Linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous texts in teaching Russian to Kazakh schoolchildren

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Abstract. The authors characterize functioning of semiotically heterogeneous texts in the methodology of teaching the Russian language. Traditional methods of applying semiotically heterogeneous texts in the educational process are still important, but at the same time it is necessary to transform the scientific approaches to analysing the problems caused by the reflexive nature and situational variability of digital content in education. The aim of the work is to identify and describe the linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous texts used in Russian language classes in Kazakhstan schools. Methods of comprehensive theoretical analysis of scientific and educational literature on semiotically heterogeneous texts, as well as observational method of studying and summarizing the pedagogical experience of Russian language teachers in Almaty schools were used. The printed semiotically heterogeneous texts from the series of textbooks on the Russian language and literature of the Kazakh language school (7th, 8th, 9th grades), as well as the video clips of literary miniatures by E. Posashkova on Youtube channel were chosen as the sources for the study material. It was proved that the linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous texts is disclosed on the basis of a system of special tasks and exercises. The authors’ method of analysing semiotically heterogeneous texts in Russian language classes in Kazakhstan schools is offered. Their linguodidactic potential aimed at memorizing the main content of the text, developing the skills in the main types of speech activity and language aspects, influencing the students’ imagination, emotions, subconsciousness, ensuring the productivity of communication in the new information and communication environment is revealed. Prospective for the study is the study of the functional load of variative components of semiotically heterogeneous texts, their hyper-textual connections and implementation in teaching Russian in Kazakh schools.

Keywords: Russian language, teaching, Kazakhstan schools, semiotically heterogeneous texts, linguodidactics, electronic teaching tools

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Introduction

Modernization of the world educational space, including Kazakhstan, the “expansionism” of modern science has caused the expansion of theoretical and applied research in the framework of electronic linguodidactics, as well as the development of specialized areas of learning, focusing on the methodology of the visual way of representing educational language information, i.e. understanding the basic semiotic characteristics (polycode and hypertextuality), the ratio of verbal and visual (iconic, animation) components, synthesis of verbal and non-verbal means of communication, which belong to different sign systems.

Among the electronic didactic teaching tools used in Russian language classes in Kazakhstan schools, especially important are the texts, which contain semiotically heterogeneous elements in their structure.

Modern scientific literature uses a number of terminological labels for texts that are characterized by “synthesis of verbal and non-verbal components – polycode texts, creolized, video-verbal, linguovisual, media, contaminated, compounded, semiotically complicated, etc.” (Maksimenko, 2012: 93). Terminological diversity is caused by the complexity of analysing the structure, functioning and description of this kind of texts, by different approaches to their understanding and classification of components. In our study we use the generalizing term “semiotically heterogeneous text” due to its semantic transparency and descriptive nature, based on the understanding of the semiotic code as a specific sign system.

By semiotically heterogeneous text we mean a text that combines elements of different sign systems – both verbal and non-verbal.

Currently, the study of methods for applying semiotically heterogeneous texts in the educational process and in Russian language teaching remains a topical research problem. Thus, the significance of polycode texts for academic discourse has been described (Popova, Kolesova, 2020; Luchinskaya et al., 2021; Pervukhina, Lysova, 2021), the features of using polycode and polymodal texts in professionally oriented Russian language teaching have been analyzed (Galkina et al., 2021; Kuzmina, Krasikova, 2021), presented an ethno-oriented approach when working with polycode texts in Russian as a foreign language classes (Shmalko-Zatinatskaia, 2021), considered the role of semiotic heterogeneous texts when preparing a textbook on Russian as a foreign language (Kozdra, 2019), etc. There are studies devoted to the polycode essence of the fiction text (Samokhina et al., 2022), development of communication based on semiotically heterogeneous texts (Gnezdilova, Bugaeva, 2021).

We think that traditional methods of applying semiotically heterogeneous texts in the educational process and in teaching the Russian language will keep their importance, but at the same time it is necessary to transform scientific approaches to the problems caused by the reflexive nature, situational changeability
of digital content, because the specific way of constructing educational content on the basis of semiotically heterogeneous perception of reality (wide visibility, interactivity, dialogism, accessibility) increases the effectiveness of communicative influence on students and ensures the formation of their communicative competence.

“With the emergence of multiple sources of educational information and embedded electronic tools, the structure, functions, typology of information and communication systems change;” the contemplative state of learners is replaced by their active participation in the learning process, involving them in the process of cognition (reflection, situational variability), in creating multimedia projects, acquiring new scientific knowledge (Dugin, 2019: 12). These online forms of learning (video conferencing, audio conferencing, online webinars and many others) “thanks to the digital environment can combine the properties of individualized teaching and learning, and the global Internet acquires the properties of the home information and communication center and allows to meet both cognitive and communicative needs of students” (Dugin, 2019: 14).

