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**DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN TEACHING NATIVE
LANGUAGES**

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Abstract

The article covers general approaches to the use of digital educational resources in teaching native languages in Russia and abroad. The article compares the role and place of advanced information technologies in teaching native languages, and reveals the meaning that researchers attach to this concept. In addition, the article gives examples of how specific peculiarities of those resources can be used in teaching. In particular, we consider practice-oriented e-courses relevant for the study and support of native languages: the national corpus of the Russian language, the capabilities of the portal "Gramota.ru", specially designed author's courses. The authors analyze existing digital resources and use their findings to make conclusions about the means of their use in language education in general and peculiarities of their use in teaching native languages in particular. The importance of the development of digital resources as a pedagogical tool, the need to master various teaching strategies and the ability to create a variety of learning environments; as well as the existing skills of modeling learning situations for practice, the content and purpose of which are realized by students and which is carried out under the control of not only teachers but also students. The authors emphasize the necessity of an integrated approach to the studies in fostering audiovisual literacy and skills of independent and critical thinking in association with specialists in other fields of pedagogic sciences.

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1. Introduction

In pedagogic studies of today, use of digital resources that have a powerful educational potential evokes interest of learners, incentivizes schoolchildren and enlarges the area of their research interests, expands the degree of children's involvement in academic activities, and promotes positive attitude to studies and school. At the same time, it is important to remember that there is no direct link between use of digital resources and learning results. As in the case of use of any other teaching aids, use of digital resources becomes effective if a teacher has mastered them as a pedagogic tool, has mastered varied teaching strategies and developed the skill of creating a diversified learning environment, skills of simulating educational situations for practical activities, the content and goal of which have been grasped by learners and which are performed under the control of not only the teacher but students themselves. Another significant factor is well-established collaboration in class, including work in pairs and in groups, interactive learning.

2. Problem Statement

Readily-available and daily updated digitalized bases of the cultural heritage accumulated by humanity are a significant information resource of the State and society, which, along with free access to information, opens up vast prospects for the development of science and education. Speaking about peculiarities of information resources, researchers underline a number of distinct features of "digitalized culture," such as freedom, transparency, comparability, dynamism, impartiality and analyzability (Rastrigin, 2004). Researchers believe that it is not virtual reality that should be mentioned but real virtuality, or a communication system, "in which reality itself (i. e. material/symbolic existences of people) is fully captured by and is fully immersed into virtual images, in an imagined world, a world in which external projections are not only displayed on a screen via which experience is translated, but themselves become experience" (Kastel's, 2000, p.246).

Relevance of this study is supported by the statement that "sustainable development of modern Russia and of the world requires an optimal axiological consensus linked to a constructive dialog based on global universal values, with conservation and development of national cultures and historically emerged identities" (Smakotina, Gasparishvili, & Aleshkovskij, 2018, p.7). Those universal values include security, freedom, justice, responsibility, progress, education, love for mankind, equality, patriotism. Education is defined by many scholars as a "means of development and evolution of human being as individual and citizen; the most important factor of social progress; source of development of individual and society." Most scholars who list patriotism among global universal values explain their reasoning this way: "Love for one's country, one's people is the most important factor of understanding of and respect for other countries and peoples" (Smakotina, Gasparishvili, & Aleshkovskij, 2018, p. 9). It is essential to understand how a changed information space and digital culture affect education and provide backing in the conservation and support of native languages in the educational process.

