

Specific features of teaching Korean language to Russian students

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Abstract

Korean Language is gaining its popularity, Korean language departments, divisions and Korean Studying Centers are opening in top universities whole over the world. There are few reasons for this phenomenon. This happening due to so-called 'Korean Wave' – 'Hallyu' (한류). Nowadays k-pop (Korean pop music) and k-dramas (Korean dramas) attract huge number of tourists. Active performance of Korea in G20 showed that capital investment in South Korea is of high interest in modern business world. It produces new employment perspectives among foreigners.

It is always preferable to start to learn new language from the native speakers. But history of teaching and learning Korean language shows that founders of Korean departments in the biggest and most respectful Korean centers of Russia and Soviet Union (Moscow State University, Far East State University and Saint-Petersburg State University) were Russian linguists like A. Kholodovich, M. Pak, T. Kaplan, L. Konctevich. Nowadays about 90% of all Korean language professors are Russian.

Aim of this article is to highlight specific features of teaching Korean in Russia and its practical implication. Russian scientific environment was chosen because of its geopolitical and economic status. And as an example curriculum of Kazan Federal University was taken. It is based on Korean divisions' curriculum of other Russian universities. Practical Language course here is based on teaching program introduced by Sogang University. Research was made based on observation. Target groups are first-year group of bachelor course (26 students) and four-year group of bachelor course (14 students). Observation was made during fall semester 2014.

Results of this article show that it is preferable for beginners in Korean language to start learning it with non-native speaker, or teacher who masters Russian language as well as native speakers.

Keywords: language learning, Korean language, Russian language, Oriental Studies, Korean grammar, Korean lexicology.

Introduction

Among general goals of teaching Korean language desirable human formation, establishment of value system and building proper image of Korean nation can be named. But thing like forming mature self-consciousness, ability to form autonomic idea and intention, basic learning ability, ability to find rational decisions and forming a creative mind should not be excluded. These goals appear on different stages of language learning: the deeper your knowledge of Korean, the more developed goals you follow.

This research may be of practical value not only for Russian Korean language teaching stuff, but for all non-native language teachers.

Methodology of teaching Korean is lack of studies related to teaching methods, curriculum, development of teaching materials, etc. The aim of teaching Korean as foreign language consists in transferring from teacher to student such skills as accuracy and fluency in using language. And according to this aim Korean scholars now tend to use Earl Stevick's theories about Macrowave and Microwave teaching methods.

Microwave is a teaching method where the emphasis is on drilling of small learning content. For example, the first stage of introducing new material is mastering its pronunciation. Student repeats the same material until the accurate pronunciation and appropriate speed level are reached. Only after that the meaning of it is given. In order to reach full understanding of new material educator translates it and then ask student randomly to translate new material in mother language or vice versa translate from mother language to foreign. And the next step is explaining and practicing grammar. These three stages called M-stages.

After of acquiring of new material educator gives practice exercises based on previously and newly learned material. It should come in three stages: 1) practice between educator and students (e. g. answering questions), 2) practice between students (e.g. role-playing), 3) students individual presentation about any favorable thing using already known and new material. These stages called C-stages.

Macrowave teaching method consists in "macro cycle" of C-stages, which means mixing and repeating all the previous material.

Methodology

Russian scientific environment was chosen as the topic of article because of its geopolitical and economic status. Russia occupies most of Eurasian continent. 1/3 of Russian territory lies in European part of the continent, 2/3 lies in Asian part. Thus it is hard to refer Russian Federation either to European or Asian society. This country combines features of both. And as an example curriculum of Kazan Federal University was taken. This curriculum is based on Korean divisions curriculum of other Russian universities with longer history of Oriental studies departments. Korean Practical Language course here is based on teaching program introduced by Sogang University and its course materials. Observation and individual interviews methods of collecting data were used in this research. Personal observation of teaching process by native speakers and non-native speakers was made. Target groups of this study are first-year group of bachelor course including 26 students and four-year group of bachelor course of 14 students. Observation was made during fall semester 2014. Also individual interviews with other teaching staff of Kazan Federal University were taken.

Teaching pronunciation

Korean pronunciation is very specific. Korean alphabet has 24 letters: 14 consonants, 6 vowels and 4 iotized vowels. Also there are so-called tense or double consonants (e.g. ㄱ [kk], ㅋ

[jj]), consonant clusters which usually cause biggest problems with the pronunciation (e.g. ㅈ [gs], ㅊ [nj]), iotized diphthongs (e.g. ㅟ [ye], ㅠ [yae]) and vowel diphthongs (e.g. ㅓ [wa], ㅗ [wae]).