Following A.G. Sonin, we note that the desire to maximize the use of multimedia technologies allowing the creation of texts with different variants of semiotic components, “is due to the evolution of polycode perception of modern synthetic texts” (Sonin, 2005: 106). This evolution accompanies the formation of a new “network (visual)” generation of learners surrounded by “creolized” texts (Aniskin et al., 2018: 58). In this regard, the educational space is flooded with the texts integrating verbal and non-verbal components, “classroom walls are breaking down,” online and offline learning is combined, the real and virtual are converging and mutually “sprouting” (Aniskin et al., 2018: 58).

In this regard, we believe that in modern conditions the educational process should be designed with the use of semiotically heterogeneous texts, because the specific way of constructing educational content based on polycode perception of reality (wide visibility, interactivity, dialogism, accessibility) increases the effectiveness of communicative impact on students and ensures the formation of students’ communicative competence.

The aim of the study is to identify and describe the linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous texts used at Russian language classes in Kazakhstan schools.

Methods and materials

Semiotically heterogeneous texts used in Russian language classes in the Kazakh-speaking audience made up the material of the study. The following sources of the studied material were chosen: for analyzing printed semiotically heterogeneous texts – a series of textbooks on the Russian language and literature for Kazakh schools.
(for grades 7, 8, 9), for analyzing semiotically heterogeneous texts with video and audio – video clips of E. Posashkova’s literary miniatures posted on Youtube channel. The study involved schoolchildren of Almaty (total number – more than 500 people) in the period from 2019 to 2021.

The didactic potential was assessed on the basis of a comprehensive theoretical analysis of semantically heterogeneous texts, as well as the observational method of studying and summarizing the pedagogical experience of using semantically heterogeneous texts in the Russian language lessons in Kazakhstan schools.

**Results**

The authors of the article:

– revealed the linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous texts used in Russian language classes in Kazakhstan schools. The main advantage of using semiotically heterogeneous texts is their significance for modeling the learning process with interacting linguistic units and a wide extralinguistic context (diagrams, tables, reproductions of paintings, photographs, musical accompaniment, etc.);

– determined the methods of working with semiotically heterogeneous texts in the textbooks on the Russian language and literature for Kazakhstan secondary schools with non-Russian language of teaching;

– proposed tasks and exercises that contribute to the long-term assimilation of semiotically heterogeneous texts in Russian language classes;

– proved that semiotically heterogeneous texts not only contribute to memorizing the main content, but are also aimed at developing the skills of the main types of speech activity and language aspects. They are a means of influencing the students’ imagination, emotions, and subconsciousness, ensure productive communication in a new information and communication environment and effective learning of Russian didactic material.

**Discussion**

Semiotically heterogeneous texts should be considered “as a linguocultural phenomenon reflecting in verbal and visual form the national-cultural picture of the world.” Knowledge of the picture allows Kazakh students to learn Russian through the prism of cultural phenomena (Kharchenko, 2014: 12).

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2 Thoughtful Reading. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/@user-ek4ix6md6x/about
The verbal component of semiotic heterogeneous texts has its main features: coherence, wholeness and meaningful unity. Combined with the visuals, it attracts students' attention and focuses it on the key components of the text (for example, in a fiction text – on the place of action, characters and their actions). The visuals implicate the verbal text and combine different semiotic elements that help to understand the linguistic figurative components when reading the text in Russian.

Semiotic verbal and nonverbal components differ in terms of stages of their perception, their role for processing, storage, assimilation and reflection of the text content. Psycholinguists have studied the processes of speech production with the help of various types of visual support, where the key one is the universal subject code, which has a complex structure and provides for processing of both verbal components, and nonverbal ways of informational communication (Zhinkin, 1982). In texts with different combinations of semiotic codes, the basis of the visual “text” is a potential, implicit verbal text, i.e. variants of “integration of verbal and non-verbal elements form a stable system of relations, which functions as a categorical system and, accordingly, duplicates (or replaces in some cases) the categorial system of natural language” (Kharchenkova, 2014: 45). Thus, when precepting semiotically heterogeneous texts the mind of a person (in our case – a secondary school student) constantly transit “from the visual code to the verbal one and vice versa” (Zhinkin, 1982: 101).

