

Cultural-Linguistic Aspect of Teaching and Learning Spanish Colour Idioms and Symbols

Elina GRODSKA¹,
Anastasiia MACHULIANSKA²,
Ludmila SHAPA³

¹ PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, Odessa National Polytechnic University, Odessa, Ukraine, grodskaelina@gmail.com

² PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Linguistics, National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv, Ukraine, for_nastia@ukr.net

³ PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, Odessa National Polytechnic University, Odessa, Ukraine, shapa.od@gmail.com

Abstract: The article argues that idiomatic competence should receive considerable attention during the process of foreign language acquisition because of the modern processes of European integration, which are putting forward a priority task for technical education and some fields of humanitarian one – training the future specialists to function professionally under the conditions of multicultural environment. Thus, the main purpose of foreign language teaching is to form the understanding of all psychological peculiarities of another national culture representative. The main objective of this article is to show the effectiveness of the acquisition of foreign language skills in the unity of language and culture, that was proved on the basis of the results obtained during the experimental Spanish training of 1 and 2 year students of Odessa National Polytechnic University in 2018-2019 academic year. The object of the experiment is the linguistic units denoting the colour spectrum in Spanish. To optimise the training process the corresponding verbal-oriented stages were outlined. The process of teaching Spanish idioms related to colour contains three stages. The first stage considers units whose cultural and linguistic fields coincide. The second one concerns more complex units denoting the shades of colours, which are formed in different ways in the compared languages. The third stage represents the Spanish phraseological units, whose metaphorical meanings are both far from the direct one and logical assessment of the relevant notions. The units of such kind should be taught successively by gradually increasing their complexity.

Keywords: *Cultural-Linguistic aspect; multicultural environment; foreign language acquisition; Spanish colour idioms; symbol; colour symbolism.*

How to cite: Grodska, E., Machulianska, A., & Shapa, L. (2020). Cultural-Linguistic Aspect of Teaching and Learning Spanish Colour Idioms and Symbols. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 12(1Sup1), 213-231. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/12.1sup1/232>

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

Globalization as a determining force of contemporary cultural development has a decisive influence on all spheres of human life – economy, politics, culture, language, education, spiritual and moral development, interethnic and interfaith relations. All these spheres, becoming involved into the increasing growth rate of information exchange, acquire qualitatively new features that demonstrate above all the phenomena of interpenetration of different cultures, languages, stereotypes of thinking and behavioral standards of the peoples of the planet (Berdilă et al., 2019, p.41; Cranmer, 2015, p. 155-170; Guyla, 2010, p.237-240).

The analysis of the worldviews, which are reflected in different ethnicities, makes it clear in what way different national cultures differ and simultaneously – how they complement each other at the level of the universe world culture (Kovács, 2017). Such an analysis helps to understand that the universality or uniqueness of any phenomenon in a national culture can only be revealed by comparing it with a similar phenomenon in another culture (Colston, 2015).

The perception of the world surrounding human is presented in three forms: the real world picture, the cultural (conceptual) picture of the world and the linguistic picture of the world (Oakley & Pascual, 2017; Fauconnier, 2018). Wherein “the cultural and linguistic images of the world are closely interrelated, exist in a state of continuous interaction, and converge to the real world picture, or rather, simply to the real world surrounding human” (Ter-Minasova, 2000, p.38). The linguistic picture of the world, which becomes the basis of all cultural stereotypes and through the lens of which a human sees the surrounding reality, is manifested to a great extent in the meaningful side of language. The main obstacle that interferes to achieve successful intercultural communication is that in an attempt to make the parallels between cultures any human directly accepts another culture through the standards of his (her) own culture, so far the observations and conclusions are limited by its (culture) frameworks. It is difficult enough for a human to understand the meaning of words, deeds, and actions that are not characteristic for him (her) (Callies, 2017).

That is why the majority of researchers share the idea that lately the necessity of foreign language skills formality through the unity of linguistic and cultural peculiarities has become all the more obvious. In her work “Language and Intercultural Communication” Ter-Minasova (2000) believes that, every foreign language lesson is a crossroads of cultures, a practice of

intercultural communication because every word reflects a foreign world and a foreign culture" (p.25).

Therefore, during the process of foreign language learning a student should acquire the fullness of all nomenclature of the psychological characteristics of another national culture representative (Dąbrowska, 2018). Such a person must understand the thoughts, feelings, behavior of its representatives, be able to become a cultural mediator, who constantly moves from one culture to another, finding the ways to reconcile with differences (Czerwionka et al., 2015).

