

denominator is to guide and support students in recognizing, respecting, and valuing cultural differences and similarities. The overall aim for teaching university students-pre-service foreign language teachers is to help them develop insights into a cultures. This will help them understand their own culture better and at the same time develop critical intercultural awareness. Future teachers of foreign language serve as role models for their students, promoting a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity.

How to diagnose critical intercultural awareness of future foreign language teachers is determined by diagnostic tools — these are diagnostic tasks: control questions, practical tasks implemented through various types, forms, diagnostic methods. The main element of diagnosis is a rational frequency, which in our case allows us to obtain continuous objective information about the level of critical intercultural awareness of students. The system of such control should be aimed not only at identifying ignorance, but also necessarily at correcting the assimilation of knowledge.

At Baranavichy State University, we conducted a survey among teachers, in which we found out whether they were solving the task of raising critical intercultural awareness among students-future foreign language teachers and what exercises they used for this purpose. The survey involved 22 teachers with 1 to 28 years of university experience. According to the results, 54.5 % of the teachers surveyed often solve the problem of increasing critical intercultural awareness among university students, 45.5 % sometimes. When asking about effective methodological techniques for raising critical intercultural awareness among university students, respondents acknowledged that the most effective techniques are comparing facts in their native and foreign cultures (100 %) and discussing cultural studies (59.1 %). Such techniques as problematic task/situation (63.6 %), socio-cultural commentary, role-playing game/simulation (54.5 %), cross-critical analysis of situations of intercultural communication (36.4 %) and others were also noted. Such a methodical technique as the test was assessed as effective by only one teacher (4.5 %). In addition, the interviewed teachers shared examples of their assignments to raise critical intercultural awareness among university students. Among them: comparison of facts in the native country and in the country of the studied language; analysis of the pedagogical situation taking into account its socio-cultural context; an analysis of cultural stereotypes in the media text, a discussion on “Characteristic features of Germans and Belarusians: facts and stereotypes” and others. The survey results from Baranavichy State University indicate that teachers are actively employing various techniques to enhance critical intercultural awareness among students. These techniques not only provide students with factual knowledge but also encourage critical thinking and reflection. The variety of assignments shared by university teachers demonstrates a commitment to integrating critical intercultural awareness into the curriculum. These activities challenge students to think beyond their own cultural frameworks and develop a more nuanced understanding of intercultural interactions. Diagnostic tools should be designed to assess not only students’ knowledge of cultural facts but also their ability to apply this knowledge in practical situations. A combination of control questions, practical tasks, and reflective assignments can provide a more comprehensive evaluation of critical intercultural awareness.

Conclusion. The findings of this study emphasize that critical intercultural awareness is a dynamic and essential skill for future foreign language teachers. While significant progress has been made in integrating this awareness into the educational process, ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that student teachers are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of intercultural interactions. By fostering a deeper understanding of cultural contexts and promoting critical thinking, we can prepare future educators to effectively teach and inspire the next generation of global citizens.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING COGNITIVE VISUALIZATION IN TEACHING CHINESE WRITING

Introduction. Chinese, with its many thousands of years of history and complex structure, is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, but its study for native speakers of Indo-European languages is fraught with a number of specific difficulties. One of the key problems is mastering hieroglyphics, which requires not only memorizing the form, but also understanding semantics and phonetics. In this context, traditional teaching methods are often insufficient to achieve a high level of proficiency. The use of cognitive visualization, based on the principles of the human brain and its ability to process information in images, offers a promising new approach to overcoming these difficulties. In this paper, we will analyze the effectiveness of using cognitive visualization techniques in the process of learning Chinese.

Main part. Currently, due to the strengthening of ties with the East, more and more people see the practical importance of learning Chinese. However, Chinese, due to the peculiarities of its grammar, is very different from languages that are based on the alphabet in their writing. The main difficulty in learning this language is hieroglyphs, which become an obstacle, including memorizing thousands of similar symbol images, each of which have their own spelling, meaning and sound [1].

Given the inefficacy of traditional memorization methods for adult learners of Chinese, there is a need for an alternative pedagogical approach tailored to the unique challenges of teaching characters to non-native speakers. In such case, the using of mnemonics or cognitive visualization can be effective.

Mnemonics is a set of special techniques that facilitate the memorization of necessary information by forming associative connections. Mnemonic techniques are employed to facilitate the retention of information that is inherently complex or illogical for the conscious mind. For non-native speakers, Chinese characters appear as images rather than words, and the connections between them are difficult to discern [2]. So, it can be assumed that the use of mnemonics will be effective in memorizing hieroglyphs.

To test the effectiveness of the proposed methodology, a pilot study was conducted. The hypothesis of the study is as follows. The ability to retain Chinese characters will be much better developed if we use cognitive visualization techniques. To check the hypothesis, the pilot study was conducted in two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group used visualization techniques to memorize hieroglyphs, while the control group was not taught using specific memorization methods. All participants are native speakers of Russian and have had about one and a half years of Chinese language learning experience.

