

SAVING OF THE LANGUAGE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE AS THE SPHERE OF IRCICA'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

SALVANDO A LINGUAGEM COMO PATRIMÔNIO CULTURAL COMO A ESFERA DA ATIVIDADE INTERNACIONAL DE IRCICA

SALVAR LA LENGUA COMO PATRIMONIO CULTURAL COMO ÁMBITO DE ACTIVIDAD INTERNACIONAL DEL IRCICA

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ABSTRACT: Language not only performs as a method of functional communication but also displays the speaker's cultural identity and the cultural heritage produced by all former users of that language. The study's main aim is to analyze the activities of the Research Center for the study of Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the saving of the historical and cultural heritage of the Tatar people, predominantly language. The main objective of the study implies the presentation of the experience and practical steps of this organization aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of the Tatar people, including language. The methods utilized in this study involve systematization, analysis of specific situations and description of them, comparison as well as concluding. The study's results demonstrate the importance of such organizations for the scientific world and their role in society.

Keywords: IRCICA. Cultural heritage. Language. Communication.

RESUMO: *A língua não apenas atua como um método de comunicação funcional, mas também exibe a identidade cultural do falante e a herança cultural produzida por todos os ex-usuários dessa língua. O principal objetivo do estudo é analisar as atividades do Centro de Investigação para o Estudo da História, Arte e Cultura Islâmica (IRCICA) da Organização de Cooperação Islâmica (OIC) na salvaguarda do patrimônio histórico e cultural do povo tártaro, predominantemente língua. O objetivo principal do estudo implica a apresentação da experiência e dos passos práticos desta organização visando a preservação do patrimônio cultural do povo tártaro, incluindo o idioma. Os métodos utilizados neste estudo envolvem sistematização, análise de situações específicas e descrição das mesmas, comparação e conclusão. Os resultados do estudo demonstram a importância de tais organizações para o mundo científico e seu papel na sociedade.*

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Palavras-chave: IRCICA. Patrimônio cultural. Idioma. Comunicação.

RESUMEN: El lenguaje no solo funciona como un método de comunicación funcional, sino que también muestra la identidad cultural del hablante y la herencia cultural producida por todos los antiguos usuarios de ese idioma. El objetivo principal del estudio es analizar las actividades del Centro de Investigación para el estudio de la Historia, el Arte y la Cultura Islámicos (IRCICA) de la Organización de Cooperación Islámica (OIC) sobre la conservación del patrimonio histórico y cultural del pueblo tártaro, predominantemente idioma. El objetivo principal del estudio implica la presentación de la experiencia y los pasos prácticos de esta organización destinados a preservar el patrimonio cultural del pueblo tártaro, incluido el idioma. Los métodos utilizados en este estudio involucran la sistematización, análisis de situaciones específicas y descripción de las mismas, comparación y conclusión. Los resultados del estudio demuestran la importancia de estas organizaciones para el mundo científico y su papel en la sociedad.

Palabras clave: IRCICA. Patrimonio cultural. Lengua. Comunicación.

Introduction

The culture of Tatarstan, embodying the rich traditions and spiritual identity of the peoples living on the territory of the Republic, at the same time embodies universal values as part of the world cultural heritage. The Kazan Kremlin, the Bulgarian historical and architectural Museum, the Sviyazhsk historical, architectural and natural landscape complex are included in the UNESCO world cultural heritage list (Fakhrutdinov, 2018; Akiş, 2020).

Since 1980s, the Research Center for the study of Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), which unites

53 countries, has been active in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The headquarters of this center is located in Istanbul (Republic of Turkey). The purpose of IRCICA is to create cultural unity between the Islamic countries, namely, to unite scientists, historians, art historians of Islamic countries, study Islamic history, art, and civilization, and disseminate these studies' results around the world (Sugár, *et al.*, 2020). In addition, it should be emphasized that this center's activities are aimed at conducting research against misconceptions about the Islamic religion, misinterpretations of Islam

contained in Western literature (Stepanova, 2020; Chumarova, *et al.*, 2019).

Since the 1990s, IRCICA has been developing relations with Russian academic circles. Many joint projects are being implemented, seminars, scientific conferences are held. Despite the fact that the organization's main goal is to promote Islamic culture and civilization, IRCICA is particularly interested in saving the cultural heritage and monuments of the spiritual culture of the Tatar and other Muslim peoples of Eurasia (Sugár, *et al.*, 2020; Erkinovna, 2020).

Methods

Analyzing the IRCICA's work in this sphere allows presenting an objective academic picture of the interest of the Centre in further development of joint activities.

The methodological basis of the presented work includes systematization, analysis of specific situations and description of them, comparison and drawing conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Various types of activities were organized by IRCICA: international conferences and exhibitions, symposiums and joint publications, research projects, workshops and exhibitions on traditional art, etc.

Since its early years, IRCICA showed utmost importance to the protection and spread of Islamic Cultural Heritage in Volga-Ural, one of the essential Islamic geography regions. IRCICA started a collaboration with the regional governments in the Symposium series on Islamic Civilization in the Volga- Ural region held from 2001 to 2010. They were successfully concluded with extensive participation of historians, researchers, religious scholars, etc.