In Sogang series transcription of Korean letters is given in McCune-Reischauer Romanization which is very useful though while explaining basic consonants and vowels, and double consonants. Russian students have an advantage in pronouncing vowel sounds. They are tend to be clearer in Russian language and as practice shows Russian students are quite successful in distinguishing sounds [o] and [eo] produced by vowels ㅓ and ㅗ. Also sound produced by letter ㅡ which is transcribed as [eu] has analogue sound in Russian, which is produced by letter ы. For example Korean word “to be fast” 빠르다 has sound [eu] in the middle syllable and Russian word “to growl” рычать has sound [eu] in the first syllable.

But there appear some problems with acquiring consonants sounds by Russian students. Russian language tends to have ‘strong’ consonant sounds. For example the biggest problem appears when pronouncing sound [r] produced by letter ㄹ. But Russians have some problems with pronouncing letter ‘ㄹ’ which gives sound [r]. Koreans tend to pronounce it in a soft way, while Russians (and most of the Romano-German speakers) tend to pronounce it more strongly. For example word 라디오 ‘radio’ where Korean [r] must be something between [l] and [r] to make the sound more soft. Another problem arose when explaining sounds [p] and [m] produced by letters ㅍ and ㅃ respectively. Students have no problem in pronouncing it but it appear quite hard for them distinguish this sounds while listening. Korean sound [p] pronounced smoothly, not like Russian explosive [p].

Thus while teaching Korean pronunciation to Russian students special emphasis should be done on consonant sounds. The main aim of teaching pronunciation is to develop skills of accurate pronunciation of Korean consonant and vowel sounds and accurate acquisition of Korean native speech. It can be done with the help of appropriate language-level listening and speaking exercises, showing Korean movies even with subtitles for students with beginner level and welcoming students to read in classroom as much as possible.

Teaching grammar

Korean is agglutinating language which is very different from both, English and Russian. That’s why we have to explain additionally, for example, how to extend interrogative statement to complex adversative one.

After students learn alphabet and pronunciation rules next step is teaching grammar in context. As context short text or dialogues are used. When explaining grammar material to Russian students comparing Korean grammar formulas to Russian can be very helpful at the beginning.

Usually first grammar point is nominal sentences. It is very uncommon for English language and in translation from Korean to English it is always given as a sentence which has both subject and predicate. For example: 저는 김민희예요. [chŏnŭn kimminhŭiyeyo]

Here we have pronoun 저 [chŏ] which means ‘I’; noun ending 는 [nŭn] which modifies the topic of the statement; proper noun 김민희 [kimminhŭi] and sentence ending 예요 [yeyo]. As you can see we have no verb in this sentence. But English translation would be always “I am Kin Min-Hyee”. The point here that in Korean language there is special noun ending -이다 [ida] which gives noun an opportunity to behave as verb, which means that it can appear in past or future tense. Russian language has no strict sentence word order and some parts of sentence may be omitted if

the speaker wants. So translating and thus explaining Korean nominal sentences to Russian students seem easier.

Next very important grammar point is noun postpositional particles 조사 [chosa]. They are added to noun stem and transfer some meaning to the noun. They can be very easily explained to Russian students as cases. In Russian language we have 6 cases and we will study closer Korean postpositional particles and find their substitutes in Russian case system:

1. Particle -은/는 [ün/nün]. It is very often considered to mark the subject of the topic and used to set the topic of the talk; to change the topic of the talk from one to another; to express some old, well-known information; or to express contrast. Translating it from Korean to English may cause some problems and always it is unclear in translated sentence whether this particle has been used in original sentence. For example: 윤호는 오늘 넥타이를 땀어요. [yunhonün onül nekt'airül maesöyo] Yunho had his necktie on today.

Where 윤호 [yunho] is proper name which serves as subject, 는 [nün] is subject marker.

But sometimes it can be attached to nouns and some parts of predicate to indicate emphasis. For example: 오늘은 수업에 가지만 내일은 못 갈 것 같다. [onürün suöbe kajiman naeirün mot kal köt kötta] I go to class TODAY, but I don't think I'll be able TOMORROW.

In this sentence 오늘 [onül] 'today' and 내일 [naeil] 'tomorrow' are adverbial modifiers of time, but to show contrast English or Russian speaker would use dramatic intonation, while Korean ending -은/는 [ün/nün] is powerful enough to show the emphasis and contrast itself.

한국어가 어렵지는 않습니다. [han'gugöga öryöpchinün ansümnida] Korean is not difficult at all.

Here this particle is attached to the part of predicate 어렵지 않다 [öryöpchi anta] 'not difficult'.

Russian students as well as English find it very difficult to master this particle as it has wide range of usage. But still in the meaning of subject marker it can be easily compared to subjective case.

2. Particle -이/가 [i/ka]. This is only a subject marker. It is used as non-subject marker but only in fixed phrases or with fixed verbs. It is almost the perfect comparison to subjective case in Russian language.

