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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AS A MEANS OF
MOTIVATING READING ACTIVITY OF MODERN LEARNERS**

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Abstract

The article analyzes the socio-cultural situation in the sphere of school reading. It has been determined that reading practices, especially the ones involving mobile devices, are becoming common practice in today's world. That is why it is necessary to use ICTs to engage students in reading to stimulate their reading activity. The motivational role of ICTs in stimulating students' reading activity was analyzed based on direct observations and the study of the materials of state documents and theoretical-educational works. The systematization of the obtained results allowed the authors to identify the problems in the use of ICTs as a means of motivating the reading activity of learners, as well as identify the ways of solving these problems. The article provides the analysis of a number of documents which reflect the state policy in the field of supporting children and youth reading. The difficulties teachers have to face, which arise from the use of ICTs, are also studied in the article. Particular attention is paid to finding ways of engaging pupils in reading with the help of information and multimedia technologies. The article observes the efficiency of using modern electronic information reference systems, digital libraries, thematic channels, personal book blogs, multimedia design technology, etc. at literature lessons. It is concluded that these and other types of ICTs are a means of motivating the reading activity of teenagers, they contribute to an activity- and practice-based methods of teaching, as well as to the development of students' independence and their personal growth.

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1. Introduction

The development of information technologies has brought about the changes in the school educational environment. “21st Century content includes the basic core subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic but also emphasizes global awareness, financial/economic literacy, and health issues. The skills fall into three categories: learning and innovations skills; digital literacy skills; and life and career skills” (Trilling & Fadel, 2012, p.137). That is why modern teaching and learning process should be organized in such a way as to give learners an opportunity to fulfil their creative potential, develop critical thinking and communication skills.

These days it is practically impossible to find teenagers who stay out of the infosphere, so it is advisable to use ICTs in the process of teaching literature and developing learners as readers. The necessity to use computer technology is enshrined in the following regulatory documents: Federal State Educational Standard for the Basic General Education, “School philological education concept: the Russian language and literature” and “The program concept for supporting children and youth reading in the Russian Federation” (The Government of Russia, 2017; Kontseptsiya shkolnogo filologicheskogo obrazovaniya: russkij yazyk i literatura, 2015; The Ministry of Education and Science, 2010). The development of children and youth reading is a top priority for the government in cultural and educational policies.

Pointing out that reading practices, especially those involving the screen of mobile devices, are becoming common practice in today’s world, which cannot and should not be dismissed, the Program concept for supporting children and youth reading reasonably warns that “the scientific understanding of the processes, outcomes and dangers of children’s exposure to digital culture at a very young age has not been gained yet”, and that there are issues “with attention span and focusing, mosaic (or ‘clip’) thinking and perception, the weakening of cognitive abilities of the younger generation; the tendency to replace in-depth analytical reading with superficial scrolling through texts on electronic media, which does not allow the readers to understand and remember previously read information and get solid knowledge” (The Government of Russia, 2017).

Undoubtedly, the use of information and communication and multimedia technologies should be weighed up; they should be used only to engage students in reading (Belyaeva, Berdysheva, Kritarova, & Shamchikova, 2018). Besides, it should be borne in mind that with the implementation of ICTs in school education the role of the teacher inevitably undergoes a change (König et al., 2014).

Teachers have to update their teaching approach using such forms of instruction that will allow children to develop universal learning actions and meta-subject (or transdisciplinary) skills and abilities. Therefore, the main task of the teachers, which they should fulfil during literature classes, is to motivate children to read, determine the abilities of each child, and help them become aware of their own needs.

2. Problem Statement

In order to stimulate the reading activity of schoolchildren using ICTs and multimedia, it seems necessary to conduct research on the influence of the digital environment on teenagers’ reading, draw attention to family reading with the use of e-media, create Internet services, promote children’s literature

using the mediasphere, engage teenagers in reading through electronic media platforms, audiovisual and multimedia tools. Particular attention should be paid to reading events which can be promoted via social networks, new mobile and interactive applications and gaming platforms (The Government of Russia, 2017).

A lot is already being done in order to involve schoolchildren in reading and stimulate their reading activity. At present, gamification with the use of ICTs is considered to be a promising avenue of learning, which can also motivate students to read (Syed, 2013).

Instant messengers that are used for reading, various thematic channels, virtual libraries, bookshelves, podcasts, blogs of well-known writers and critics and BookTube have become an integral part of our life in the 21st century. The nature of the popularity of new media resources has to do with the fact that “among the Internet audience there is a demand for high-quality media materials of educational and informative, cultural, social and other nature” (Soldatkina, 2018, p.323).

