

Title: Teaching Russian as a Pluricentric Language

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Abstract:

Teaching a pluricentric language for different audiences is a challenge and it is experienced by teachers of English (Li 2017). Experts recommend that educators should familiarize themselves with students' linguistic biographies; i.e., their family background, contexts of encounters with the language, and language attitudes. Educators should also take into account the type of community where the students live. These communities are sometimes divided by cultural and linguistic conflicts which should be acknowledged in the curriculum. It is important to know how students choose which language to use in different domains, and in what contexts misunderstandings arise. It is also important for teachers to reflect on the roles of non-native and native language teachers. An instructor teaching her native language has the advantage of serving as a linguistic role model for her students but at the same time has to be sensitive to the otherness of the students, while a non-native teacher, aware of her students' difficulties caused by the interference with the students' mother tongue or dominant variety, may be proactive in helping students avoid many a language-learning pitfall. Nowhere does the learners' identity emerge as saliently as in their views upon the language and the significance of their culture (Berry, Candi 2013). Currently used textbooks do not meet present-day requirements and do not incorporate the state-of-the-art methods, which further complicates the teachers' mission.

Pluricentric varieties of Russian evolve their own lexis and idioms reflecting local realities: ethnic, administrative, religious, traditional, folkloric, etc. Localisms are routinely used in the discourse both in informal and formal settings. On vast territories people speak oral varieties of Russian which differ from the centralized codified literal norm. They barely write anything in Russian, and when they do, their written language reflects their oral-speech habits.