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The phenomenon of the transit of cultural values of the small indigenous peoples of Africa: a socio-philosophical analysis

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Abstract

The work carried out a socio-philosophical analysis of the transit of cultural values of the indigenous peoples of Africa, as a result of which it was shown that a number of uncertainties remain to this day associated with the inclusion of national languages of indigenous peoples in the educational process. Thus, the question remains as to how much it is necessary to combine the teaching of national and state languages, whether it is worth building the entire educational process only on teaching these languages or using languages that provide more opportunities for professional implementation, for example, easier admission to higher educational institutions, and reduce barriers of intercultural communication. Therefore, when choosing a form of education in the native language, one should take into account the need for further socialization of young people, the need to be able to fully use the state languages.

Conclusion. The national language is often the only tool for preserving the cultural values of the indigenous population, while its loss also means the loss of national identity and self-consciousness. Despite significant pressure from the metropolises, national languages were not lost, because, being a component of culture, they acquire its main quality - the tendency to constantly include new elements and transformation. Not only the national language of small indigenous peoples is a condition for the preservation of culture, but something else is also true: culture is an object for language acquisition, since teaching it without taking into account national cultural characteristics is ineffective.

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Keywords

Indigenous peoples, languages of Africa, post-colonial history of Africa, cultural values, school education.

Introduction

The practice of schooling of indigenous peoples in various regions of the world suggests that the simple unification of the educational process leads to the loss of cultural identity, a decrease in the cultural diversity of the peoples of the world. In the context of globalization, this problem is significantly exacerbated due to the fact that the amount of information traffic in less common languages is decreasing every year, while even the most significant languages for the world cultural heritage are experiencing a crisis associated with an increasing number of borrowings from English.

The measures taken by the state and public organizations to maintain linguistic diversity are not always sufficient, especially when there are a significant number of languages. Under these conditions, only the languages of indigenous peoples, which are the most significant in terms of the number of speakers, are supported through the implementation of part of the educational process in national languages in general education schools in the area of their compact residence. Under these conditions, the search for a form of transmission of the "cultural code" is a very relevant topic, and it is also becoming increasingly important to study the experience of the indigenous peoples of Africa in preserving cultural diversity, where, in the absence of a sufficient level of development of educational institutions and the scientific study of indigenous languages, not only languages are preserved but also the cultural values of indigenous peoples. This experience is interesting for studying the cultural development of small indigenous peoples in various regions of Russia in the context of a constant increase in interethnic interaction and globalization.

Main content

Native language teaching as a tool for transmitting the cultural code of an ethnic group or territory is the subject of a significant amount of research. Conventionally, they can be divided into works that consider various institutional aspects of the problem under consideration. For example, in relation to the cultures of Africa, this topic was considered in works devoted to teaching reading and writing outside and within the framework of school education. Another area of research was the consideration of literacy within the framework of the cultural development of territories, including with the aim of identifying the ontological components of the stages of development of the process of transferring the cultural code of the territory. In the socio-cultural framework, the practice of developing a system of teaching reading and writing in the native language was considered in conditions when a certain language did not have its own written language.

A fundamentally different direction of research in this area is represented by works that consider the ethnographic aspects of teaching literacy as a tool for transmitting the "cultural code", some of which are directly related to the study of the customs and rituals of the peoples of Africa, while others are devoted to various linguistic issues.

Thus, research in the field of the transfer of cultural values in the teaching of native speech is of an interdisciplinary nature, including such areas of modern science, such as cultural studies, ethnography, sociology of rural life, linguistics and pedagogy.

Historically, during the colonial era in Africa, there was a serious suppression of local writing and culture at the expense of the languages of the metropolitan countries - English, French or Portuguese. By the time of independence, a small number of national languages were widely spoken. First of all, they should include Swahili in Tanzania and the Amharic language, common in Ethiopia [ibid.]. The reason for the preservation of these languages was the significant efforts of the governments of these countries

to preserve their language. At the same time, later studies have shown that the preservation of the national cultures of these countries is primarily due to the widespread use of national languages in the education system. The course towards the preservation of national culture and national identity has become a key one for countries in this period and in conditions when there was one or two national languages in the country, and led to the fact that the goals set were achieved. Under these conditions, it was quite simple to organize the training of teachers, the creation of special programs and teaching aids.

However, these goals could not be achieved in all cases. In the case of indigenous peoples, the problem of teaching writing was not solved for quite a long time. Despite the fact that UNESCO adopted a document supported by all UN countries on the need to preserve the languages of indigenous peoples, only in the 21st century did education in the native language become available virtually everywhere in most regions of the world. If in the 50s in Africa education was carried out only in English, French and Portuguese, then by 2004 more than 50 languages were used in the pedagogical process. To this end, specialized programs have been created, such as PROPELCA, used in Cameroon, in which even languages spoken by less than 2% of the local population participated. The action of this program extended to 29 languages of the north-west of Cameroon, the number of native speakers ranged from 80 to 150 thousand. It should be noted that the purpose of this program was not only the development of languages, but also the preservation of the cultural values of indigenous peoples, the preservation of national identity.