Thus when studying the Spanish language one should pay attention to the peculiarities of the Spanish national mentality, the character traits of the people, the specificity of the Spanish traditions, which represent a unique conceptual-linguistic area (Mellado Blanco, & López Meirama, 2017).

Taking into account the main trends (Nešić, & Stojković, 2017) that have been developed in the world (and then in the education system) the Foreign Language Department teachers as well as linguists from other departments of Odessa National Polytechnic University are increasingly aware that elements of a cultural character should be included in the curriculum of students-future specialists in various fields of science and technology. However, the solution of this issue requires the implementation of significant theoretical and practical work aimed at determining the degree of students' preparation for the introduction of cultural facts. At the same time in addition to knowledge in the fields of language and culture it is necessary to take into account a large number of personality characteristics such as the level of general education, the ability to correlate facts, the ability to associative thinking, etc.

1.2. Aims and scope of the study and research questions

This work is aimed at determining the nomenclature of phraseological units of the Spanish language as well as the amount of cultural and historical information connected with them for the further introduction of this material into the curriculum. In our case, this is one of the most complex phenomena of language and speech - idioms related to the symbolism of color.

To achieve this goal the following tasks were performed:

1. Consider the extent to which the specialty (faculty, Institute), the students have chosen, affected the ability to perceive and translate into their native language the idiomatic phrases represented at various stages of teaching the Spanish language.

2. Make a statistical study to indicate the percentage of students who successfully/ unsuccessfully cope with the information provided for the learning process.

2. Literature review

At present, the issue of the inseparability of foreign language acquisition from the knowledge of the culture of the country, where this language is spoken, is commonly accepted in the foreign language teaching methodology (Nind et al., 2019). In the interaction of language and culture, especially bright units reflecting cultural and national features in perception of the surrounding reality are presented in phraseology. Phraseology is a part of language that reflects the identity of this or that nation, which predetermines its importance during the foreign language acquisition (Dobrovolskij, 2016). The statistical data have shown that 70% of adults' speech consists of phraseological units (Gibbs, 2017). This fact also confirms that phraseological units have to occupy an important place in learning a foreign language, and be an integral and obvious part of the students' linguistic training programs covering any professional field (Bowker, & McBride, 2017).

With the help of phraseological units-metaphors one of the most important concepts of consciousness — the concept of colour — is represented. According to the linguists, a metaphor refers to one of the leading means of world's picture simulation (Kövecses, 2015; Lakoff, & Johnson, 2003; Mellado Blanco & López Meirama, 2017; Oakley, & Pascual, 2017). It is a certain product of the work of thought, an instrumental means of cognition and reflection of surrounding reality by a human (Fauconnier, 2018, p. 55). In their turn, Callies (2017) and Timofeeva (2012), along with nominative and functional means of creating the linguistic picture of the world, also mark imaginative means, including the national metaphor. Metaphor can be a source of information about deep thinking processes that occur in the minds of native speakers and influence the linguistic picture formation of the world.

Studying the phenomenon of metaphor is one of the most important directions of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Dobrovolskij, 2018; Penadés Martínez, 2017; Ruiz Gurillo, 2010), in which the metaphor is regarded as the basic mental operation, as a means of cognition, structuring and explaining the world.

However, in our work a metaphor is considered as an element of consciousness that firmly entrenched in the system of language and speech

filling the gaps in the mechanisms of word formation and interpretation of the phenomena of reality (Callies, 2017).

2.1. The Role of colour idioms in Spanish Language teaching

On the basis of the Spanish language (Mellado Blanco & López Meirama, 2017), we have proved that linguistic and cultural method, which includes the simultaneous usage of linguistic factors and features of the Spanish cultural tradition, makes it possible to understand one of the most important elements of consciousness — the designation of colours, which is very important during the process of foreign language acquisition.

The researchers affirm that colour understanding as well as the associations connected with it are based on the centuries-old traditions of a specific people. For a long time people have attached special importance to the “language of colours” which is reflected in ancient myths, folk tales, fairy tales, various religious and mystical teachings (Dobrovol’skij & Piirainen, 2018).

At present, the problem of colour symbolism is one of the central problems of modern linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies, etc (Tomozeiu et al., 2016). The colour symbol origin, its content, the attitude to these or those phenomena in people’s life, the intercultural difference in colour symbolism are one of the main sides of this problem, most clearly manifested in phraseology which is one of the most ancient linguistic layers.