Those issues are raised and widely discussed not only in Russia (CHitateľ'skaya gramotnost' shkol'nika (5 – 9 klassy), 2018; Aleksandrova, Dobrotina, Gosteva, Uskova, & Vasilevyh, 2018; Aleksandrova, Vasilevykh, Gosteva, Dobrotina, & Uskova, 2018), but also abroad, where scholars note,

first and foremost, that “use of digital educational resources is a two-way process, in which both schoolchildren and educators must be interested” (Jurado & Pettersson, 2017, p.16). One important area of studies abroad is the study of the impact that use of digital educational resources has on the quality of learning description of the experience of creating digital classes (Ribeiro & Gil, 2016), in which teaching is primarily based on electronic devices using digital educational resources. Studies mention a positive effect of the use of those resources when a correct approach to the organization of that process by teachers is adopted (Medina & Hernandez, 2013) The digital educational environment per se has been regarded for a long time not only as a platform for developing subject-related competencies and skills but also as a means of fostering functional literacy (Roxin, Tajariol, & Rusitoru, 2016) which ensures successful mastering of meta-subject competencies and skills of working in an information-educational environment.

The findings of a study conducted by Niemiec, Sikorski, and Walberg (1996) helped those scholars arrived at the conclusion that learners can boast higher achievements when the learning process itself, which includes regulation of the work pace, time distribution, determination of the succession of absorption of the learning material and fulfillment of tasks, selection of exercises, is monitored by the student rather than by the teacher. Using digital resources, learners also achieve better results when they perform self-control themselves than when control is present as a program function. One example of effective self-control is use of text processors. Practice shows that, using this type of software, learners, including those who are not proficient in writing, create longer and more meaningful texts, and the quality of their writings improves significantly, because schoolchildren proof-read texts typed on computers more carefully and, therefore, make fewer mistakes (Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003).

3. Research Questions

On the one hand, digital resources today are an effective means of information support of education and self-education. On the other, availability of digitalized libraries or other digital resources does not boost the number of readers and does not help develop literacy of any kind. It is not enough just to provide access to information — for instance, open up all museums online using digital means or play a presentation (a video) on a native language (or place). Issues of effectiveness of computer technologies in education are raised in works written by Clark (1983) and M. Apple. As far back as in the 20th century, Clark (1983) introduced the term “media novelty effect,” and he believed that objective evaluation of effectiveness of computer technologies is a challenge, because use of new and advanced (at the time) means of information representation can only seem effective in a number of works, this effect of subjective overestimation of effectiveness of a tool by virtue of its novelty was called “Clark’s effect” (Pippert & Moore, 1999). We believe that this effect should be taken into account when studying expediency of using digital technologies in education.

Thus, core issues of this study emerge as follows: 1) whether use of digital educational resources in teaching native languages improves the quality of learning; 2) what digital educational resources it is expedient to use in teaching native languages; 3) what methods and techniques used by the teacher will be the most effectual in middle school.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to define approaches to the use of digital educational resources in teaching the Russian native language in middle school.

5. Research Methods

The main methods of this study were analysis of Russian electronic educational resources used in teaching native languages in today's school; analysis of international academic and methodological literature that describes the impact of the use of digital educational resources on the quality of native language teaching; collation of the findings of pedagogic and methodological academic studies; generalization of the author's experience in writing textbooks and methodological guides for teachers; polls among learners; reflections on the author's own academic and pedagogic activities.

6. Findings

In the course of the study conducted by employees of the General Philological Education Laboratory, Institute for Strategy of Education Development, Russian Academy of Education, from 2017 to 2019, the following findings were obtained.

Continuous and dynamic development of digital technologies opens up new opportunities for developers of theoretical and practice-oriented electronic courses, including language-teaching courses. In this study, we have analyzed and reviewed existing digital educational resources, which are relevant for the study and promotion of native languages. They include the educational online complex "Russian phraseology marked by national and cultural specificities, as a component of an electronic educational space for remote Russian language learners," which includes the following modules: 1) a course of video lectures, 2) creative assignments that foster love for the Russian language as the core of vast Russian culture and promote respect for the values of Russian society; 3) ordinary and check-up tests that assess the level of knowledge of phraseology reflecting national specificities of the Russian ethnic group. This educational resource can be used to improve the level of training and advanced training of Russian language and literature teachers. It can also be used as a means of developing communicative competencies of high-school schoolchildren and college students and, simultaneously, as a means of bringing up the younger generation in the spirit of love for the official language of Russia and its culture, in the spirit of patriotism and respect for traditional values of the people — the native speaker of the Russian language. Accessible for foreign users via the educational portal, the complex will drive interest in the Russian language and Russian culture; it will become a factor of dissipating distrust between the Russian Federation and foreign countries, and, thus, will also help reinforce positions of the Russian language in near and far abroad (Anohina & Pozdnyakova, 2018).

