

## Specificity of teaching Sakha as an official language in the Russian-language schools of Yakutia

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### ABSTRACT

The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that an academic subject “Sakha as an official language” is a new subject in secondary school, thereby theoretical and methodological foundations of teaching this subject are insufficiently developed, the advanced pedagogical experience of teachers is lacking theoretical insight. Therefore this article is aimed at coverage of theoretical assumptions of these problems. The article deals with a legislative framework related to the introduction of school subject “Sakha as the official language” in the basic curriculum of the educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); the new content of this educational subject in Russian-language schools of Yakutia has been determined; the principles and methods for teaching lexical and grammatical material have been proposed; various options for the organization of educational process have been presented. The article materials are of practical value in creating a new generation of the relevant educational complex and development of theoretical and methodological foundations of teaching this academic subject for the Russian-language schools under the new Federal State Educational Standard.

### KEYWORDS

language education, multiethnic environment, multicultural society, schools in Yakutia, the Sakha language

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### Introduction

Among the main tasks of the state language policy of the Russian Federation is the creation of favorable conditions for maintaining and updating the languages of all ethnic groups, including Russian as a state one, the formation of a multilingual person in the conditions of a multicultural society. The main ideas of this article are in conformity with the UNESCO project “Towards a Culture of Peace”, and aimed at the implementation of UNESCO Conception vision of linguistic diversity and continuum of multilingual education, the preservation and development of endangered languages.

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Practical implementation of the language policy of the Russian Federation requires creating scientific and theoretical and culturological and linguistic conditions for the development of multilingualism in the entire polylingual, multicultural Russian space, study of the language picture of the inner world of man in the Russian polylingual world view, socio-cultural, socio-linguistic, linguo-political problems of formation of linguistic personality, capable of cultural identity.

### Methods

The language policy of the Russian Federation as part of the national policy is based, on the one hand, on the theory of cross-cultural and cross-language communication in a multiethnic environment, and on the other – on the theory of domestic and foreign linguistics and polylingual education that concern the functioning of the language in a multicultural society. To implement these tasks it is also of paramount importance to introduce educational services and opportunities for children of non-indigenous cultures, striving for high culture of bilingualism and polylinguism, for familiarizing with the languages and culture of the indigenous population of the region. All these factors determine the relevance of this article.

Research methods include 1) theoretical method: the study and analysis of domestic and foreign literature on language education in a multiethnic, multicultural educational space; 2) sociological and pedagogical method - analysis of educational materials on the subject of “Sakha as the official language”, the study and theoretical understanding of work experience of the teachers of the Sakha language); 3) experimental method (development of curricula and textbooks on the subject, followed by their approbation in educational activity).

### Literature review

The Yakut language has the status of a state language on a par with the Russian language in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which is defined on the basis of paragraph 2 of Article 68 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 46 of the Constitution of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), paragraph 2 of Article of the RF Law “On the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation” and Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) “On the Languages in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)”. The academic subject “Sakha as an official language” is provided at the regional (national and regional) component of the Basic curriculum for educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), implementing the general education programs, approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) as of 30 June, 2005, No. 373. The subject has been introduced to Russian-language educational institutions to implement Article 10 of the Law of the Russian Federation “On the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation” and article 27 of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) “On the Languages in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)”. Depending on the language situation and the social order it provides: 1) the study of the Sakha language by Sakha children who do not know their mother tongue; 2) the study of the Sakha language as a state language by children of other (non-indigenous) nationalities.

Since 1991, the country implements the Concept of modernization and development of national schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), approved by

the Council of Ministers in the Republic. This concept, which had no analogues in Russia, has ensured the implementation of the threefold objective of intercultural education in Yakut schools: to transmit richness of the language and culture of the native people, the experience of life, traditions and spiritual and moral values to the younger generation, to enrich the culture of the peoples living together, to acquaint with the values of the world culture – the synthesis of the best achievements of cultures of different peoples that inhabit our planet (Gabysheva, 2005).

## Results and Discussion

According to the ideas of the Concept of modernization and development of national schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), an academic subject “Sakha as the official language” has been introduced in the Russian-language educational institutions, which develop curriculum based on the Basic curriculum of educational institutions of the Russian Federation. Learning Sakha as a state language is determined by the participants of the educational process on their own through hours of training provided in the elective part – regional (national and regional) component and an educational institution component. Basic curriculum for educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which implement programs of general education, provide one hour per week in 2 - 9 forms for the study of the Sakha language as the state one. The total number of classroom hours per year, depending on the class, amounts to: 34 hours in 2-4 forms; 35 hours in 5-9 forms. An educational institution is entitled to allocate classroom hours against the component of the educational institution additionally to the specified minimum number of academic hours provided by the Basic curriculum.