The functionality of semiotically heterogeneous components in texts varies. In the Russian language textbooks for non-Russian language schools in Kazakhstan, the nonverbal component of the text is mandatory, combines a number of functions and ensures compliance with the principle of clarity. The specifics of Russian language teaching in Kazakhstan secondary schools lies in close contact with the teaching of Russian literature, so the literary text turns out to be one of the main methodological tools in Russian language teaching.

**Analysis of semiotically heterogeneous texts in Russian language and literature textbooks (Kazakhstan)**

To analyze the linguodidactic potential of semiotically heterogeneous elements, let us examine a text from a Russian language and literature textbook for the 8th grade of a non-Russian language school (Figure 1).

The accompanying illustration increases the productivity of reading through the visual perception of the situation, the transfer of thoughts and feelings of the author and the characters of the novel. The syncretic unity of verbal and non-verbal components, in our opinion, not only contributes to understanding the content of the text, memorizing Russian lexical units (the color highlights the semantically connected verbal and iconic signs), but also allows students to comprehend the ideological content and subtext of the novel.
Полисемия в этом примере передает студентов от информационного уровня к семантическому; процесс восприятия художественного текста виден через органическую единство содержания текста и иллюстраций, с вербализованной частью текста играя роль ведущим, а иллюстрация — отправной точкой для заполнения слова содержательным смыслом ("видение"), т. е. для формирования ответа. Сочетание изображения и заключенной в нем вербальной части текста создает множество ассоциаций и впечатлений и способствует личной вовлеченности в краткий, но эмоционально окрашенный художественный текст. Студенты приводятся к пониманию анализируемого текста через эмоциональное восприятие состояния природы и человеческого поведения.

Использование таких иллюстрированных текстов способствует развитию коммуникативной компетенции учащихся: они содержат возможности для развития навыков чтения и говорения, как основных видов речевой деятельности. Однако, эти возможности могут быть реализованы только при компетентной методической поддержке учителя.

Так, для улучшения текстовой деятельности студентов, учителя используют задания, направленные на постановку, понимание и переосмысление текста. Вот некоторые из них:

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Highlight the main and secondary information. 
Find the description of something, someone in the work (precepting literary characters’ images).
Point out the text fragment about someone, something, etc. (developing emotional responsiveness when reading).
Put qualifying questions to the semantic parts of the text.
However, in our opinion, such tasks are not enough. We need exercises orienting students to visualize the text being studied. For this reason, the following tasks should be added:
Look at the picture.
Find the piece in the text that corresponds to the picture.
Determine whether the artist succeeded in conveying the content of this piece of text.
Express your opinion.
The picture and its methodological support are aimed at the effective assimilation of content-conceptual information of the text and the development of students’ communicative competence.

Methodological techniques for working with dynamic semiotically heterogeneous texts

Another group of texts with a mixture of verbal and non-verbal elements in a single structure with synsemantic relations are texts of the dynamic type, where the non-verbal elements are a series of alternating images. In Russian language classes in Kazakh-speaking audience, such texts most often include fragments of artistic texts, where understanding of the whole text depends on the perception of the figurative meanings. The visuals fill the students' imaginary world with objects that determine the specificity of the content. Without them the text loses its cognitive essence.

To achieve that, adapting the learning process to the conditions of modern digital society, the vector of compiling semiotically heterogeneous texts becomes dominant: their structure includes not only visual elements, but also media data – audio and video files, QR codes. They become full-fledged components that contribute to the complex perception of the text; they contain facts with the subtext, complementing and enhancing the semantic load of the material presented. We believe that these texts have the specific type of textuality. It is not a mechanical connection of the audiovisual series with the verbal code, but, as V.E. Chernyavskaya notes, “the emergence of a dynamic relationship of the picture with the cognitive module of consciousness.”

As an example of such texts, we can take literary miniatures by E. Posashkova (the workshop “Thoughtful Reading”) freely accessed on the YouTube channel. The author of the project, Elena Posashkova, created videos for Russian-speaking children, but, in our opinion, they can also become an effective tool for Russian language and literature lessons in Kazakhstan schools. In the videos, the text is presented on the screen and accompanied by specially selected video and music.

For example, a literary miniature⁵ on I.A. Bunin's poem “Listopad” (“Leaf fall”) includes:

1) a written text divided into verses;
2) an audio text synchronized with the written text in the frame;
3) photographs/animated images corresponding to the text (verses of the poem);
4) background music conveying the atmosphere of the poem (the author of music is not specified). A frame with the components is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A sample frame of a dynamic semiotically heterogeneous text – E.A. Posashkova’s literary miniature on I.A. Bunin’s poem “Listopad” (“Leaf fall”)

Synchronizing a verbal text voiced by a native speaker with its written version solves several methodological problems, including, first of all, the development of listening and reading skills in Russian. Russian speech perception focuses on the peculiarities of pronunciation, intonation, logical accents, memorization of the sound and written images of a particular word. The combination of visual and musical series with the verbal one contributes to understanding and memorizing new lexical units, assimilation of the figurative and aesthetic content of the text.