Federico Garcia Lorca (1975) considered a metaphor embodied in an idiom to be a native daughter of the imagination that sometimes gives life to a sudden flash of intuition, illuminated by a long yearning of anticipation. He wrote that for a metaphor to come to life, two conditions are needed: form and action radius – a nucleus in the center and perspective around it. The kernel reveals itself as a strange, unknown flower, but in the surrounding glow we find its name and feel its aroma.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The experiment involved 64 participants who were the 1st and 2nd year students of the Institute of Computer Systems, Humanities Faculty and the Institute of Business, Economics and Information Technology of Odessa National Polytechnic University.

All the students were divided into groups according to several parameters:

1) according to the year of study – 30 first year students 34 second year students;

2) according to the specialty and department they study at

- the group of students who had chosen humanitarian specialties (Humanities Faculty - HF) – 22 persons;
- the group of students preferring purely technical specialties (the Institute of Computer Systems - ICS) – 20 students;
- the students whose specialty can be called intermediate between humanitarian and purely technical ones – future economists and accountants (the Institute of Business, Economics and Information Technology IBEIT) – 22 persons.

3) the principal requirements for the participants were as follows: at least A2 level of knowledge of Spanish checked with the help of the special Language Test;

- logical ability to perception and correlation of linguistic facts;
- mean level of associative thinking;
- at least middle level of general education (literature, art, music).

We should note that the selected participants were (and are) considered to be the so-called “elite” among the students of Odessa National Polytechnic university.

3.2. Methods of research

In the process of performing the described experiment the various analysis methods were used that strictly corresponded to the features of the object, which was considered at one or another stage of the study (Nind & Lewthwaite, 2018).

First of all, a set of Spanish idioms intended for testing was singled out, and the elements of cultural and historical nature that logically explain their appearing and functioning in language and speech were presented.

The specificity of the study, which solves the interdisciplinary tasks, is reflected in the complex nature of usage of different methods and approaches in the course of the material treatment. First of all it is a linguistic-cultural approach that is necessary for the simultaneous consideration of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of words that denote colours in Spanish. However, in order to use the linguistic-cultural approach it was necessary to prepare research material accordingly. For its (material) preparing the following purely linguistic methods were used: comparison method that reveals similarity and difference in the structure, semantics and functioning of words with the meaning of colour. It also allows establishing the range of interlanguage peculiarities and differences

within the studied phenomena; distribution method; analysis of dictionary definitions; descriptive method. All these approaches allow to systematically characterize the analyzed material in all details.

The nature of the study required to use the etymological facts of some lexical units. In this regard, a historical-semasiological approach to the analysis of linguistic material is used, which allows us to consider the development of semantics of adjectives with the meanings of colour, beginning from the ancient syncretism of name (as the initial stage of semantic process).

But during the testing procedure fundamentally different methods were applied: a survey to determine the participants' general education level; written testing to determine the participants' language level; psychological research, which made it possible to identify the ability for associative thinking and correlation of the facts of foreign and native languages; consultations to identify the reasons of this or that test result; usage of statistical methods, i.e. the processing of quantitative and qualitative data obtained after testing.

3.3. Methods of verification

The study relies on statistical methods of mathematical processing of information: comparative, correlation and factor analysis. Comparative analysis was based on Student's t-test (Rembach et al., 2019). The method of statistical processing of data allowed comparing the results of study of two Language Tests. Correlation analysis allowed identifying the relationships between the investigated features. The analysis was conducted using SPSS 13.0. for Windows.

3.4. Materials

Ukrainian and Spanish colour marks are considered at the synchronous slice, since the main source of language material is modern interpretative dictionaries, including the publications of contemporary press, the Internet, scientific and professionally-oriented texts.

The compilation and comprehension of linguistic material has been greatly facilitated by: «Diccionario de la lengua española» Real Academia Española (2014, 23 ed.), «Diccionario fraseológico documentado del español actual. Locuciones y modismos españoles» M. Seco, O. Andrés, G. Ramos (2004), «Refranero multilingüe» J. Sevilla Muñoz, M. I. T. Zurdo Ruiz-Ayúcar (2009).

3.5. *Colour Idioms*

The degree of complexity of the set aims requires considering the Spanish idioms of colors in detail. For testing the metaphors with those colours were taken, which are most commonly used in both languages – Spanish and Ukrainian.

