: higher education methodic, linguistic transformation

The problem of methodology of teaching a foreign language in constantly changing realities of modern global world is of current interest. This is due primarily to the fact that along with the changes of historical realities the lexical-phraseological language base is also changing. New words and expressions are taking the place of the existing ones. Considering these factors teachers of a foreign language should regularly update their training materials and teaching methods.

Any aspect of language, whether a spoken language, newspaper language or fictional text, is strongly influenced by the media, social nets (such as Facebook, Twitter), a variety of blogs and video reviews.

The purpose of this article is to consider some features of modern teaching of the Japanese language, taking into account the lexical transformation. This is related to the course of studies for the students of 3 and 4 years, the Department of Japanese studies, the Faculty of Asian and African Studies, Saint-Petersburg State University. The practical course on the Japanese language is divided into several subjects, such as "Spoken language", "The Japanese media", "Historical text", "Modern historical text", "Translation of fiction" and "Science text." Only some of them are to demonstrate lexical changes in the language that take place according to certain conditions. The spoken language, by all means, reflects the most of the transformations of the language. But it is difficult to track the constant emergence of neologisms in everyday speech, while being "outside" the language environment. Therefore, it's worth focusing on two subjects, the main purpose of which is to study the texts of the socio-political and economic issues, that is "the Japanese media" and "Modern historical text."

Working out the teaching methods of the subjects mentioned above, it is necessary to set the following tasks:

1. To study the basic specialized terminology;
2. To define lexical and idiomatic innovations in language;
3. To understand the process of linguistic transformation;
4. To acquire and practice reading listening and comprehensive skills, using audio and video materials, such as news reports, documentaries, etc.);
5. To be able to make their own conclusions based on reading material, as well as to express them in Japanese;
6. To read and understand research papers covering a wide range of issues (internal policy and socio-economic problems, foreign policy and international relations, etc.);
7. To be able interpret and translate a variety of materials, including documents.

At the initial stage it is very important to have a specific terminology database. To complete this task one should carry out practical training, using specially designed teaching summarizing materials, which often take the form of charts or tables. The new terminology is also relatively easy to understand while reading the comments to illustrations, because the students involve the lexical and visual associative memory at the same time. For memorizing it effectively it is very useful to write dictations. However, it can be difficult to understand the use of a term out of context. The teacher should ask students to read the small newspaper articles as an exercise. On the basis of reading material one may offer to students to make a thematic glossary which can help to learn a related vocabulary also. In addition, the selection of related words and phrases allow using the most appropriate expression in each case.

At the next stage one can start reading texts on research issues. It is important that the student could not only translate the text, but also to identify the main idea and the author's point. As the media materials, as well as research in the field of contemporary history reflect the current situation in political, economic and social sphere, they may contain a sufficient amount of lexical innovations on which the teacher is to focus students' attention. The material revision can be done in the form of narration or small presentation, which should reflect the essence of the issue, the opinion of the author, as well as the point of view of students themselves. Students are recommended to study the articles and materials on similar subjects in their native language, to compare terms and analyze the definitions. Due to such training one can get a good report and essay writing skills.

An important point of teaching the official Japanese language is to work on the translation of documents, such as the joint declarations, agreements, treaties, laws, text of constitutions, etc. The case is that such documents have a certain lexical and grammatical base on which documentation is being drawn up to the present day. In this connection, the ability to make a correct translation of a document may be used in research, diplomacy, translation and other fields of professional activity.

Accepting the classical methodology, which provides fundamental knowledge and understanding of the language, one must take into account that only lectures and workshops are not enough to complete the understanding of the language. In addition one can use the news reports, documentaries or movies, etc. This type of training contributes to the development of listening and comprehensive skills. Moreover, the visual comprehension makes it possible to guess a proper interpretation according to the context, which is also a useful practice. Interactive lessons using modern technologies are playing the more and more important role in teaching methodic as they allow to explain the new material in an easy and accessible way. In the conditions where new words or modified existing ones (for example, in abbreviation) constantly appear, one must clearly explain to students the mechanism of these processes to avoid any misinterpretations and distortions of meaning. Needless to say, an explanation in the form of, for example, the presentation using a variety of animation effects

is more vivid and memorable. Students themselves are able to choose interesting words and expressions used not only in everyday life but also in the written issues.

At the final stage it is necessary to turn to the study of analytical work. Among these works there are articles in scientific journals and thematic bulletins, as well as monographs on specialized topics.