In order to organize project and research activities it seems practical to turn to electronic libraries and encyclopaedias, Internet resources, multimedia technologies (video encyclopaedias, electronic textbooks, etc.); but one should not forget about social networks where modern children spend a lot of time communicating. In the United States, 1,141 children aged 13-17 were surveyed. The study revealed that the percentage of teenagers who use social media to communicate several times a day increased from 34% in 2012 to 70% in 2018 (Common Sense, 2018).

The term “social media” can be defined as a community of users united by a certain online platform (website, service), the key feature of which is the possibility of free interaction between them in order to establish and maintain social connections (Chto takoe sotsialnye seti?, 2011). It is free communication that attracts modern children, but the risks of negative impact (e.g. cyberbullying - intimidation and harassment on the Internet) pose a real threat, therefore parents and teachers have to be especially attentive to children and, without rejecting the positive aspects of Internet communication, explain to them its negative sides.

Social media allows you to share information (including photos and videos), impressions about books, movies, games, music, YouTube and provides an opportunity to broadcast your workshops and presentations to a wide audience. It is advisable to use this opportunity more actively to develop children’s interest in reading and literary creativity.

With the growing popularity of Facebook, Instagram and other mobile applications, the reading needs of schoolchildren have increased, since communication has come down mainly to writing. Reading is the main form of communication here, which allows for motivating reading activity by means of interests, inner motives that are formed under the influence and in the process of independent activity.

The task of the teacher of literature and language is not to dismiss the opportunities created by information technologies, but to use students’ interest to increase their motivation for reading. It is necessary to develop new methods and techniques for working with information technologies at literature lessons.

3. Research Questions

In order to solve the problems put forward in the study, the authors address the issues connected with the problems of reading competence of modern adolescents that arise from the shift in the teaching and learning paradigm in the information society. Therefore, it was necessary to analyze a number of documents that reflect the state policy in the field of supporting children and youth reading, as well as the difficulties teachers have to face, which arise from the use of ICTs for these purposes. This contributed to justifying the choice of new teaching and learning technologies that should motivate learners' reading activity.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify ways and means of using new technologies to motivate the reading activity of modern pupils. This required the specification of the impact of ICTs on the development of learners' reading activity, which was based on the analysis of the socio-cultural situation and school practice in the field of children and youth reading. The findings helped to establish the role of information technologies in engaging teenagers in reading in the information educational environment.

5. Research Methods

The following methods were used in the course of research: system method, theoretical and content analysis, sociological method. The motivational role of ICTs in stimulating learners' reading activity was analyzed based on direct observations and the study of the materials of state documents and theoretical-educational works. The systematization and generalization of the obtained results allowed the authors to identify the problems in the use of ICTs as a means of motivating the reading activity of learners, as well as to identify the ways of solving these problems.

6. Findings

New sociocultural conditions are aimed at getting different results of literary education, when students must not only thoughtfully analyze literary texts, interpret them, agree or disagree with other people's opinions, but they also should comment on the text publicly, add new information, convert the text into another format or create a new text in a completely different form. Such approach to education offers the learner an opportunity to choose a task which would meet his/her level of literary language proficiency and match his/her subjective experiences and interests (Tomlinson, 2014).

Modern information technologies can be successfully used when working with such an intricate element of a literary work as intertext (or intertextuality). This work requires not only conscious reading activity on the part of the learner but also a solid knowledge of background material pertaining to various aspects of culture. According to Barthes (1973), "any text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in forms more or less recognizable: the texts of the previous culture and those of the surrounding culture; any text is a tissue of bygone new quotes" (p. 73).

As a rule, the concept of intertextuality is associated with postmodern literature which is practically non-existent in school literature syllabus. It should be noted, however, that intertextuality is also typical of works of art written in the 19th and 20th centuries which form the basis of modern literature programs. “Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of other texts” (Kristeva, 1986, p.35). Furthermore, according to modern researchers, “an intertext can belong to another language than the text into which it is introduced (foreign languages, various kinds of text, literary texts, images, etc.) or in another domain of art (cinema, photography, painting, music, etc.)” (Aktulum, 2017, p.35).

This proves the assertion explained in our study that working with intertext at literature lessons is extremely important, but it also requires certain preparation, on the part of both the learners and the teacher. The task of the teacher is to choose an appropriate material for such type of work, as well as to motivate students to look for intertextuality by demonstrating with concrete examples how interesting and exciting this activity can be.

The use of modern electronic reference and information systems (e.g. Russian National Corpus) that allow for text search can help solve this problem (Nacionalnyj korpus russkogo yazyka, 2019). Working with such search engines meets the learners’ interests in the field of computer technologies and opens up new vistas in their use. The strong point of this approach consists in its focus on students’ independent search activity which allows them to feel like “pioneers” who are finding examples of the inclusion of a “foreign” text in the well-known works of art.