The colour idioms were divided into three groups.

The first are the units whose cultural and linguistic fields coincide in both Spanish and Ukrainian, so the minimal traces of metaphor are observed in the units of this group. These are the base colours except for the blue and dark blue, which corresponds to a single word *azul* in Spanish: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, dark blue, violet; in Spanish: rojo, anaranjado, amarillo, verde, violeta, and azul NOT = blue and not = blue, azul = blue + blue, the two systems also deal with the common names of achromatic colours, represented by three names: white (blanco), gray (gris), black (negro) (Seco, Andrés & Ramos, 2004).

In Ukrainian and Spanish, the specific colour markings applicable only to certain objects are created. Special adjectives in two languages indicate the colour of a person's hair (red, gray, brown, blackish, blond; Spanish: triqueño — dark blond, rubio - blond, castaño — dark brown); a person's skin colour (dark, ruddy, tanned; Spanish: Moreno - dark, zarco - white, amoratado - bluish); in Spanish the paper colour names are marked as follows (agarbanzado - of a walnut colour), copper colour (mochoso - greenish), wheat colour (ceburro - white), bird colour (lempo - blacky), etc. There are even special designations for the colour names on emblems in the language (Diccionario de la lengua española, 2014): gules (red), argen (white, silver), sinople (green), sable (black).

To this group the main achromatic colours — *black and white* – were referred. There some differences in perception of the white colour in the compared languages. In Ukrainian, the white means: good, peace, light, purity, chastity, holiness, sincerity, peacefulness, truth, divine, eternal, spiritual, and in the Ukrainian cultural tradition, white has a pleasing association: white hands, white face, white hut, white swan, white viburnum.

But the examples of Spanish-language metaphors demonstrates a sort of negative perception of the white colour: fear, strangeness, lack of understanding, sinlessness, holiness, difference, etc. (Sevilla Muñoz & Zurdo Ruiz-Ayúcar, 2009): ponerse blanco del miedo (turn white with fear); blanco como el papel, el muerto (white as death); envidia blanco, alma blanca (white envy, white soul); cartilla de lincenciamieto (white ticket); mirlo blanco (black sheep); verso libre, baile blanco (white verse, white dance); mago

blanco, clero secular (white magician, white clergy); estar, quedarse en blanco (to be out of the swim); negro sobre blanco (black on white “write clearly”); esto está sólo hilvanado, poco disimulado (it is sewn with white thread “it is obviously clear and cannot be hidden”); lugar en blanco (white spot); en pleno día (in broad daylight); noches blancas (white nights).

A characteristic feature of black is that for both nations it symbolizes “bad” — death, mourning, sorrow, melancholy, humiliation, destruction (Timofeeva, 2012). The symbolism of black is based on opposition to white. In the examples above, this colour has a negative meaning: poner negro sobre blanco (to write black on white “to make everything clear”); pagar en negro (pay blackjack cash); convertir en blanco lo negro (to distort the truth, to give out black for white); decir blanco hoy y negro mañana (to speak today one thing but tomorrow another, to constantly change one’s point of view); no distinguir lo blanco de lo negro (not to understand something at all); pasarlas negras (to mourn, to torment, to wander); ponerse negro a uno (to merge, to annoy, to infuriate, to put out); estar negro (to turn nasty); tener la negra (to get in the lane failure); suerte negra (malevolent fate).

The second group of the colour spectrum elements includes more complex units, symbolizing colours in Spanish. They do not have a correspondence in both languages, since they are formed in different ways (Mellado Blanco & López Meirama, 2017). This concerns primarily the shades of colours.

The units of this group are included in the Spanish system of shades of colour. They differ in more detail than in the Ukrainian one. If a colour is to be indicated in language then the Ukrainian language primarily uses adjectives for the base colours, and expresses the shades through those colours, which are modified by different word-formation means. In Spanish, the shades are indicated not through the base colours but with specific words. Spanish methods of marking, although more detailed, do not have the interior interdependence of elements that is characteristic for the Ukrainian system. Coming across such shades as tinto, cinzolin, pardo, zarco, etc., on the basis of forms of these names we cannot determine, the shade of which colour they indicate (Diccionario de la lengua española, 2014). They are motivated beyond the circle of base colour markings.

