# ABSTRACT

**of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational programme 8D01720 – "Russian language and literature"**
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**"Innovative Methods in Developing Students' Sociocultural Competence in Learning the Russian Language"**

**Relevance of the study.** The growth of intercultural interaction and the specific features of multilingual education in the Republic of Kazakhstan are placing greater demands on the development of students' sociocultural competence in general, and in learning Russian as a second language in particular. In this context, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a means of acquiring cultural norms, values, and patterns of verbal behaviour.

An analysis of regulatory documents and teaching materials shows that the sociocultural component is presented predominantly in a descriptive form, while the tasks do not sufficiently focus on the interpretation of cultural meanings and their use in communicative practice. This way of presenting sociocultural content primarily involves the reproduction of cultural information, whereas its understanding and application in communicative situations require additional instructional support.

A key factor is the changing cognitive and communicative needs of students associated with digital socialisation and the multimodal perception of information, which necessitates the incorporation of various sign systems, communicative modelling, and active forms of verbal interaction into the teaching process. In this context, the development and implementation of innovative methods for developing sociocultural competence, based on the use of multimodal resources and the active involvement of students in interpretative and communicative activities, become particularly relevant.

**The object of the study** is the process of developing sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 in Russian language lessons at a school where the medium of instruction is Kazakh.

**The subject of the study** is innovative methods for developing sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 in Russian language lessons at a school where the medium of instruction is Kazakh, and their impact on students' school engagement.

**The aim of the study** is to determine the effectiveness of innovative methods in developing sociocultural competence and enhancing school engagement among students in Grades 5-6 while learning Russian as a second language.

To achieve this aim and test the hypothesis, the following **objectives** were set:

1) To systematise the scientific foundations for developing students' sociocultural competence in learning Russian as the theoretical basis of the study.

2) To conduct a content analysis of regulatory documents and teaching materials to determine the extent to which learning objectives and tasks aimed at developing sociocultural competence are represented.

3) To develop diagnostic tools for assessing the level of development of sociocultural competence, adapt tools for assessing school engagement, and, on this basis, determine the baseline levels of sociocultural competence development and school engagement among students in Grades 5-6.

4) To develop a system of tasks based on innovative methods for developing students' sociocultural competence, using multimodal means of presenting information and incorporating the method of semiotic transformation, role-play using multimedia and intelligent digital technologies, and work with the linguistic landscape.

5) To implement the developed system of tasks in the educational process and evaluate its effectiveness based on the results of the experimental work.

**The research drew on** the State Compulsory Educational Standard of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Model Curriculum for the subject "Russian Language and Literature" for Grades 5-9 in schools with a non-Russian language of instruction, textbooks for the subject "Russian Language and Literature" for Grades 5-6 in schools with Kazakh as the language of instruction, as well as materials from the experimental work conducted at Secondary School № 2 in Pavlodar.

**The research hypothesis** is that if students in Grades 5-6 are taught Russian using innovative methods (semiotic transformation, role-play using multimedia and intelligent digital technologies, and work with the linguistic landscape), this will contribute to an increase in the level of development of their sociocultural competence.

**Research methods:**

– theoretical methods (conceptual and terminological analysis, content analysis, systematisation and typologisation of scientific information);

– empirical methods (methodological experiment, observation, written survey, testing, and analysis of students' work);

– methods for organising and implementing the formative stage of the study (pedagogical modelling, development of a system of tasks, and work with visual and multimodal materials);

– methods of mathematical statistics (calculation of mean and median values and application of Pearson's $\chi^2$ test to compare the indicators of the control and experimental groups).

**Scientific novelty of the study:**

1. The study identified specific features of how the sociocultural component is represented in regulatory documents and teaching materials for Russian Language and Literature for Grades 5–6, namely the predominance of descriptive sociocultural content alongside the limited use of tasks aimed at interpreting cultural meanings and applying them in communicative practice.

2. Indicators and diagnostic tools were developed to determine the level of development of sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 learning Russian as a second language, and tools for assessing school engagement were adapted.

3. The baseline levels of sociocultural competence development and school engagement among students in Grades 5-6 were determined: sociocultural competence was characterised by the uneven development of its components and insufficient development of interpretative and communicative-pragmatic skills, while school engagement was characterised by the predominance of medium and low levels.

4. A system of tasks based on innovative methods for developing students' sociocultural competence using multimodal means of presenting information was developed and implemented, incorporating the method of semiotic transformation, the role-play method using multimedia and intelligent digital technologies, and the method of working with the linguistic landscape.

5. The effectiveness of using innovative methods was experimentally demonstrated, as evidenced by positive changes in the level of development of students' sociocultural competence and their school engagement.