One of the most important projects of IRCICA in collaboration with the Institute of history of the Academy of Sciences of the

Republic of Tatarstan was the preparation and publication of the book "The Tatars. History and Civilization" in English, which was presented in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan with the participation of General Secretary of the OIC E. Ihsanoglu, former President of the Republic of Tatarstan M. S. Shaimiev, General Director of IRCICA H. Eren in 2011 (<https://cyberleninka.ru>).

In this study, which consists of three main parts: history, social structure and economic development and culture of Tatar society, special attention is paid to the spread of Islam among Tatars in different historical periods, the traditions of Tatar society, as well as the Tatar language, literature, culture, education, etc.

As part of this work, historical monuments, mosques, minarets, and ruins of the Bulgarian Khanate's Palace were studied. At the same time, it should be noted that the OIC and IRCICA have been supporting projects in this region for more than ten years (<https://www.tatar-inform.ru>).

As noted above, IRCICA, in addition to research in the field of history and archaeology, pays great attention to participation in conferences that also touch on important topics of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the preservation of cultural heritage, etc.

On 24 September 2019 by the Religious Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation, the Russia Muftis Council, and the Moscow Islamic Institute, the international conference "Islam in the Global World: Muslim Heritage and International Dialogue" was organized. It was named after Mufti Rizaetdin Fakhretdin (1859-1936), a prominent religious scholar who lived in the Tatarstan area and the author of books on history and language, social life and the position of Muslims, the status of Muslim women in Russia. He popularized educational ideas on the pages of his numerous books on Islamic theology, history, linguistics, pedagogy (more than 150), and in the "Shura" magazine. Along with other Tatar religious reformers, without abandoning the main provisions of classical Islam, he tried to free it from later layers and introduce religion to modern reality, corresponding to the realities

of the new time, thereby introducing a new, rationalizing beginning to the religious worldview of the Tatar people (Fakhrutdinov, 2018; Chumarova, *et al.*, 2019; Stepanova, 2020).

The conference brought together representatives of public authorities, religious and public figures, scholars and educators. It generated exchanges of views on how to channel the positive experiences of Muslim cultural heritage towards fostering mutual understanding, interfaith and intercultural dialogue (<https://www.ircica.org>).

IRCICA developing fruitful cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Tatarstan and Russia's academic institutions in academic and artistic fields, prepared an exhibition of Islamic calligraphy in 2018. General Director of IRCICA H. Eren discussed the prospects of organizing similar exhibitions in the future, both in Kazan and in Istanbul, at a meeting with the Republic of Tatarstan Irada Ayupova (<https://tatarstan.ru>).

There is a lot of research that focuses on the interaction of Islamic organizations and scientific institutions in order to spread knowledge about Islam and prevent misinterpretation and perception of this religion. For example, such as: "Science and Religion around the world" by J.H. Brooke, R.L. Numbers (Brooke & Numbers, 2011); "Christianity and Islam in the context of contemporary culture: perspectives of interfaith dialogue from Russia and the Middle East" by D.Spivak (Spivak, 2009; Gabidullina, *et al.*, 2020).

In its study "Religion and Islam in contemporary international relations" M. Berger discussed such issues as protecting Islam, dealing with Islam and Islamic discourse in International relations (Berger, 2010; Akiş, 2020).

The study "Development and spread of Islamic cultures" noted very remarkable aspect that "cultural exchange seems obvious to our modern sensibilities, but at the time, it was an entirely new way of thinking about the world" (<https://www.khanacademy.org>). Religion is a significant part of the culture. Considering the necessity of all kinds

of ways and approaches to save the nation's cultural heritage, such activities of Islamic organizations demonstrate their importance. Unfortunately, there are no studies on these organizations' activities, particularly about IRCICA, and such information that can be found mostly on the official websites.

Summary

Throughout its activities, IRCICA emphasizes the importance of traditional crafts, archaeological and historical sites, as well as, if necessary, their reconstruction and restoration for their saving for future descendants. Aware of the fact that much has been lost, especially among the ancient crafts, General Director of IRCICA H. Eren in his speeches emphasizes the need to recreate them from ancient records and preserve them both in written sources and in the training of masters.

At the same time, emphasizing the commonality of the Turkic-Muslim roots, the Republic of Turkey and its representatives pay special attention to the Tatar heritage, including it to the common for both nations.

Conclusions

The culture of Tatarstan has developed for centuries at the junction of two civilizations – Eastern and Western, which explains its diversity. Reflecting the rich traditions and spiritual identity of the peoples living on the territory of the Republic, it simultaneously developed in the paradigm of universal values and today is part of the world cultural heritage. Significant cultural events confirm the unique creative potential of the Republic.

The problem of saving the national cultural traditions of the Tatar people becomes particularly acute in modern conditions. Cultural heritage saving activities vary from country to country. However, it is clear the significance of the activities of all organizations and institutions in this sphere cannot be overestimated.

Conferences, symposiums or workshops on different themes that were held with participation of IRCICA show that studies of famous personalities such as: R. Fakhreddin, S. Madrijani, etc. are still in demand today for the development of Islamic theology, as well as for the implementation of inter-religious dialogue with representatives of other faiths.

It can be concluded that the discussion also leads to the importance of such organizations for scientific world and increase its role in society. Holding conferences on this topic, events related to IRCICA demonstrates its desire to save the cultural heritage of the entire Muslim world, as well as its part – the Tatar people.

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