Having supplemented this text with methodical material, we solve the tasks in speaking and writing. It is important to note that the Russian language and literature are taught jointly in Kazakhstan schools, so this electronic resource with

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poems and fragments of fiction texts should be used to teach Russian to Kazakh schoolchildren.

Let us consider exercises of different types in more detail.

To assess the general understanding of the text, the teacher can discuss its content after viewing it. The discussion can be opened with questions stimulating speaking:

What is this text about? What mood does it convey? What does the author admire? What did you feel and think when listening and reading the text? And when you were looking at the pictures?

The language of visualization must be qualitatively comprehended, so we cannot but agree with scholars who justify the need for meaningfulness to several needs – “to optimize human interaction to increase the effectiveness of communication, to overcome the hidden stereotypes of the literary language, to provide openness to new communication” (Maksimenko, 2012).

It is methodologically important to use verbal “supports,” “author's signs” and “navigation signs” to highlight signal words – reference components of semantic blocks, regulating the transition to the related intercontext (topic-subtheme-microtheme). The plot of semiotically heterogeneous texts with parallel verbal and non-verbal components provides access to the information thesaurus and draws students' attention to the structure of the text, contributing to forming skills to identify the text theme, convey the plot, compile the characteristics of the text characters. From the point of view of linguodidactics, at the lessons of Russian as a non-native language we can work on semiotically heterogeneous artistic texts with the help of exercises containing the following verbal components:

- Indicate the words expressing the theme (in the paragraph, in the text).
- Point out micro-themes.
- Highlight the most significant events and/or episodes, etc.

For vocabulary work (language work), you can return to video fragments and use pictures to specify the denotative meanings of words that may be new to students. The following tasks can be used:

- Match synonyms to words denoting colours (while naming, the teacher points to objects of corresponding colours).
- What colour palette is represented in the I.A. Bunin’s autumn pictures?

Appealing to phonosemantics contributes to practicing Russian pronunciation, memorizing lexemes through associative rows, and forming aesthetic images of a literary text. Pupils can be offered a task of this type:

- Find the words in the poem with sounds that convey the breath of autumn.
- What other sounds of autumn can you describe?

We agree with N.N. Nikolaeva who writes that teaching on the basis of suggestive texts – attracting attention by suggestion in order to create a positive effect –
provides the recipient with the most favourable conditions for perception and understanding and allows “immersing” students in the Russian-language picture of the world, developing thinking activity (Nikolaeva, 2016: 36).

The visual component of the presented video can be used to work with verbs. Thus, the video clip under consideration allows to semantize the following verbs: shine, darken, blue, as well as to learn constructions with verbs.

Exercises of the following types are offered:

- Find verbs that denote colour.
- Find synonyms and antonyms for them.

The cognitive value of the components (visual and auditory) helps students productively assimilate, perceive, and use tropes in Russian speech (with their semantic and stylistic significance). For this, tasks of this type can be used:

- Find epithets in the text.
- Identify comparisons and metaphors.

The texts under consideration can also be effectively used in teaching listening. Suggested tasks are as follows:

- Listen to the video.
- What impression did it make on you?
- How does what you heard relate to the text of Bunin’s poem?

The authentic nature of the video information corresponds to the audio text, which must be not only listened to, but also understood.

The formation of the students’ communicative competence is facilitated by the linguistic and cultural context of the information, developing speaking skills in Russian. The following exercises can be offered:

- What do you think I. Bunin felt when he was writing this poem?
- What feelings did he want to convey to us, the readers?

In written tasks, students can be asked to reflect on the question: “I.A. Bunin called his poem ‘Leaf fall.’ Would you call this poem differently? Suggest your options and justify them.”

Video-verbal texts: the virtual whiteboard Classroomcsreen

The above-described methodology of working with semiotically heterogeneous texts can be supplemented with exercises on the Classroomcsreen virtual whiteboard: a polycode perception of reality with the help of information educational resources caused the emergence of video-verbal texts containing verbal and non-verbal ways of information transmission in a single construction. The analysis of such texts identifies the significance of its components (verbal text – image) in the situation of generalization, since the perception of images, video accompaniment of the text and other non-verbal components in Russian occurs through
understanding of their meaning and significance, i.e. when moving from text to image and backwards, and the intersemiotic translation occurs.