Digital resources that can imitate real communications are also important — for instance, it is essential to include "communication" with dialog assistants, such as Alice (Yandex), Alexa (Amazon) or Siri (Apple), in the curriculum.

The portal "Education in Russian" is the biggest in terms of the scope of represented courses. Its motto is "Learn to read, write, speak and think in Pushkin's language" (<https://pushkininstitute.ru>). The

principle of interaction is implemented in the course via the learner's interaction with the system via several options: correct/incorrect result, general or specific recommendations, explication of errors, suggestion to redo an exercise. The lessons included in the course imitate the learner's direct interaction with the teacher, and for that purpose, a base of potential reactions to correct and incorrect replies was built — in the form of a teacher's remarks (for instance: "It's perfectly correct!" / "Please try again!" / "Please listen carefully once again, pay attention to..." / "You know the subject well... But if you want to have more training, stay with us!").

There is a number of digital educational resources the effectiveness of which has been proven in teaching the Russian language and which open up new opportunities in teaching native languages, because they can help develop all kinds of speech activities of schoolchildren. For instance, those are the reference and information portal gramota.ru, which is positioned by its authors as "The Russian language for everyone"; *TextoLogia*, an e-journal on the Russian language and literature; gramma.ru, a website on the culture of written speech.

Let us review new options of using the reference and information portal gramota.ru in practical teaching of native languages. The portal offers both conventional resources widely used in today's system of education (for instance, a set of linguistic vocabularies) and unconventional ones that are rarely used in school today but that provide the teacher with new opportunities for organizing the learning process, and the schoolchildren for independent studies. Let us showcase varied capabilities of the portal for the improvement of all types of speech activities of schoolchildren.

For instance, in order to develop the skill of literate writing, this reference and information portal has a built-in spell-checker, a FAQ bank, and in especially difficult case, users can send a query to the Information Desk, which is the only e-resource maintained by the V.V. Vinogradov Russian Language Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences. To ask a linguist, one can use the online query form and wait for the correct answer supported by arguments to be posted.

No doubt, in the practice of teaching native languages, special emphasis is made on listening comprehension, where learners listen to text recordings in order to train their ability to comprehend oral speech. In doing so, it is important not only to enunciate the text correctly from the orthoepic perspective, but to select the topics carefully and to reflect in the texts the national worldview that would foster the learners' love for the native language and respect for the culture and history of their nation. The audio vocabulary "Oral Russian" uploaded on the gramota.ru portal provides a unique opportunity for learning Russian phraseology, catchphrases, proverbs and sayings, and in an entertaining manner, too, and also provides plenty of curious information on Russian culture, classic and contemporary literature, etymology of words and expressions. Alongside the audio vocabulary "Oral Russian," the portal has another vocabulary, "Say it correctly," in which speakers, in the form of a dialog, discuss difficulties of the Russian accents, pronunciation, lexical and grammatical difficulties, reveal the secrets of origin of words and catchphrases, help listeners speak correctly and beautifully. Topics of many podcasts of the "Accent vocabulary" have been borrowed from the questions submitted to the Information Desk of the portal. Thus, listening to the audio files, one can develop and improve their pronunciation skills and learn to use words correctly in line with their proper lexical meanings.

For the development of reading skills in teaching native languages, the reference and information portal gramota.ru offers a copious library of works of classical Russian literature, digitalized Russian language textbooks, popular science articles on the Russian language, etc.