In the first form learning of the Sakha language as an official one according to the Basic curriculum for educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which implement general education programs, is not organized in connection with the initial learning of the native language and familiarizing with the system of the first language and the language of students’ tuition. At this approach, teaching a second language (Sakha as the official language) is based on the knowledge and skills of Russian language students, as well as the mature general educational activities (skills). Meanwhile, the educational institution has the right to determine on its own the period of study of the Sakha language as the state language and start learning in first grade by the decision (based on opinions) of participants in the educational process. At this academic hours are additionally allocated on account of the elective part. Basic educational plans of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) define the minimum (optimum) number of hours on a subject.

Inclusion of the subject (course) in the Basic educational program for 5-9 forms contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of general education aimed at the student’s personality development, the formation of his/her personal qualities needed in the modern world and reflected in Article 66 of the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” dated December 29, 2012, No.73-FZ. The program of the subject (course) “Sakha as the official language” also implements the requirements of the federal state educational standard of basic general education.

This program contributes to the achievement of personal, metasubject- and subject-oriented results of acquiring basic educational program of basic



education, grounded on multi-cultural, historical, and integrated activity-based approaches.

Personal results. The content and technology of the subject (course) “Sakha as the official language” are aimed at:

- upbringing of the Russian civil identity, patriotism, love for the Fatherland, a sense of responsibility and duty to the Motherland, pride for their country, past and present of multinational Russian people;
- awareness of their ethnicity, knowledge of the history, language and culture of the people living together, their land, the foundations of the cultural heritage of the peoples of Yakutia, Russia and humanity;
- assimilation of humanistic, democratic and multi-ethnic traditional values of Russian society;
- formation of conscious, respectful and friendly attitude to another person, his/her opinion, outlook, culture, religion, traditions, languages, values of the peoples of Russia and the peoples of the world; willingness and ability to engage in dialogue with others and to reach an understanding with them.

Meta-subject results. The content of the subject (course) “Sakha as the official language” is structured taking into account the formation of meta-subject skills (regulative, cognitive and communicative) based on interdisciplinary concepts and universal educational activities, as well as their use in the educational, cognitive and social practice.

Subject results. The program of the subject (course) “Sakha as the official language” contributes to the results of the various subject areas studied in basic school.

A subject area of “Philology” (forming the basis for the understanding of different languages and nurturing respect for them).

A subject area of “Social-scientific subjects” (the formation of students’ personal ideas about the basics of Russian civil identity, patriotism, citizenship, social responsibility, legal awareness, tolerance, commitment to the values enshrined in the Russian Federation Constitution).

A subject area of “Art” (awareness of the importance of art and creativity in the personal and cultural identity of the individual, the formation of interest and respect for the cultural heritage and values of the peoples of Russia, the treasures of world civilization, their preservation and enhancement).

A subject area of “Fundamentals of spiritual and moral culture of the peoples of Russia” (knowledge of basic rules of morality, moral and spiritual ideals, stored in the cultural traditions of the peoples of Russia, a willingness to the conscious self-restraint in actions, behavior, wasteful consumerism on their basis, the formation of ideas about the historical role of traditional religions and civil society in the formation of the Russian statehood).

Objectives and tasks of learning the Sakha language as the official one in educational institutions with the Russian language of tuition are defined in the Concept of school language education in Sakha (Yakutia), approved by the Educational and Methodical Council of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in 2001 – the European Year of Languages.

The objective is the functional mastery of the Yakut language, achievement of communicative and ethno-cultural competencies by students at a level sufficient for introduction in the language and culture of the Sakha people.

The tasks are the following ones: teaching pupils to adopt ways to master a language of another people, upbringing of a culture of tolerance, respect for the language and culture of the Sakha people in students.

The program of the subject “Sakha as the official language” defines the mandatory minimum of training content and requirements for the level of educating of pupils of 2-9 forms in educational institutions of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in view of interdisciplinary connections (reliance on native (Russian), the Yakut peoples’ culture, Russian national culture, geography, biology, history of Yakutia, Russian history and the world history, social science, fundamentals of spiritual and moral culture of the peoples of Russia, fine arts (the minimum number of academic hours (1 hour per week), age and personality features, continuity between the learning stages.