Here is an example of exercises that include video-verbal texts with the help of the Classroomcsreen virtual whiteboard (Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Example of using the Classroomcsreen interactive whiteboard as a tool for working with polycode texts (authors’ experience)](image)

The example presents an interactive whiteboard screen that allows students to switch from one text to another, to combine work with texts, images, videos, using a rich toolbox of navigation, markup, commenting learning materials, lesson planning, work control, etc. This service has sufficient options and allows visualizing the verbal components and translating the iconic components into verbal language. Visual images (photos, drawings, pictures, reproductions) can be accompanied by recorded speech or spoken literary texts, providing a complex impact on the learner and, as a consequence, a more effective mastering of the material. Inter-semiotic translation of video information (graphics, colour, animation, sound), being the material for comparison, independent disclosure of the lexical and semiotic level of content, promotes immersion into the Russian-language text, creates a visual and expressive image, optimal conditions for understanding and interpreting the text as a whole, and also promotes “aestheticization of communication in the virtual space of the Internet” (Grigoryan, Strelchuk, 2021: 991). In the case of working with literary texts in Russian, video information (film texts, educational film texts) stimulates students to identify the compositional and semantic subordination of visual and verbal elements, encourages them to search for the mismatch between the information thesaurus of the reader and the author's intention, i.e. makes students ready to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic facts and, accordingly, stimulates active intellectual activity of students, “promotes reading skills and their productivity” (Stapleton, 2014: 98).

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Conclusion

At present, the polycode perception of reality is being transformed into a multi-vector communicative model that can be implemented in Russian language lessons by using semiotically heterogeneous texts. With the emergence of multiple sources of educational information, the incorporation of electronic tools in the educational process, the structure, functions, and typology of information and communication systems change: the contemplative state of students is replaced by their active participation in the educational process. A new, rich in opportunities, educational environment is being created. It is aimed at achieving pedagogical results in Russian language teaching using modern information tools.

The use of semiotically complicated texts in Russian language teaching greatly facilitates the solution of different linguistic and methodological problems. Plot-imaginative, sound and emotionally affecting possibilities of texts, combining verbal and non-verbal components, allow modelling a new language learning environment, intensifying the formation of students' Russian-language communicative competence.

The research of functional load of their variant components, hypertextual connections, the use of texts with mixed (transemiotic) intertextuality in teaching Russian language and literature in Kazakhstan schools seem to be promising directions for further study of semiotically heterogeneous texts in Russian language teaching.

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Научная статья

Лингводидактический потенциал семиотически неоднородных текстов в обучении русскому языку школьников Казахстана

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Аннотация. Освещаются вопросы функционирования и описания семиотически неоднородных текстов в методике преподавания русского языка. Традиционные методы применения семиотически неоднородных текстов в организации образовательного процесса сохраняют свое значение, но вместе с тем необходима трансформация научных подходов к анализу проблем, обусловленных рефлексивной природой, ситуативной изменчивостью цифрового контента в образовании. Цель работы — выявление и описание лингводидактического потенциала семиотически неоднородных текстов, используемых на занятиях по русскому языку в школах Казахстана. Применялись методы комплексного теоретического анализа научной и учебной литературы по семантически неоднородным текстам, а также обсервационного метода изучения и обобщения педагогического опыта учителей русского языка в школах Алма-Аты. В качестве источников для исследуемого материала выбраны печатные семиотически неоднородные тексты из серии учебников по русскому языку и литературе общеобразовательной школы с казахским языком обучения (7, 8, 9 классы), а также видеоролики литературных миниатюр Е. Посашковой, размещенные на YouTube-канале. Доказано,
что раскрытие лингводидактического потенциала семиотически неоднородных текстов осуществляется на основе системы специальных заданий и упражнений. Предложена авторская методика работы с семиотически неоднородными текстами на занятиях по русскому языку в школах Казахстана. Выявлен их лингводидактический потенциал, направленный на запоминание основного содержания текста, развитие навыков основных видов речевой деятельности и аспектов языка, воздействие на воображение, эмоции, подсознание обучающихся, обеспечение продуктивности коммуникации в новой информационно-коммуникативной среде. Перспективным для исследования является изучение функциональной нагруженности вариативных компонентов семиотически неоднородных текстов, их гипертекстовых связей и реализации в практике преподавания русского языка в казахстанских школах.

**Ключевые слова:** русский язык, преподавание, школы Казахстана, семиотически неоднородные тексты, лингводидактика, электронные средства обучения

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