The Spanish language speakers, when colour marking, builds an associative series (Penadés Martínez, 2017). The use of descriptive constructions is a reflection of the linguistic picture of the world. Only in Spanish (unlike Ukrainian) there are shades of colour designations such as: el colour de las manzanas – “apple colour”, el colour dorado de la gente de

mar – “golden colour of the inhabitants of the coast”, el azul de la noche – “the dark blue colour of night”, el colour casi marrón – “barely brown”.

The comparison of direct and figurative colour designations in Spanish and Ukrainian shows that the tendency of the Spanish language to use words of more abstract meaning, manifests itself in metonymy (Spanish (Ruiz Gurillo, 2010): tiene unos ojos grises siempre alegres – “her gray eyes are always cheerful”, un poco la cabeza gris – “gray head”, mil surcos grises – “thousand gray wrinkles”, días iguales, grises – “the same gloomy days”).

The third group of idioms makes up the concept “colour” deals with the Spanish phraseological units (Sevilla Muñoz & Zurdo Ruiz-Ayúcar, 2009), whose metaphorical meanings of the Spanish language are far from the direct one, moreover the “associative motivation” of meanings does not frequently correspond to the logical assessment of the relevant notions: lila — lila 'fool', blanco “stupid”, aplomado “lead colour, grayish” – aplomado “lazy, clumsy”. All these phenomena reflect a common metaphorisation, which is lighter than in Ukrainian.

Widespread word formation on *-ado* is met in Spanish, which is able to belong to different word-types when expressing multiple meanings, e.g. perlado, limonado, colourado, aplomado (Penadés Martínez, 2017). The adjectives *perlado* and *limonado* in the word combinations of the type collar perlado (pearl necklace), pastel limonado (lemon cake), etc. have the meaning inherent to what is said to be produced in the word and the colour meaning of that which is indicated by the motivating word in word combinations of the type bufanda perlada (pearl colour of muffler), tela limonada (lemon colour fabric).

Such types of colour idioms functioning in the Spanish language in most cases cannot be translated into Ukrainian literally because of the absence of a similar symbol or association with one or another colour. As a rule, such expressions are translated descriptively or with the help of Ukrainian idioms, which present other images. For example, the Spanish metaphor *colgar el / un marrón a alguien* - hang something brown on someone) has no equivalent in the Ukrainian language and therefore it is translated descriptively “to blame someone (for something bad)”. Or, for example, the metaphor *libro verde* (green book) that causes for a Ukrainian speaker the associations with the nature, ecology, environment, but is presented in the meaning “a book or magazine that publishes amusing information about countries and these countries residents, positive and negative moments of pedigrees of this or that clan” or “the person involved in the elucidation, gathering information of such facts” (Sevilla Muñoz & Zurdo Ruiz-Ayúcar, 2009).

Some of the colour idioms in the Spanish language, which do not reveal the structural analogues in Ukrainian, have a fairly transparent meaning due to the coincidence with one or another colour association as for example in such utterances: *cruzar con el disco en rojo* (cross (the road) with a red disk) – drive on red (traffic light)”, *estar de un humor gris* (to be in a gray mood).

Some fixed phrases in the Spanish language except for conventional international meanings implement the additional ones, which belong to national. We can see this in the metaphor *bandera negra* (black flag), the equivalent of which in Ukrainian is “black (pirate) flag”. At the same time in the Pyrenean national version of the Spanish language, this metaphor implements an additional meaning – “hostility”, “excessive severity towards anything or anyone”.

3.6. Treatment

During the entire experiment the two treatments were carried out: pretests and posttests which were then compared. They were similar as to their character and content, and served three different aims. Their complexity was the same too.

1. In order to test the students’ linguistic level we applied such tool as the Language Test. It consists of 50 questions, each containing three multiple-choice answers. The Language Tests of autumn-winter semesters of 2017-2018 academic year and 2018–2019 academic year were compared. The experienced Spanish teachers (one of them had been an employee of the consulate of Spain in Odessa for a long period of time, another had a year traineeship in Valencia, Spain) conducted and checked this test.

2. To identify the necessary level of associative thinking and ability to correlating the unconnected facts the instructors of Psychological Department were attracted to conduct the corresponding tests.

3. The test checking the educational level (literature, art, music) of the participants was conducted by the instructors of Cultural Science Department.

