



ES Mūžizglītības programmas

Comenius daudzpusējais projekts „The treasure chest and ICT or ICT in reading and writing”

Līguma nr. 2013-1-BG1-COM06-00006 2

Essays

Values of national costumes

A national costume has been around here for many hundreds of years. It shows us the identity of the wearer. As far as I know, there are quite a lot of national costume variants here, in Latvia. Some of them were used in everyday life, but most were not.

The whole idea of a national costume, in my opinion, is to express a dedication to a country, without having to say a thing. Also, when wearing it on occasions, to celebrate something related to national values. The main reason for having the costumes could be a celebration of an important feast.

However, the national costumes in Latvia are much more than just a celebration. They keep reminding of important pages of history – how we were living in the past, what were our traditions, what we were wearing, and so on. But the fact is – the national costumes, despite having two wars in Latvia and huge influence from other cultures, have not really changed. As they were looking a very long time ago, now they look still pretty much the same. In my opinion, this is very good, because it helps to save our culture overall and protects it from nasty other ones. It means that our costumes are independent and unique.

Patriotism is the reason why national costumes are not forgotten still, and I think that they will not be forgotten for a while at least. Besides, the costumes are still used in many popular feasts, like “Song festival”, which occurs nearly every year since the end of the nineteenth century. Even in some not quite official celebrations the national costume is often used. It all shows, that people do care about their country and their identity.

In conclusion, the national costume is a very important part of Latvia itself. It is all about patriotism, celebration and making history. I think that national costume should not be changed anymore, and that people should make it more popular.

Valdis Platonovs, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Folk costumes in Latvia have played and still play an important symbolic role in the preservation of national values and cultural heritage and in the creation of a feeling of unity of the people. Folk costume is formed and existed in certain geographic and economic circumstances and continually evolved within different traditions.

Today folk costumes has a different application than in earlier centuries and now it is worn only on festive occasions or during performances, but however it is not only festive attire. It includes centuries of accumulated and continually replenish the nations sense of beauty, ornamentation and color composition skills, craft skills. It accumulated over many centuries by making the clothes, and also wearing tradition.

I am proud that the great amount of interest that Latvians Express in national costumes has helped to preserve research and popularise it. It proofs that Latvians respect ancestral traditions and are proud of their nation's history. Folk costume is something very special about our Latvian nation.

Each wearer it imposes certain responsibilities and a sense of responsibility not only towards the clothes, but also against our nation. Costume shows not only ethnic features, but the social and marital status, age and wealth of the individual wearer and traditions as well. Maybe in everyday life we forget about the folk costume, but this does not mean that it is not a part of our history, because of the attitude toward the nature of cultural heritage, the same us show our personality and our inner world.

It is our duty to maintain and take care of folk costumes because it is one of our nation's identity, which is the way our national self-confidence and distinguishes us from other Nations. It is important to highlight the inherent and important for us things because it makes us truly valuable in this vast and varied world. I think that the traditional costumes turn out to have gained more importance in the current days. They are no more just an identity; they have become a bridge, joining people with the uniqueness of their heritage.

Laura Viļuma, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

There are the hundreds of different national costumes in Latvia; every region has its own. The Latvian national costume is basically the traditional festive outfit of peasants, craftsmen, fishermen, and other ordinary folk as worn in the 19th century, approximately up to the 1870s.

The whole idea of national costume, in my opinion, is that folk dress in Latvia has played and still plays an important symbolic role in the preservation of national values and cultural heritage and in the creation of a feeling of unity of the people.

There were, of course, also work clothes, just like today, the outfit matched the season and weather. The national costume, however, is not just a certain type of festive garb: it is an expression of a nation's sense of beauty, ability to form an ornament and put together colors, as well as knowledge of the craft. It embodies centuries-old traditions of making, adorning, and wearing the costume. As they look now they were looking the same a very long time ago. And I think that it is very good because it helps to save our costumes, and nowhere else in the world, can be the same folk dress costume like in Latvia.

To this day, the traditional costume is an essential element of the song festival. The costumes are still used in many popular feasts, like Song festival. Even in some not quite official celebrations the national costume is often used. I think it's very good because people are showing how they love their country and proud of it.

In conclusion I can say that, the national costumes are a very important thing for Latvia and those people. It is said about our history and celebrations. In future people should make the national costumes more popular in the whole world than they are now.

Valērija Burova, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

National costume also known as folk costume expresses an identity through costume which is associated with a geographic area or a period of time in history. In some countries national costume also indicate social, marital or religious status. Almost all costumes are worn in two forms: one as everyday costume and one as formal wear. In Western areas national costumes are still worn at special events and wedding ceremonies. Even nowadays there are some areas where people have to wear traditional clothing every day, for example Bhutan or Saudi Arabia, where women are still required to wear their traditional clothing in public.