Combining the reading of books and the use of Internet technology helps to increase the motivation for reading. So, for example, to master the strategy of vocabulary development, learners should be encouraged to use online dictionaries to clarify the contextual meaning of a given word and its other meanings. You can also use hyperlinks to explain the lexical meaning of difficult words and phrases supplying it with videos in order to actualize the metacognitive knowledge of how to apply previous knowledge connected with the topic of the text.

With the help of Edtech program you can check the quality of reading (speed and comprehension), create a specialized program for mastering the reading technique, and with the help of TrackStar program (trackstar.4teachers.org) you can create a multimedia glossary in various modes for each learner: writing, audio, graphics, video and animation.

Telegram channels stand out among all the thematic channels on mobile messengers. The teaching and learning process can become more diversified, as well as broadened with the inclusion of the materials posted on Telegram channels (Volotskij, 2017). Thus, for example, “Polka” Telegram channel states that it is an educational project dedicated to the most important Russian literary works. Texts there are written by specialists in the field and the channel has more than fifteen thousand subscribers.

These days a paradigm shift in education can clearly be traced: in the 20th century learners keenly kept reading logs, whereas modern schoolchildren want to be bloggers since being a professional book blogger has gained popularity in recent years. Blogging about previously read books contributes to constant reading, writing reviews and language development. Numerous book vlogs are posted on YouTube. A completely new trend has emerged – BookTube bloggers. Here a mix between the jobs of a

literary critic and a TV presenter can already be seen. By creating a video book blog, learners master public speaking skills, practice their oral and written speech.

The use of digital libraries is one of the ways to increase motivation for reading. For instance, Bookmate virtual library offers a huge selection of classic and modern literature. The texts of the library can be incorporated into the lesson because the program allows the user to highlight what he/she has read, make notes on the margins or “cut out” passages. Bookmate also has bookshelves. These could be bookshelves of publishers who advertise new products or of famous journalists, writers, literary critics. However, any user can create his/her own bookshelf on the website.

Thus, high school students who read books on this website get an opportunity to have their own bookshelf and write notes about what they have read, and this can be done effortlessly, similarly to starting a blog on YouTube. Bookmate users not only discuss modern literature but also write comments on and reviews of classic works. Teenagers understand that they are not alone in reading the Russian classics. The questions that the teacher asks in the classroom are no longer perceived as teaching and learning material but turn into a lively and engaging dialogue.

Another effective way of using modern ICTs as a means of stimulating students’ reading activity is media design technology. It contributes to the development of students’ reading skills and helps to organize modern teaching and learning process at school. Media design technology provides for the organization of literary teaching and learning activities in such a way that the work with a literary text is associated with electronic digital resources – an environment which is quite familiar to students of the digital generation.

Recently, the practice of creating pupils’ own videos that are based on a book has been introduced into the process of teaching literature at school. Book trailers are a new genre which combines literature, visual art and digital technologies. “The use of book trailers at literature lessons makes it possible to structure work on the development of all universal learning actions (regulative, cognitive, communicative)” (Babkina & Baranova, 2016). The psychological and instructional approach to teaching rightfully argues that students remember and perceive information, which has been passed through their own perception, much better. Book trailers allow for reflection, they visually “present” works of art and help develop skills of processing nonlinear information. The determining factor in creating book trailers is its interactive nature, which bounds students by shared interests and serves to develop an interest in reading and literacy skills.

The importance of using modern computer technologies in teaching literature at school is also evident in the changes that affect higher teacher education. Thus, for example, several years ago a special course “Computer technologies in teaching literature” was introduced at the Philological Faculty of the Moscow Pedagogical State University (Mironova, Dutko, & Popova, 2019). Budding literature teachers should be prepared to be able to work with various information technologies to motivate students to read.

7. Conclusion

Reading is a universal skill which children should acquire to learn about the world. The realities of today demonstrate that reading is becoming more and more digital, which calls for new methodological solutions.

In modern society overstocked with information which, on the one hand, is easily accessible through the media and the Internet but, on the other, may affect young minds negatively, the tasks of developing reading literacy, fostering reading culture and motivating reading activity are especially acute (Aristova, Strizhekurova, Mironova, & Dutko, 2018). It becomes quite clear from direct observations, publications and studies of psychologists that the problem of youth alienation needs to be solved. The search for ways of overcoming the difficulties in the relationship between children and others - adults and peers – goes on (Weymouth, Buehler, Zhou, & Henson, 2016). The book that students have read, its screen version they have watched and a lively discussion in the classroom where learners participate and exchange their impressions, as well as project and research activities (individual and group) – all of this helps students not only to handle difficult real-life situations, but also contributes to activity- and practice-based methods of teaching, as well as to the development of learners' independence and their personal growth.

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