3.7. Data collection and Analysis

The entire experiment occurred in the autumn-winter semesters of 2017-2018 and 2018–2019 academic years at three lessons in each semester that prolonged an hour and a half. At each lesson one of three groups of Spanish colour idioms were offered. The students were to demonstrate the following three abilities during the experiment:

- 1) linguistic knowledge to correctly translate each element of an idiom;
- 2) the level of understanding approximately a sense of an offered idiom which could show the ability to logically and associatively realize the entire idea of an idiom;
- 3) ability to correlate the Spanish and Ukrainian idioms and understand the common features and differences in mentality of both nations.

The 1st year students of the Institute of Computer Systems, Humanities Faculty and the Institute of Business, Economics and Information Technology were the first who passed the testing, then the 2nd year students participated in the experiment.

3.8. Research reliability and validity

The reliability of linguistic correction was provided with the availability of some Normative Spanish Dictionaries (mentioned above), the presence of the instructor-specialists in the Spanish languages during the process of checking the test, an instructor of the Department of Psychology of the University. Some students' tutors were controlling the correctness of answers, avoiding the random errors made because of absent-mindedness, and absence of helping. Although the students were warned about the responsibility of dishonest behaviour in the course of testing the presence of tutors could excluded such kinds of events. The common level of the language knowledge was verified with the help of the Language Test before the experiment (as was mentioned above).

4. Results

The calculation of answers has fixed the following quantitative and qualitative results of testing.

1. The first stage contained the testing of the 1st year students. The first lesson which topic was "The Idioms coinciding both in Spanish and Ukrainian (the first group of idioms)" demonstrated the following results:

- the HF students – 100 per cent of correct answers;
- the ICS students – 100 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 100 per cent of correct answers.

At the second lesson the 1st year students performed the test devoted to "The idioms included in the Spanish system of shades of colour". As it was already mentioned above this group of idioms is much more complicated than the first one. The results obtained were as follows:

- the HF students – 51 per cent of correct answers;

- the ICS students – 92 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 86 per cent of correct answers.

The 1st year students at the third lesson, which topic is “Idioms of colour with metaphorical meanings (the third group of idioms)”, demonstrated the following results. It is the most complex units of colour spectrum in Spanish.

- the HF students – 9 per cent of correct answers;
- the ICS students – 10 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 6 per cent of correct answers.

To summarize the results obtained during the 1st year students testing process some regularities should be marked.

The figures show that the first test was the most successful and was made by the students of all Institutes without mistakes.

The second test demonstrates a sharp fall in the values of correct answers in the HF student group (almost twice) and nearly similar values in the two other student groups – ICS and IBEIT. And the test carried out at the last lesson presents very modest results in all three 1st year student groups. But this time the worst were IBEIT students, and HF and ICS students had almost the same results.

The base peculiarity of the presented results is the highest value of correct answers in the ICS student group in all three tests containing the Spanish colour idioms of different complexity.

2. The second stage was devoted to the 2nd year students testing. The topics of the lessons were of the same type – “The Idioms coinciding both in Spanish and Ukrainian (the first group of idioms)”, “The idioms included in the Spanish system of shades of colour” and “Idioms of colour with metaphorical meanings (the third group of idioms)”. The results of the first lesson were as follows:

- the HF students – 100 per cent of correct answers;
- the ICS students – 100 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 100 per cent of correct answers.

The second lesson showed the following results:

- the HF students – 87 per cent of correct answers;
- the ICS students – 70 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 68 per cent of correct answers.

The third lesson presented the following results:

- the HF students – 79 per cent of correct answers;
- the ICS students – 50 per cent of correct answers;
- the IBEIT students – 45 per cent of correct answers.

The figures describing the results of the second stage test present absolutely another situation. In all three tests the HF students are the best.

The students of the other two groups have almost similar values of correct answers at the second lesson test. The most complicated third test shows again a significant lag in the values of correct answers among the ICD and IBEIT students as compared to HF's'.

5. Discussion

The students taking part in the experiment gave their informed consent for participating in the study, and more than that they demonstrated their sincere interest in the procedure in general and final results in particular.

The quantitative data given in the previous paragraph required a rather complicated explanation with the help of qualitative argumentation and detailed discussion. The teachers who conducted the tests compared not only the translation results of the Spanish and Ukrainian idioms but also had to refer to the results of all the tests carried out in preparing for the described experiment.

The following issues were discussed.

1. The results of testing of the first-year students.

After processing of the test results it seemed quite natural for the examiners to get 100% correct answers from both first and second year students when translating and understanding the first group of Spanish idioms that designate colors since they coincide in structure and sense with the same color adjectives in Ukrainian.