The final goal of teaching of the aspects mentioned above is the acquisition of skills of translation and interpretation.

Before proceeding directly to the specific examples of the lexical transformation in the Japanese language of socio-political and economic issues, it's worth noting the main reasons why such a transformation has occurred. There has been an increased international cooperation among many countries in different regions of the world during the past decade. Therefore, new political and economic organizations and associations have been formed. Consequently, new trends in the development of the world order are also remarkable. Thus, the need in adoption of common designations of different realities of the integration process is becoming evident. For this reason, a kind of the universal terminology base is being created, mostly based on the English language. Such a renewed terminology base, is being gradually accepted in other languages. As a result, the process of negotiating and business dealing between people of different nations has been significantly simplified. That is the reason why, while teaching a foreign language, one should pay a special attention to the training of translation skills, using as much the renewed terminology as possible.

There are also some general trends in the lexical transformation of Japanese. Due to the modern way of life with its high-speed rhythm there has been a recent tendency to reduce the total volume of the text, as well as the words as lexical units. In the case of the Japanese language the similar reductions seem to be natural and easily perceived as a steady trend towards abbreviation (jp. *Ryakugo* 略語) has been existing for a long time. Moreover, a lot of abbreviated and loan words have already become a part of the official language. The several periods in the history of the Japanese language are distinguished as the time of a dramatic increase in the number of loan words (jp. *Gairaigo* 外来語). They are the following: the Chinese writing adoption in the V century; the first Europeans arrival to Japan in the XVI century; the opening Japan to the world and the Meiji period (1868-1912), the time of the rapid industrialization and modernization of the country. It is no exaggeration to say that we are witnessing at present time a new period of increase in the number of loan words and expressions, and the worldwide Internet and the processes of globalization play a leading role in this.

There has been also another tendency: the simplification of the text. It may appear in different types of texts, including newspapers. Suffice it to compare some articles in Japanese newspapers with a difference of a few years to make sure that the sentences have become shorter, and the division of the paragraphs more clearly defined. Thus, the perception of the text becomes easier and less time is spent for reading. These factors correspond with the process of acceleration of life in the modern world.

In the case of the Japanese language one can identify as the use of already established Japanese names, such as the UN (jp. *kokusai rengo*: 国際連合), ASEAN (jp. *to:nan ajia shokoku rengo*: 東南アジア諸国連合), APEC (jp. *ajia taiheiyo: keizai kyo:ryoku* アジア太平洋経済協力) etc., as well as a significant number of loan words from the English terminology, especially to denote the contemporary realities. However, taking into account the peculiarity of the way of thinking of the Japanese people based on characters (*kanji* 漢字), it is worth noting the wide use of "mixed" terminology, in other words, the combination of loan and Japanese words.

With regard to general terminology related to various kinds of international cooperation, the loan words from English are more commonly used than their Japanese analog for the better understanding and increasing an interpreting speed. Below you can see some examples:

- *Pa:tona:shippu* (パートナーシップ) as a partnership in its broad meaning;
- *Aguri:mento* (アグリーメント) as an agreement;
- *Ko:pore:shon* (コーポレーション) as a corporation;

The terminology of "mixed" type or consisted of only the loan words can be often found among the Japanese names for the new official organizations or events, that appeared in the beginning of the XXI century. This is exemplified by such names as the East Asia Summit (jp. *higashi ajia summito* 東アジアサミット), the Nuclear Security Summit (jp. *Kaku sekyu:riti: summito* 核セキュリティサミット), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and its abbreviation RCEP (jp. *a:ruseppu* アールセップ along with its Japanese name *higashi ajia tiiki ho:katsuteki keizai renkei* 東アジア地域包括的経済連携), the Trans-Pacific Partnership, using commonly in Japanese as TPP itself etc.

The use of more specialized terminology relating, for example, to the financial, economic and industrial, security fields etc., is also worth paying attention to. The case is that such a terminology is well-defined, and it's substitution by even a lexical analog in the Japanese language can cause the loss of meaning in interpreting or complete misunderstanding.

This is exemplified by the following:

- *Sapurai chein* (サプライチェーン) as a supply chain;

- *Sutokku opere:shon* (ストック・オペレーション) as a stock operation;
- *Ri:do taimu* (リード・タイム) as a lead time etc.

As the set phrases the "mixed" terminology is often used:

- *Enjo ni:zu* (援助ニーズ) as an assistance needs;
- *Kamotsu sekyu:riti: ru:ru* (貨物セキュリティールールー) as a cargo security rule;
- *Rikuesuto ofa: ho:shiki* (リクエスト・オファー方式) as a request-offer system etc.