Before conducting a pilot study, a pretest was conducted to determine the initial level of Chinese language proficiency. The test results were recorded using the memorization coefficient, which were calculated using the formula: $X = (k / n) * 100 \%$, where X is the memorization coefficient, k is the number of correctly reproduced hieroglyphs, and n is the total amount of educational material (in this case, $n = 40$). The results of the tests are given in Figure 1 (the experimental group showed 36.6 %, the control group showed 46.8 %).

The topic of the classes during the pilot study was “Health”. The procedure for working with unfamiliar vocabulary at the introduction stage included the following steps:

- The division of a hieroglyph into its constituent components, which are called radicals, each of which had a lexical meaning.
- These components were highlighted in different colors: the main component was red, and the additional component green.
- Providing students with the opportunity to independently create an association based on the values of the components.
- Demonstration of a ready-made association for memorization.
- Using software program to show the order of writing Chinese characters in an animated way.

After 3 weeks of pilot study (12 university classes), the mid testing was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology. The results showed that the use of cognitive visualization contributes to a more effective fixation of hieroglyphs in the student’s memory in the experimental group compared with the control group (58 % vs. 49 %). This confirms the hypothesis. The results are given in Figure 2.

4 weeks after the pilot study we conducted a final testing to check the reproduction in long-term memory. The results are given in Figure 3. The effectiveness of fixing hieroglyphs in long-term memory in the experimental group is higher than in the control group (59.7 % versus 54 %). This means that this technique is generally more effective.

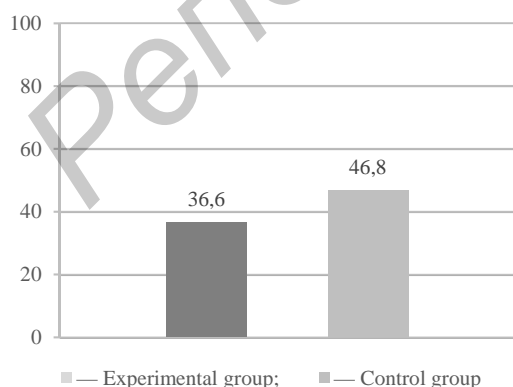


Figure 1 — The pre-test results

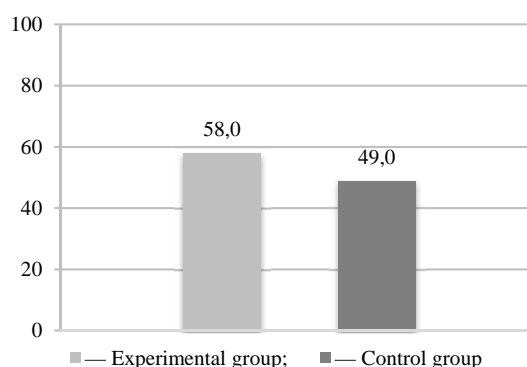


Figure 2 — The mid-test results

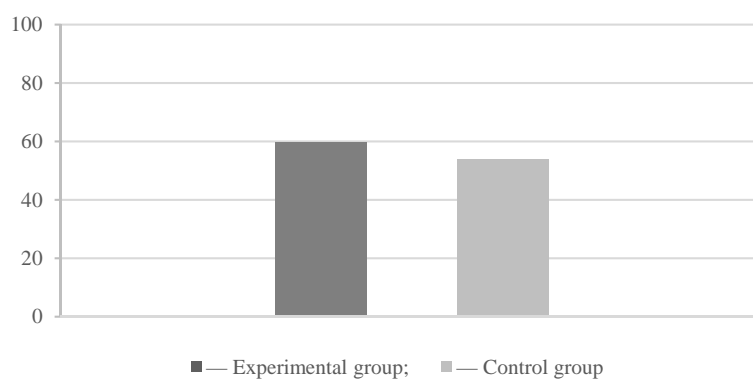


Figure 3 — Final test results

Conclusion. The theoretical rationale for the conclusion is as follows. Chinese hieroglyphs, being complex and unfamiliar symbols for Russian-speaking students, are not perceived as full-fledged linguistic units. The traditional method of memorization (hieroglyph + translation) won't provide effective retaining of abstract information.

Cognitive visualization techniques solve this problem by replacing abstract concepts with visual images perceived by the senses and creating associative links between them. The effectiveness of mnemonic methods in studying Chinese characters varies depending on practice: at the initial stages, their use can be time-consuming, and it does not always ensure complete memorization of characters. However, regular use of mnemonic techniques can significantly improve the reliability of memorization and storage of information.

Not only does this study confirm the effectiveness of mnemonics but also expands the understanding of how visual and associative methods can facilitate the development of complex writing systems.

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