**The theoretical significance of the study** lies in clarifying the structure and content of the concept of "sociocultural competence" in the context of schools where the medium of instruction is Kazakh, as well as in providing a theoretical justification for innovative methods in developing students' sociocultural competence within a multimodal educational environment. The principles for selecting teaching materials and organising learning activities aimed at developing sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 in Russian language lessons at a school where the medium of instruction is Kazakh were substantiated.

**Provisions submitted for defence:**

1. In regulatory documents and teaching materials for Russian Language and Literature for Grades 5-6, the sociocultural component is presented predominantly in a descriptive form, with limited use of tasks aimed at interpreting cultural meanings and applying them in communicative practice.

2. The assessment of the development of sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 is based on the diagnostic tools developed to determine the degree of development of its components, while the assessment of school engagement is based on adapted instruments.

3. The baseline level of development of sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 is characterised by the uneven development of its components and insufficient development of interpretative and communicative-pragmatic skills, while school engagement is characterised by the predominance of medium and low levels.

4. The use of the developed system of tasks based on innovative methods in developing students' sociocultural competence, which incorporates multimodal forms of presenting information, ensures a transition from reproductive activities to the interpretation of cultural meanings and their application in communicative practice.

5. The effectiveness of the developed system of tasks based on innovative methods for developing sociocultural competence is confirmed by positive changes in the level of development of students' sociocultural competence and their school engagement.

The study examined the theoretical and methodological foundations for developing sociocultural competence in learning Russian as a second language, determined its place within the structure of communicative competence, and clarified its component structure, comprising linguistic, pragmatic, ethical, aesthetic, and country studies components.

A content analysis of regulatory documents and teaching materials for the subject "Russian Language and Literature" for Grades 5-6 revealed that sociocultural

content was presented predominantly in a descriptive form, while tasks showed limited focus on the interpretation of cultural meanings and their use in communicative practice.

Diagnostic tools were developed and tested to determine the level of development of sociocultural competence, and tools for assessing school engagement were adapted, providing a comprehensive assessment of the indicators under study.

It was established that the baseline level of development of sociocultural competence was characterised by the uneven development of its components and insufficient development of interpretative and communicative-pragmatic skills, while school engagement was characterised by the predominance of medium and low levels.

A model for developing sociocultural competence among students in Grades 5-6 learning Russian as a second language was developed, taking into account the perceptual characteristics of contemporary students and the multimodal nature of the contemporary educational environment. The model integrates the semiotic transformation method, the role-play method using multimedia and intelligent digital technologies, and the method of working with the linguistic landscape; the mechanism for implementing these methods involves the perception and analysis of multimodal information, the interpretation of cultural meanings, and the modelling of communicative situations.

The experimental work was conducted at Secondary School № 2 in Pavlodar in Grades 5-6 with Kazakh as the language of instruction. A total of 149 students participated in the study and were divided into control and experimental groups.

The results of the experiment and their statistical analysis (mean and median values, Pearson's $\chi^2$ test) demonstrated positive changes in the level of development of sociocultural competence: the increase in indicators across its components ranged from 18 to 31 percentage points. The assessment of school engagement conducted using an adapted version of the MSES indicated an increase in the learning activity of students in the experimental group: the proportion of students with medium and high levels increased, while the proportion of students with low levels decreased.

**The practical significance of the study** lies in the development of diagnostic tools, innovative methods for developing sociocultural competence, and teaching and methodological materials for the subject "Russian Language and Literature" for Grades 5-6 in schools where the medium of instruction is Kazakh. The findings of the study may be used in the development of learning tasks and the organisation of multimodal forms of work in teaching Russian as a second language.

The dissertation research aligns with the Republic of Kazakhstan's priority areas for educational development in the context of multilingual education, with a focus on improving teaching content and methods. The findings of the study are consistent with the Republic of Kazakhstan's state programmes and strategic documents in the field of education, which are aimed at developing students' functional literacy, fostering communicative and sociocultural competences, and introducing modern teaching methods. The innovative methods developed for fostering sociocultural competence address the objectives of updating educational content associated with the transition to activity-based, interpretative, and communication-oriented forms of learning and are also consistent with contemporary trends in multimodal and digital education.

**The research findings were disseminated** through the publication of one article in a journal indexed in Scopus, five articles in publications recommended by the Science and Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one article in a publication included in the Russian Science Citation Index, and five publications in the proceedings of international scientific and practical conferences.

**Structure of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction, three sections, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The reference list contains 199 entries, 105 of which are in foreign languages. The dissertation contains 104 figures and 5 tables.