The sharp drop in the quantitative values relating to the third stage of testing (the most difficult idioms in structure and sense) among the first-year participants of all specialties turned out to be quite understandable since the level of discrepancy between cultural and linguistic characteristics in both languages was quite high.

For examiners such details of testing as the prevalence of the greatest number of correct answers among the first-year students of the Institute of ICS (a purely technical specialty) were impossible or unlikely compared to even students from the Humanities Faculty (HF), who according to the teachers' opinion, had to demonstrate the highest rates since they possessed humanitarian type of thinking and language knowledge equal to ICS students. Particularly striking was the correlation of numerical values - the number of correct answers of the ICS students almost doubled the amount of answers of the Humanities Faculty students.

However the cause was found by comparing the results of preliminary testing concerning the issue of presence/absence of associative and logical thinking and the ability to correlate linguistic and cultural facts as well as the test results, which determined the level of general education of the participants. It turned out that students of ICS had a much higher logical level and the ability to associative thinking for comparing language facts than the HF students. In addition, their educational and cultural level also exceeded the one of the HF students.

As for the IBETT students (having the specialty intermediate between humanitarian and purely technical ones – future economists and accountants, here the number of correct answers is also quite large, and again, much higher than among the HF students (almost a third). This was also explained by the relatively high level of education the students of this Institute had demonstrated in the course of testing. But this did not concern the ability to correlate facts of the language and associative thinking; in this they took the same position as the HF students. Thus, taking an intermediate position between students of purely technical specialties (ICS) and humanitarian specialties (GF), they also took an intermediate place in the results of this testing

2. The results of testing of the second-year students.

After very low rates of the first-year HF students the leading position of second-year HF students in the second and third stages of testing turned out to be quite unpredictable. In terms of quantitative values they significantly outstripped the ICS students of purely technical specialties and the ones who were closer to Humanitarian specialties – the IBETT students participating in testing.

The cause was found in language and educational test results, which had been carried out before the experiment with idioms. As the results the second-year HF students showed that their background knowledge of historical and cultural facts of Spain as well as the linguistic phenomena of the Spanish language had grown significantly. Which could not be said about the second-year ICS students, their level of language knowledge remained the same and even decreased. That testified about a certain stagnation in this point, the lack of necessary activities aimed at acquiring new linguistic information and maintaining the old, already learned before.

The same thing happened with the IBETT participants.

3. Consultations with psychologists about the test results.

The psychologists involved in the experiment explained the situation with several factors.

Firstly, some euphoria from the victory gained during the first year students testing, and the full confidence in further successes that is characteristic of students belonging to the “elite” of the University.

Secondly, the heavy workload of daily activities, the density of the study schedule, which did not provide an opportunity for further improvement of their language history knowledge.

As to the HF students, who had received the lowest percentage of correct answers in language and culture testing in the first year testing, they persistently sought to narrow the gap in their knowledge, which was helped by curriculum that took into account linguistic, historical and cultural facts in Spanish.

6. Conclusions

The effectiveness of the formation of foreign language skills in the unity of language (Spanish) and culture was proved on the basis of the results obtained during the experimental Spanish training of 1st and 2nd year students of Odessa National Polytechnic University in 2018-2019 academic year. 64 student participated in this experiment. To optimise the Spanish language learning process we outlined verbal-oriented strategies (incentive strategy, emotional activity strategy, evaluation strategy, cooperative strategy and self-presentation strategy), and developed the language tests for their development.

The performed research allowed arguing that one should approach to the introduction of phraseological units as well as information about their historical and cultural roots in the curriculum and further in the education process differentially taking into account the results of the presented experiment. So the recommendations were as follows:

1) for the HF students - to enter the Spanish idiomatic units in the education process starting with the first course of study with the parallel introduction of historical and cultural facts that describe Spain;

2) for the ICS students who had chosen technical specialties it seems more rational to introduce idioms beginning from the second year of study at a university solely to maintain and improve existing knowledge of the Spanish language and the realities of this country

3) for the IBET students - to use educational material that includes this language phenomenon starting from the second year.

In addition, the resolution of the examiners contained the conclusions that the acquaintance with Spanish language idioms played a

positive role in understanding and perception of the same units existence in the Ukrainian language by students of a non-linguistic University.

In addition to the students' interest in the linguistic side of metaphorical units the historical and cultural facts that contributed to the appearing of such phenomena in the language also aroused undoubted interest.

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