

Without breaking from the tradition: the language café is now online

The language cafe is a good project that has existed for several years at the premises of the Center for the Russian Language as a Foreign of the SPbPU Higher School of International Educational Programs. Foreign students from all over the world get together, familiarize with each other, drink tea, and discuss the diversity of cultures and customs in different countries. The main feature of such meetings is that communication is going only in Russian. Classes in the language café are conducted by teachers of the Russian language of the HS IEP Daria SKUBCHENKO, Tatyana DOMINOVA and Alexandra KOLBASENKOVA.

This year, only two meetings in the language cafe took place in the usual format. With the outbreak of the pandemic, all public events were canceled, and the Russian language teachers faced the challenge of what to do next. Nobody wanted to leave foreign students without classes where they not only learn the language, but also make new friends. Therefore, it was decided to try switching the language café online.



The practice proved to be a success: now meetings in the language cafe are held

every week on the Zoom platform. Students from China, Turkey, India, Syria, Guinea, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Colombia, Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and other countries take part in them. They train their skills of spoken Russian, talk about the culture, traditions and life of people in Russia and other countries, play games and just spend time in an affectionate and friendly atmosphere.

“With the beginning of quarantine, it became very difficult to spend time with people. This is especially bad for preparatory students like us who want to learn the language here because we have fewer opportunities to practice the language. But thanks to the online conversation club, this problem was partially resolved. For me, this club means having fun during boring quarantine days, practicing and learning something new about life in Russia. Every week, in addition to what I learned in the lessons in the club,, I learn interesting new words that Russians often use in everyday life,” said Havva AVJU, a student from Turkey.

“We meet online, and I think that this form of organizing classes and meetings is newer and more interesting. I especially like when we discuss different topics in small groups, I think that you can learn a lot about life in different countries,” shared Lin PENHUI from China.

“During isolation, we were tired of sitting in the hostel and miss meetings at the university. With friends, we often talked about how difficult it is to live without communication. Thanks to the club, we got a chance to meet online again and chat. It’s absolutely certain that the club made us closer,” said Shamal HIRUSHAN, a student from Sri Lanka.

Prepared by SPbPU International Services

Дата публикации: 2020.05.29

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