Folk costumes in Latvia are still an important symbol of national values and cultural heritage. Latvian national costumes as we know them now occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, when the independent Latvian nation was founded for the first time. Then first interest of national costumes was born. It was restored after the renewal of Latvian independence in 1991. Today folk costumes are worn only at special events or during performances. There are two popular historic periods of Latvian dress: costume of the 7th-13th century as “ancient dress” and clothing worn in the 19th century as “ethnographic dress”, when costumes were worn and made differently in each region of Latvia. Until the beginning of the 19th century most Latvians’ clothes were natural grey, while for decoration they kept traditional color scheme of blue, red, yellow, and green.

During the 19th century, people still wore linen tunic-shaped shirts. Work shirts looked very similar to the ancient ones. For festive occasions there were variations of collars, cuts, and embroidery. Shirts were pinned with brooches and sometimes there was a row of brooches down the front of the shirt. Above the shirt, Latvian women wore long skirts, coats of various length and woolen kerchief. The only jewelry worn by Latvian women were silver brooches on the front of collar and shirt. Young girls wore crowns that were covered in cloth and embroidered beads and rings. Men wore homespun coats, mostly of a natural grey color, that were decorated with red, green elements on sleeves. Later were made dark blue, brown or natural black clothes. Men wore vests for special occasions.

There are five regions in Latvia with their own traditions. Some of them have their own dialect and festivals. These regions are Kurzeme, Zemgale, Latgale and Vidzeme. Earlier people in Kurzeme and Vidzeme lived based on Liv traditions, but now each of them has something specific. Regionalism was the most seen in women’s dress: in their cuts and the color-schemes, embroidery techniques and compositions, and the decoration of shawls, mittens and socks. Everyday clothing, footwear and men’s head coverings were almost similar all over Latvia. There were few regional differences in men’s clothing, but they are not as noticeable as in women’s national costumes. Even in nowadays national costume of Lielvārde is the most popular and the most worn in special events.

The national costume of Latvian nation or rather a stylized version of it became a symbol of Latvian culture in the 1880s. To this day, the traditional costume is an essential element of our country, culture and people clothing through the time.

Ieva Zeltiņa, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Clothes are an important part of life. It's impossible to imagine how people can live without clothes. There are various styles of clothes nowadays, so people can choose what to wear on different occasions.

Firstly, folk costumes are usually associated with a period of time in history or a geographic area, but can also indicate marital, social and religious status. They can represent an entire nation or a small regional area. Traditional costumes are as different as the people who wear them. Folk dress has played and still plays an important symbolic role in the preservation of national values and cultural heritage and in the creation of a feeling of unity of the people. National costumes are not worn in daily life but at folk festivals, weddings, harvest festivals, and other special occasions. Discovering and learning about different customs and clothing is essential to any trip.

Secondly, tourism is popular hobby, because by traveling people get new information about the place where they travel, people can learn about their culture, national meals, national costumes, traditions and other things. In areas where contemporary Western fashions have become usual, traditional garments are often worn at special events or celebrations, particularly those connected with heritage, cultural traditions, or pride.

Thirdly, Latvia is very small compared with many other countries in the world, yet it is a surprisingly varied land in many different ways: the diversity of landscape in different parts of the country; a long history that is rich in great events, a varied cultural heritage; long-lived customs and traditions. Latvian national costume is used since ancient times to the present day. It has noticeable features depending on the region: festive and casual. A distinctive feature of the Latvian national costume is a large number of clothing.

Traditional clothing and costumes are garments worn to indicate national, cultural or religious identity. They reflect a period of time and one's place in society. Therefore I think national costumes are very important.

Andrejs Ančs, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

All the people have split into different nations, with their own country and culture. Countries, by the way are one of the easiest ways to describe spread of particular cultures and folk practicing them. Each culture has its own mental values such as religion, mentality and character. As well as material values such as architecture, land and of course costumes. Though those are not only the values of both types. However speaking of national costumes, they have more of a cultural and historical value, which has no practical value and use nowadays. Most preferably they have no value at all, or in other words, they have as much value as people give them. They are nowadays valued as a part of amusement and are only worn on several occasions. There is no other use for them nowadays as people globally are dressed all the same. Anyway people might behave in a negative way with you if you will wear a dress your ancestors wore. You are most likely to be called at least crazy.