In the latter case, only the Japanese word for system can be used, but not the loan word *shisutemu* (システム).

The opposite is true when we use the phrase "the European sovereign debt crisis" (jp. *o:shu: soburin saimu kiki* 欧州ソブリン債務危機). In this case only the loan word from English *soburin* can be used as a "sovereign", but not its Japanese analog *shuken* (主権).

The example of the term "the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) security" (jp. *shi:ren no anzenhoshō*: シーレーンの安全保障) is also worth being mentioned. This example shows that the word "security" is used only in the Japanese version, but not loaned from English.

Furthermore, the emergence of new political and economic concepts has as a consequence the creation of new terms. A bright illustration of such a concept may be a term "Abenomics" (jp. *abenomikusu* アベノミクス), knowing as the economic policies advocated by the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe. This example is also interesting for the fact that the loan word *regi:mu* (レジーム), established as a "regime", gains the new meaning, while being used in the context of "Regime of Abenomics" (jp. *abenomikusu no regi:mu* アベノミクスのレジーム). Thus, the word mostly known to be used as a "military regime", "political regime", "fascist regime" etc., means in this context the "new economic policy".

It is worth mentioning one more important feature of Japanese. In Western countries a lot of the concepts first appeared in the media or in the literature, are then included into the spoken language. Colloquial words and expressions rarely become a part of the official language. In Japan the process is reversed: new words often arise as colloquial expressions or words of the language of young people. Some of these words quickly get out of use, but a significant percentage gets into the standard language. In case of misunderstanding of this process lexical and semantic errors can be made in the translation of not only socio-political texts, but also treaties, agreements etc. Thus, the study of such aspects of the language as "Historical text", "Newspaper" etc. should be based on official papers and documents, the example of which can clearly show the processes of lexical changes that occur more slowly than in the spoken language.

However, the introduction of new and modification of existing words in the language of socio-political texts and media is inevitable. Taking into account, that there is often a Japanese equivalent word, using such words in texts may seem weird. At the same time all the grammatical rules and regulations are applied to such words, which demonstrates their ingraining into the lexical composition of modern Japanese.

Speaking about modern socio-political texts such type of them as blogs should be mentioned. A blog is a kind of online diary kept by one or several people. It provides their personal subjective opinion on different events. Quite often the bloggers react first to the changing of situation and provide their comments before the release of official papers and notices. The number of readers of popular blogs reaches millions of people, so sometimes such blogs are equated to the media.

Unlike the official documents and chronicles, where the authors should strictly follow the established canons and, to some extent, clichés, bloggers can take the liberty of dealing with language quite brusquely. Many words and phrases first appeared in these online diaries became a part of the everyday vocabulary. In case of the Japanese language, this process is particularly interesting because alternative methods of the transmission of information are used in addition to the new vocabulary. For example, the Japanese often substitute words with visual symbols: emoticons or Emoji. The word Emoji (絵文字) itself is of Japanese origin and literally means "picture" and "sign". Using of these schematic faces depicting various emotions gives greater expressiveness to the message. It spread throughout the world, but in Japan some messages consist of nothing but Emoji. The reason for this is caused by using characters, as for the Japanese the visual component of a text has a great importance. Here is an interesting example: the combination of the characters meaning "a lawn" (単芝) is used to denote laughter (same as the abbreviation LOL in the West). The first sound of the word "to laugh" - warau (笑う), repeated several times, reminds of grass on the lawn by its contour (wwww). This resemblance was reflected by the characters.

Naturally, it is impossible to know all the new words and expressions, but without understanding of the basic mechanisms of the modern word-formation and the affecting factors, an important layer of modern culture may be left without appropriate attention and, therefore, understanding.

As a conclusion, it can be said that nowadays the linguistic transformation processes are much faster than before. The globalization has a great influence on of them, particularly through the development of the Internet. Despite the fact that the official Japanese media adhere to the norms of the standard language, new words and expressions get into them. Sometimes loan words and abbreviations even replace Japanese words. It is important

to understand the mechanism of word formation and evaluate the impact of various factors on the context of the statement; otherwise the meaning can be misunderstood.

The focus on the lexical and phraseological transformation is an extremely important part of the teaching of a foreign language. Knowledge and ability to use the new terminology in accordance with the realities of the time, undoubtedly, will be very useful in professional activity of students.

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