When designing the content of the subject (course), the system of basic national values (patriotism, social solidarity, citizenship, family, work and creativity, science, traditional Russian religion, art and literature, nature, humanity) simultaneously performs the function of “skeleton” and value component of the structure of civil, regional and ethno-cultural identities formation.

The course content is based on the principles of communicative teaching of the second language. Training topics are selected based on typical situations occurring in real daily life of students.

Lexical and grammatical material is introduced on the basis of productive syntax structures of the Yakut language. Pronunciation and intonation skills are practiced in the process of speech activity. The development of speech activity in the Yakut language covers all of its competences, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, given the limited number of academic hours devoted to the subject study, the planned results do not include writing (spelling and punctuation). Teaching writing is organized at the level of re-writing, which provides an understanding of the written text, and performing writing exercises. Teaching reading is based on articulated reading skills in Russian and combined with training of pronunciation and intonation skills in the Yakut language. Reading in basic school also becomes a means of familiarization with the world of the Yakut folklore and literature. In the context of learning the second language with the insufficient number of academic hours, listening and speaking training as the main types of verbal activity becomes a priority.

Learning in primary and basic schools the Sakha language as the state one aims at creating conditions for communicative and psychological adaptation to the Yakut language environment, the development of communication (speech, language), socio-cultural, compensatory, learning and cognitive competencies.

Speech competence includes the formation of elementary communicative skills in the four basic types of speech activity (speaking, listening, reading and writing), taking into account students’ opportunities and needs.

Language competence is systematization of the studied linguistic material; mastering the new language features in accordance with the selected themes and areas of communication: an increase in the amount of the applied lexical units; development of skills to use language units in communicative purposes.

The socio-cultural competence is awareness of the social and cultural specifics of the functioning of the Yakut language as the state language of the



Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the ability to adapt in a foreign language environment, the formation of abilities to distinguish general and specific in the culture of the Sakha people.

Compensatory competence is development of skills to find the way out of the situation in the shortage of linguistic resources while receiving and transmitting information, intuitive use of background knowledge on the Sakha language.

Educational and cognitive competence is the development of general and special educational abilities, allowing improving educational activity on mastering a foreign language, the development and education of the ability and willingness to self and continuous study of the Sakha language, the use of the Sakha language in everyday situations, to meet cognitive interests with the help of it.

Recommended models are: 1 option - class activities. The study of the subject (course) can be arranged as *a subject* within academic hours stipulated in the part of the curriculum, formed by participants of the educational process.

Option 2 - subject modules. Integrated education can facilitate the study of the subject (course) classroom activities, which is realized through the introduction of the modular organization of training material: a) intra-subject modules; b) interdisciplinary modules - through the integration of several subjects: Russian languages (native); Russian literature (native), history, social science, art, technology, music and others.

Option 3 - extracurricular activities. Within extracurricular activities the course can be arranged at the expense of hours set assigned for extracurricular activities, in the form of circles, studios, facultative studies, hobby clubs, through the organization of educational activities (events, quizzes, and others), etc.

As a result of the study of the academic subject (course) "Sakha as the official language" in the basic school some results have been achieved.

Personal results are reflected in the students' individual qualitative properties, which they need to acquire in the process of acquiring the subject (course) "Sakha as the official language";

1. Formation of a civic individuality of the person, primarily in his/her general cultural component;
2. Formation of goodwill, respect and tolerance for other peoples;
3. Formation of readiness and ability to self-development;
4. Creating a common view of the world as a multilingual and multicultural community;
5. Introduction to the Yakut folklore and some samples of literature, traditions and customs;
6. Awareness of opportunities for self-realization by means of the Sakha language, the desire to improve one's own speech culture in general; the formation of the communicative competence and intercultural and interethnic communication, the development of such qualities as dedication, creativity, initiative, hard work, discipline;
7. Striving for a better understanding of native culture and the cultures of other nations; tolerant attitude to manifestations of a different culture, a different language, awareness of oneself as a citizen of one's people and one's country;
8. Readiness to defend national and universal values, one's civic position.



