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Social and Political Text Teaching at the SPBU

Panel: Chinese language learning and teaching in European countries: past and present

Translation of social and political texts is a part of the program of Chinese language course taught at the Department of Chinese philology of the SPBU. It is introduced in the first semester of the third course, when students return from China after language study course.

The subject of this course is represented by newspaper texts, speeches of the head and top officials of China and political documents. The materials are usually taken from web versions of the leading newspapers “People’s Daily” (人民日报), “GuangmingDaily” (光明日报), as well as from news portals – such as, for example, the Xinhua News Agency’s website. Choice of a social and political text is important, but involves certain difficulties. The majority of modern textbooks do not meet the objectives of such course. Therefore, articles exactly from the Internet have to be used predominantly – first, because the most up-to-date information can be found there; second, it provides a wide range of social and political texts.

Topics of such texts are political systems and government structure, elections, visits, meetings, negotiations, agreements, the UN Charter, environment, globalization, terrorism, Russia and NATO, nuclear disarmament, dangerous diseases, natural disasters, economic relations, as well as any other topic related to the current political situation in the world.

Lessons are usually arranged as follows:

1. Reading the text aloud sentence by sentence sequentially. First, this facilitates remembering the way characters should be read; second, trains pronunciation.
2. Translation of read sentences along with analysis of all encountered patterns and constructions.
3. Singling out those patterns and constructions that have multiple occurrences in such texts.
4. Repetition of previously learnt constructions and patterns (dictations, interpreting from Russian to Chinese and from Chinese to Russian in oral and written form).

The main difficulties students face when translating social and political texts are:

1. Inaptitude for seeing constructions;
2. Inability to isolate interrelated elements;
3. Translation of official capacities and names of organizations;



4. Translation of the newest terms that cannot be found in dictionaries.

One of the course objectives is to solve these difficulties, to develop the ability to overcome them.

In the process of study, multimedia equipment (presentations, run of news items, etc.) is used.