한국 경제가 크게 발전했다. [han'guk kyöngjega k'üge palchönhaetta] Korean economy made great progress.

Here 한국 경제 [han'guk kyöngje] 'Korean economy' is clearly the subject of the sentence and 발전했다 [palchönhaetta] 'developed/made progress' is the predicate.

Корейская экономика сделала большой прорыв. [Koreyskaya ekonomika sdelala bol'shoi proryv] Корейская экономика [Koreyskaya ekonomika] 'Korean economy' is subject and сделала [sdelala] 'made' is predicative.

3. Particle -에게(서)/한테(서). [ege(sö)/hant'e(sö)] Particle which means 'to (from) someone'. It has the same usage as dative case in Russian.

강아지한테 장난감을 주었다. [kangajihant'e changnan'gamül chuötta] I gave a toy to the puppy.

Here 강아지한테 [kangajihant'e] means 'to the puppy'. Compare with Russian:

Я дал игрушку щенку. [Ya dal igrushku shchenku] In this sentence ending '-Y' shows the dative relation.

4. Particle -(으)로. [(ü)no] Particle which indicates direction or means or instrument. When teaching instrumental case is used to explain usage of this particle.

젓가락으로 먹는 게 더 편해요. [chökkaragüro möngnün ke tö p'yönyaeyo] It's easier to eat with chopsticks.

Палочками есть легче. [Palochkami yest' legche] Ending -ами [ami] shows instrumental relation.

5. Particle -을/를. [ül/nül] This particle is used to indicate direct object. And it is easier to explain to students this particle as accusative case.

대학을 졸업했다. [taehagül choröphaetta] He graduated from college.

Он закончил университет. [On zakonchil universitet] Here the last word stands in accusative case.

These 5 cases above can be explained using Russian case system. There are more particles, but these 5 are the most complicated to explain.

English language is obligatory in middle and high school in Russia, so all of the students know at least basic English, so sometimes English grammar is used to explain the usage of some grammar constructions.

For example construction -고 있다 [ko itta]. It has absolutely the same usage as Present Continuous. -고 있다 [ko itta] is used to describe the action in progress or repeated actions.

그림을 그리고 있습니다. [kürimül kürigo issümnida] I am painting.

일주일째 비가 오고 있다. [ilchuiltchae piga ogo itta] It's raining whole week.

요즘 수영 배우고 있다. [yojüm suyöng paeugo itta] I am learning how to swim these days.

A derivative construction -고 있었다 [ko isötta] is similar to Past Continuous.

그림을 그리고 있었습니다. [kürimül kürigo isössümnida] I was painting.

Another construction -았/었습니다 [at/ösötta] has close meaning to Past Perfect Simple.

올겨울도 추웠지만 작년 겨울은 더 추웠었어요. [olgyöulto ch'uwötchiman changnyön kyöürün tö ch'uwösösöyo] It was cold this winter, but previous winter had been even colder.

Teaching vocabulary

Vocabulary appears to be one the most important aspect of teaching Korean language. The more vocabulary you know, the more fluently you can express your thoughts. But it is not only words you should know, accurate usage of these word is of high importance. For example the word 만나다 [mannada] which can be translated to English as 'meet, see'. Another word 마중 [majung] which is used in phrase 마중 나가다 [majung nagada] is also translated as 'to go and meet the person'. The difference here is context. 마중 나가다 means to come and meet the person in the airport or train station for example, while 만나다 means just usual meeting with friends, other people, etc. Thus teaching vocabulary must be always given in context. Another example with polysemy: word 세우다 [seuda]. In word collocation 차 세우다 [ch'a seuda] it's meaning is 'to stop car'. In another phrase 계획 세우다 [kyehoek seuda] it means 'to make a plan'.

Another problem with teaching vocabulary is unrenderable words. These words usually mean some culture-specific concept which just does not exist in Russia: names of food, parts of traditional art and culture, etc.

Sometimes while translating word from Korean to Russian, Russian analogue just does not give the full and comprehensive definition of Korean word. Take for example word 나타나다

[nat'anada] – ‘occur, appear’. In Russian we will translate it as ‘появляться’ [pojavljat'sja]. English translation gives us fuller definition, because Russian word ‘появляться’ has only one meaning ‘to appear, to show oneself’. So while teaching vocabulary we often address our students to English translation. But this is done only for beginners. For more advanced students explanation of the word will be given in Korean.

Conclusion

Through analyzing all the mentioned above parts teaching Korean language we came to conclusion that Korean should be taught in comparison with Russian language for better understanding. In case the students know English it would give lecturer more freedom in explaining both the usage and the meaning. Various comparisons and analogue construction with English language can be done. Appealing to English language can also help in further language education. A very common mistake of Russian students is that when speaking or writing essays they russify their Korean sentences. Abstracting themselves from Russian language students tend to make more Korean-like phrases and sentences.

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