The generalization of the experience of implementing educational programs in the native language showed not only significant improvements in the process of preserving and transmitting cultural values, but also an improvement in the social climate in the habitat of small indigenous peoples, and the expansion of social ties. It was also noted that identifying children as members of a certain commune or ethnic group, demonstrating a certain cultural identity made their lives safer, and teaching in a language understandable to students more understandable. All these positive aspects were noted in the preamble of the normative document developing approaches to the preservation of the linguistic diversity of Africa, the Asmara Declaration on African Languages.

However, there are still a number of uncertainties associated with the inclusion of national languages of small peoples in the educational process. Firstly, the question of how much it is necessary to combine teaching national and state languages remains unresolved, whether it is worth building the entire educational process only on teaching these languages or using languages that provide more opportunities for professional realization, for example, easier admission to higher educational institutions, and reduce barriers to intercultural communication. In particular, the negative effect of the excessive use of national languages was shown in a number of studies on the indigenous peoples of Brazil, where the created conditions for the availability of work and study led to the fact that the indigenous peoples actually completely abandoned education in their languages, despite the availability of widely available public mother tongue education programs [Plastow, 2012]. Therefore, when choosing a form of education in the native language, one should take into account the need for further socialization of young people, the need to be able to fully use the state languages.

According to a number of researchers, the culture of the indigenous peoples of Africa over the past 200 years has not had enough opportunities for development and survival. After gaining independence, African countries did not have time to create institutional conditions to support national cultures, as globalization began to have a significant impact on them. Currently, writing is almost the only tool for preserving culture, in fact, its key element. Thus, the use of native speech for the preservation of cultural values became the source of the emergence of a new socio-cultural space - places of compact residence of the indigenous population.

However, at the same time, studies show that attempts to artificially preserve a culture or language unchanged lead to its extinction, since the peculiarity of the development of culture lies in its constant variability, the inclusion of new elements in it. The colonial period caused the loss of many elements of the cultural diversity of Africa, in fact, the desire to join the values of one's ethnic group was not the goal of the metropolises. In the post-colonial period, the cultures of the peoples inhabiting the countries have become an object for study and protection. Thus, the preservation of cultural values became possible only in the presence of their own language. This conclusion is confirmed by the example of many other countries, including Russia, where, according to a significant number of ethnographic studies, the loss of cultural traditions in the Russian-speaking countryside is more significant compared to the countryside of the peoples living in the same territory, for example, the peoples of the Russian north who speak languages of the Finno-Ugric group.

However, simple teaching of the native language with the help of standardized textbooks that are not based on the need to convey the socio-cultural context of a particular ethnic group, according to a number of researchers, is also ineffective, which was shown by the example of a number of studies conducted when studying the process of mastering national languages with the number of speakers from 50 to 100 thousand people. Only when this component is taken into account, the pedagogical process will allow avoiding conflicts of cross-cultural communication in the "school-family" relationship.

Conclusion

The national language is often the only tool for preserving the cultural values of the indigenous population, while its loss also means the loss of national identity and self-consciousness. Despite significant pressure from the metropolises, national languages were not lost, because, being a component of culture, they acquire its main quality - the tendency to constantly include new elements and transformation. Not only the national language of small indigenous peoples is a condition for the preservation of culture, but something else is also true: culture is an object for language acquisition, since teaching it without taking into account national cultural characteristics is ineffective.

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Феномен транзита культурных ценностей малочисленных коренных народов Африки: социально-философский анализ

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Аннотация

В работе проведен социально-философский анализ транзита культурных ценностей коренных народов Африки в результате которого было показано, что до настоящего времени сохраняется ряд неопределенностей, связанных с включением национальных языков малочисленных народов в образовательный процесс. Так, остается нерешенным вопрос о том, насколько необходимо сочетать обучение национальным и государственным языкам, стоит ли весь образовательный процесс строить только на обучении данным языкам или использовать языки, позволяющие обеспечивать больше возможностей профессиональной реализации, например более простое поступление в высшие учебные заведения, и снижать барьеры межкультурной коммуникации. Поэтому при выборе формы обучения на родном языке следует учитывать необходимость дальнейшей социализации молодежи, необходимость иметь возможность полноценно использовать государственные языки.

Заключение. Национальный язык часто является единственным инструментом сохранения культурных ценностей коренного населения, при этом его потеря означает также и потерю национальной идентичности и самосознания. Несмотря на значительное давление со стороны метрополий, национальные языки не были утрачены, так как, являясь компонентом культуры, приобретают ее основное качество – склонность к постоянному включению новых элементов и трансформации. Не только национальный язык малочисленных коренных народов является условием сохранения культуры, верно и другое: культура является объектом для усвоения языка, так как обучение ему без учета национальных культурных особенностей является неэффективным.

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Ключевые слова

Коренные малочисленные народы, языки Африки, постколониальная история Африки, культурные ценности, школьное образование.

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