Schoolchildren can improve their writing skills by networking on the forum, where both academic issues (for instance, unknown translations of classical literature works into Russian, painting and music in poetry, etc.) and pseudo-linguistic topics are discussed, or, sometimes, even funny subjects (for instance, “Cats in literature,” “The day of (little) cheese” or “Pies and powders” (on types of verses today)). Those themes can involve schoolchildren into a sort of a linguistic game that fosters care for the word, its meaning, structure, functioning in the speech.

In addition, the reference and information portal gramota.ru helps organize work on developing spelling and punctuation skills. For that purpose, the portal opened up a special section, “Online coach,” in which interactive dictations are uploaded, in the form of texts from classic or contemporary literature, where certain letters are omitted and spaces are left to insert punctuation marks. Those spaces can be filled in class or at home. Schoolchildren can review and correct their mistakes themselves, because after the completion of the work the system gives a correct version and every error is commented on, and a relevant rule is cited, according to which a certain letter was to have been used.

Given new opportunities for language teaching with the use of electronic educational resources, schoolchildren of Grades 5 to 9 and their teachers have been polled and asked whether motivation for language learning and the quality of studies improve. The following replies were given: 64% of the schoolchildren said it was more interesting and exciting to study their native language using digital educational resources, and that more tasks could be completed within a given timeframe; 49% of teachers said that digital electronic resources made lessons more diversified, reinforced visual support of the course, were fit for the development of skills and competencies (CHitatel'skaya gramotnost' shkol'nika (5 – 9 klassy), 2018).

7. Conclusion

When the teacher uses digital educational resources, schoolchildren are given an opportunity of experiencing and utilizing various strategies of absorbing necessary information and comprehending various concepts through their practical and deliberate use. The biggest training effect can be derived from methods that provide for the use of digital sources not as the main but as an accessory educational resource, which is organically incorporated in the teacher's education system. Given that, developers of electronic textbooks are willing to make their contents and structure easily adaptable to the use in native language teaching in various environments, to offer useful and entertaining assignments that help maintain continuous interest in the utilization of the opportunities provided by the native language.

Those assignments keep up the interest, for instance, in memorizing or repeating multiple times certain action protocols for the purpose of acquiring relevant skills, which generally antagonizes schoolchildren in a conventional learning environment. By completing game-styled assignments using digital resources, students not only master necessary action protocols but also get motivated for fulfilling more challenging tasks and, using the skills they acquired at previous levels, they complete those tasks successfully. If conventional teaching aids had been used, the same outcome would have required more

time and effort, and, sometimes, multiple repeats and tedious memorization in order to grasp the material completely.

At the same time, some limitations inherent in the use of digital resources should be taken into account. Learning programs, electronic textbooks and teaching aids are largely controlled by the computer system, as they are close-end programs, and that factor creates certain emotional vacuum and, simultaneously, locks educational activity on the learner, without having any external outlet. To maintain emotional balance, keep up vivid communication and boost educational activity when using digital resources, it is advisable to involve learners into collaboration, organizing work in pairs and in small groups, which would allow schoolchildren to get acquainted with different perspectives and, taking them into account, to analyze their thinking process, find explanations for contradictions, use various methods of knowledge selection and systematization, make joint decisions on the problems that might arise in the course of absorption of the learning material, enlarge the scope of feedback sources. When schoolchildren work with research programs, it is important to encourage collaboration between learners, to pay serious attention to discussion, making sure that each student has an opportunity to express their thoughts and substantiate their assumptions, to propose solutions.

Thus, skilfully using digital educational resources, the teacher boosts motivation of schoolchildren, manages their attention, provides them with new learning material and proposes learning strategies, effectively controls practical work, organizes their collaboration and actively involves children in the learning process, making sure of instant feedback.

As a result of the study, we arrived at the conclusion that digital educational resources help run an up-to-date native language course, boost motivation, and help students build a worldview that reflects the reality and includes elements of national culture.

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