Nevertheless there are still some cultures that have saved a value of their national costumes for centuries up until now. One of them is no doubt a Japan and of course for such an obsessed with Japan person like me, there is no way to neglect it. Many people still are wearing kimono nowadays in Japan. It is nothing unusual to see people wearing it on a daily basis and a whole lot less unusual to notice people wearing them on an occasion of Matsuri which is a Japanese word for event. Furthermore kimonos are pretty expensive compared even to our so called ceremonial dresses we spend a lot of money on. Only few are able to wear them every day, but even fewer are using that opportunity. Price of kimono also does range from couple of hundreds of dollars up to thousands of dollars. It depends on quality, texture and technique used in knitting a kimono. Handmade kimonos of course are going to be expensive, unlike the ones made on knitting machines. Not only rich ones are the ones that are able to wear kimono on a daily basis, there are many families living in the countryside who practice such thing. I should say that it really depends on a family and on all the values of it and the great part about it is that unlike Europe, nobody is going to judge you because of that.

As I mentioned before, things are as valuable as we value them, there is no essence, no entity in anything we could agree on valuing completely the same. Probably there will never be such a thing. For some gazing into a tiny grain of sand might emulate a whole universe of ideas in their minds, while on the other hand, for some, gazing into a universe might emulate as much as a tiny grain of ideas in head. As for me, there is no practical and vital value in something as ridiculous as piece of cloth, but I won't deny that I see an aesthetic value in some, which for me is important value as well as completely different sense of beauty from the one others recall.

Andris Skromulis, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

In our country we use national costumes. It is very useful for recognition of regions of Latvia. Some people just don't understand importance of national clothing, they think that it's useless or don't have important role in their lives.

But they are badly wrong, because national costumes are our history that is left as bequest from our ancestries. National clothing keeps a lot of mysteries' from past, how our fathers lived and tried to save our country. Our homeland hundred years ago was in tenure of Crusaders, than we started to understand, that we are nationality, we can develop and we can grow our spirits. Through our pain and mortification we get stronger, because what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. We walked wearing national costumes, we was proud of it, we wasn't ashamed.

When we wear national costume, we remember all history, we realize all that victims that sacrificed themselves just for us, just for possibility for us so we can walk free, and we walk through our suffering and know that we are not alone, we have our fathers...

Nowadays we use national costume for celebrating declaration of independence on 18-th of November, also the most of celebrations, public holydays and festivals. Historical costumes are very rare and expensive.

National costume for girls contains woolen shawl, skirt, crown, corsage and blouse. At each region in Latvia are different look of national costume. So if you know every accent of clothing you can know membership from each region.

So I think that it is very important to know values and application of national costume. Sometimes I hear people talking about national costumes as useless value and I feel anger, I don't understand how they can call themselves Latvian people. I feel ashamed of our society.

Anna- Marija Prikule, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Latvian national costumes are very important and nationally original Latvian cultural heritage component. National costumes are formed and existed in certain geographical and economic conditions and continually evolved within the different traditions. Latvian folk costumes are divided into archaeological and traditional folk costumes.

An archaeological costumes and jewellers considered findings which is obtained in archaeological excavations of burial sites present Latvian territory and have been repaired. Nowadays Latvian material culture workers of traditional Latvian national costumes called peasant clothing, with has been formed and evolved over many centuries and existed until the 19th century, when it gradually replaced the urban fashion clothing.

In my opinion, costumes are among the most valuable cultural heritages, because they show exactly what life has been for our ancestors and how they lived. Our generation has maintained the inheritance at and leaves their children so they know what have been their ancestors. National costumes it is our identity, distinguishing sign of belonging to our people and traditions. In each Latvian region folk costumes are very different with colours, ornaments and other things.

When travelling, performing abroad in our traditional costumes, we should be proud of our people, and traditions. These suits should be worn with pride by the posture of the nobility. It is shown how the other does not and will not.

Our costumes have gone through the centuries and have been able to persist and bring us to the time of attention. We need to be proud of them and save them.

Dagnija Volodjko, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

I guess almost all countries have their own national costumes, which are in different shapes and colours. However they have more or less the same purposes. These costumes are our national treasures, our culture which we shouldn't forget; moreover we should remind our descendants the traditions that were kept 100 years ago. It was their lifestyle but now it's only a part we can see in museums.

These costumes were developed by our ancestors in order to represent themselves and to be recognized with a single look at their dresses. Colours and pattern were supposed to impress other nation, that's why these costumes have many ornaments and bright colours. It was their lifestyle but now it's only a part of our culture

Secondly, the fact that a large group of people wear the same clothing describes their patriotism faithfulness and brings up the idea that nowadays we lost it – everyone wears jeans, so it's hard to tell if the person is from other country at first look. So, basically, it was the thing what brought people together.

For me national costume is as important as national flag, it represents my country and makes me feel proud of where I am from. I'm glad that I and others still can see people performing in these costumes on big events in my country.

Kristaps Kalvāns, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Latvian folk costumes - bright and original phenomenon in the history of its people. It has developed and perfected over the centuries. History of Latvian clothing associated with the traditions of ancient balltain tribes, so I came to the conclusion that it is closely linked with the development of weaving and various crafts. Thus, the Latvia peasant costume in Ancient Latvia consisted of embroidered shirts and skirts, which consisted of two non cross-linked or ornamented cloth plaid fabrics. On his head was a crown of girls and a married woman piece of expensive fabrics, which pounced flap of tissue in the form of towels. At our feet great-grandparents wore wicker or leather sandals.