Meta-subject results of the study of the subject (course) “Sakha as the official language” in the basic school are:

1) the development of the ability to interact with others, carrying out different roles within the speech needs and student’s possibilities;

2) the development of student communication skills, the ability to select the appropriate language and speech means for a successful solution of elementary communicative tasks; extension of the general linguistic horizons of the student;

3) development of cognitive, emotional and volitional spheres of the student; the formation of motivation to learn the Sakha language;

4) mastering the ability to coordinate with the different components of the teaching kit (textbooks, audio CD, reference materials, and so on. D);

5) the development of the ability to plan one’s verbal and nonverbal behavior;

6) the development of the research training activities, including skills to work with information; search and selection of necessary information, compiling and recording information;

7) development of meaningful reading, including the ability to determine the theme, to predict the content of the text based on the title / keywords, to highlight the main idea, the main facts, omitting the minor ones, to set the logical sequence of the basic facts;

8) Implementation of the regulatory actions of self-observation, self-control, self-esteem in the process of communication activities in the Sakha language;

9) formation of project abilities: to generate ideas; to find not one, but several solutions; to choose the most rational decision; to predict the consequences of a particular decision; to see a new problem; to prepare material for presentation in visual form, using specially prepared project product; to work with a variety of information sources; to plan the work, to assign responsibilities among the project participants; to collect material using questionnaires, interviews; to issue the results in a material product (advertising, brochures, layout, sightseeing tour descriptions, tablet, etc.), to make an electronic presentation.

## Conclusion

During training at the basic school pupils develop skills of training and mental activity through the subject “Sakha as the official language”, which are gradually formed in the process of learning all school subjects. Among them the ability to work with the information, to carry out its search, to analyze, to summarize and to distinguish the essence and recording can be distinguished. At the same time it is important that a critical evaluation of the work of another person is expressed correctly and kindly.

This subject, as well as many other subjects of the school program, is able to gradually teach the student to carry out self-observation, self-control and self-esteem, as well as evaluating other participants of communication.

At the lessons of the Yakut language as the state one the formation of lexical skills is of great importance for the development of speaking and listening skills: to recognize the studied lexical units (words, phrases, speech etiquette clichés), including polysemantic ones, in written and sounding text within the subjects of basic school; to use the studied lexical units (words,



phrases, speech etiquette clichés), including polysemantic ones, in their basic meaning in speech and writing within the basic school subjects in accordance with the communicative tasks to solve; to comply with existing standards of lexical compatibility in the Sakha language; to recognize and form related words with the use of compounding and conversion within the basic school themes in accordance with the decisive communicative task to solve; to recognize and form related words with the use of affixation within the basic school subjects according to the communicative task to solve.

For the formation of lexical skills it is important to know the ways of word formation. In the Sakha language the following methods of word formation are distinguished: affixational, syntactic, of which the most productive is the first one, the latter includes a combination of words that form an indivisible meaningful unity expressing one concept and is a lexical unit. In the Sakha language words in their non-modified form basically have 1.2 syllables, for example: *ам, эт, ыт, ох, саа, сыа, оҕо, кииһи, уйэ, аҕа*. A small percentage of words that can present difficulties have 3.4 syllables, for example: *салааскы, минньигэс, саһархай, күөрэгэй, этэрбэс, бэргэхэ, алаадьы, олоппоси.т.д.* However, amorphous monosyllabic words can acquire several word-forming and form-changing affixes. Analysis of the forms of a word according to the composition promotes the assimilation of roots of complex words, which leads to an increase in the vocabulary of students, i.e., the reverse process takes place.

Students' vocabulary is expanded due mastering words borrowed from Russian and other languages that are included in the vocabulary of the Yakut language. At the same time a lot of attention is paid to the development of skills of mastering audio and visual image of loan words. The old loan words are pronounced by the laws of the Sakha language orthoepy, and the new ones in the way they are pronounced in the Russian language. Therefore, in many cases the Russian-speaking students do not understand the old loan words in the speech flow. As for the new words it is necessary to insert them in the correct grammatical forms of the Sakha language.

In conclusion, we note that the formation of communication skills requires the formation of students' compensatory skills, i.e. improving the following skills: use of language and contextual guess when speaking, listening and reading texts; prediction of text content by title, keywords, by the beginning of the text, by subheadings and in-text highlighted parts; ignoring lexical and semantic constraints that do not affect the understanding of the content of the text; use of repeated questions and word substitutions during oral communication; facial expressions, gestures.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Notes on contributors

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