By menswear shirts belonged to his knees. They wore trousers, knitted belts: belt, which is attached flint, comb. On his head was a hat, shoes were sandals or leather sandals. In cooler seasons men wore hoods. There was a bit of citizens other clothing. Woman wearing a long shirt and uncross linked involucres. On his head girls peasant, was a crown and women – funny hood. Urban residents had a lot of jewellery: pendants, earrings, necklaces, bracelets. Clothing was made of rich people, witch rich fabrics. Women were capes type raincoats, coloured boots and head twine rushnikopodobnaya clothing under which wore hats decorated with jewels, embroidery. Headdress women, like many other elements of the dress, had ritual significance.

Over time the costume changes. In XIIX- XIX century clothing has become a kind note, which was determined for the man belongs to the poor or rich. In families provided for suits used precious fabrics. Wealthy merchants wore shirts of fine line. These shirts were embroidered with gold or silver. At the beginning of XX century in folk dress reproduced certain elements of European culture. Due to the diffusion of professional fashion in modern clothes most of the world felt certain standards and benchmarks. However, we have and amateur fashion, whose representatives stimulate the search for so-called individualized costumes.

Patriks Gaidis, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Nations contains whole world. They're different from each other and exactly that makes every single nation unique. Features are countless. Traditional music, languages, manners, dressing - all those differences contains varied culture signs.

One of the biggest differences is of course dressing style. Nowadays it may be difficult to notice nationality, according to dressing style but in deep history, the national costumes had main role for identifying from which nation they are. Latvians in past had quite beautiful national costumes. Males were wearing white, large shirts with long brassards. They had usually gray cloth trousers and wool socks with leather shoes. On the other hand, females had too white cotton shirts, long, red, green, yellow colored dresses and a wool headgear. Every region had some unimportant differences between them like different colors or trousers were made from diverse materials, but the basics were same. Of course, to see someone walking on streets with that type of clothing is nearly impossible, people are still using them in national events of country and almost always only on dancers.

Concerts, city birthdays, "Ligo and Jani" - Latvian national event or just some music fests - all those events are worth celebrating and those are only few of hundred festivals where we're able to use them.

In my opinion, remembering old traditions with wearing traditional costumes are quite positive. It allows you to find out more about your nation history, how do they lived and how it looked like.

Māris Štekeļs, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of the national costumes

National costume is a part of the culture which tells about life style, history, place of living and fate of the nation. It is also an identification card – original, unique and unrepeatabe.

With a help of the folk costume or regional costume we can define the geographic area of the country, traditional activities or religious status. We are Baltic people, our country lies on the coast of the Baltic Sea which is known as an amber sea. Because of that one of the most popular traditional jewellery are amber beads and ouches.

There are usually two forms of national costumes; one of them is for everyday wearing and the second for special occasions. In my opinion the most significant, gorgeous and solemn event for all Latvian people is a Latvian Song and Dance Festival. There each collective, who is representing one of four regions, wears their own, characteristic folk costume. Firstly it shows belonging to certain region through differences in colours, individual elements like signs. For example the most widespread symbols are: moon, sea, sun, star, Mara's sign, God's sign, Jumis. Secondly a period of time in region's history, which indicates also an influence from another countries and thirdly judging by the material of the costumes we can learn something about people's life style and activity. For example, these folk costumes which are made in Latgale are created mostly of linen. I think that one of the most dominant spheres of activity in Latvia is agriculture. Small details of national costume like headwear also can tell the information about their owner, for example married woman in Vidzeme wears tower – cap.

Through the ornaments of national costumes we can get to know the soul of the country, people's dreams, characters, aims, hope and expectation. Very popular is nature's ornament which shows that nature plays a big role in Latvian people life.

We have to always remember and realize that national costume is one of symbols of the country. It is our pride. What is more it is a keeper of our history, memories and national self-confidence.

Katrīna Paškeviča, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium

Values of national costumes

Sometimes people only think and care about the future. Newest fashions and things like that. But I find it very important to remember about all the clothing we have had in history.

Latvia is a multicultural country and it has always been like that. Even when Latvia didn't exist Latvian people still lived here in Latgale, Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale. They all are very close to each other, but the differences in clothing and lifestyle were huge. Almost every region had a different costume. In my opinion the diversity of the clothing was amazing and it really should be a cultural artefact. All the different textures and patterns you can see in concerts is a happy sight.

I think national costume is a national treasure and I really hope to see them in concerts for many, many more years.

Toms Kļaviņš, Form 11, Rezekne Polish State Gymnasium