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SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION CONTENT IN THE INFORMATION AGE

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Abstract

The article examines the modern context that has led to the expansion of the functions of a foreign language as a tool for interaction between people, a means of intercultural dialogue and as a means of education, learning, and achieving personal goals in various spheres of life. In this regard, we consider the concept of "information and educational environment", which provides access to the content of teaching a foreign language, taking into account the emerging opportunities for teaching in a secondary school; describes the generally recognized levels of information and educational environment and proposes a new subject level; establishes and justifies the correlation of these levels of the information and educational environment. The article gives a deep analysis of the information and educational environment from the point of view of the subject content, defining each level, clarifying the key tasks relevant to the implementation of the main functions of a foreign language. It provides information about modern educational technologies, current training sites, and describes the capabilities of electronic systems used in schools and other educational institutions. In order to develop students' reflexive skills, it is proposed to use specialized databases for self-control and self-correction in the course of mastering a foreign language in the student's personal information and educational environment. Besides, the article focuses on the role of the teacher in the modern information and educational environment, as well as the importance of interaction between the subjects of the educational process at all stages of the hierarchy.

Keywords: Information and educational environment (IOS), IOS levels.

1. Introduction

In connection with the global processes taking place in the world community, with the increasing Informatization of all spheres of life, including education, science, and production (Smallman & Brown, 2015), there is an expansion of the range of use of a foreign language and its functions. Accordingly, the goals and objectives of teaching a foreign language as an academic subject have been expanded and refined in recent years. So, in addition to the goal of proficiency in the foreign language as means of intercultural and interpersonal communication (as enshrined in the Federal state educational standard of the Russian Federation) (Volkova, 2015), the skill of using a foreign language as a tool of cognitive activity is becoming increasingly important. (Alexander, 2014; Babadogan, 2010) This involves using a foreign language to search for information in different sources, its analysis, evaluation, generalization, and further use of the processed information to solve practical, applied, and research problems at different levels. It indicates an increase in the meta-subject aspect of learning a foreign language. There is also an increasing interest to the educational potential of a foreign language as a tool of creating dialogue of cultures which allows to compare moral values and traditions of different peoples, forming a positive attitude to the culture of countries speaking the target foreign language, and at the same time, the ability to convey cultural codes to the interlocutors from other traditions, including the representatives of the peoples for whom a foreign language is not native, but acts as an intermediary language (Holmes, 2014; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2015). All this is observed against the background of active, often disordered, implementation of training software and the rapid growth of the information and educational environment at different levels.

2. Problem Statement

In this context, one of the most important tasks of modern foreign language education is to create a science-based information and educational environment in which all participants of the educational process will be able to interact with each other and use both traditional and modern educational technologies (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2015; Nazarova, 2012).

3. Research Questions

In this regard, it is of scientific interest to understand the structure of the information and educational environment, to identify its levels in relation to foreign language acquisition, and to describe the hierarchy of levels and their purpose, which can help to avoid waste of time and resources while learning a foreign language. It is extremely important for teaching a foreign language, since the acquisition of a new means of communication takes place outside the natural environment of its application: students in real life communicate with each other and all other people using their native language. This means that the educational environment, which can provide close to real conditions for communication in a foreign language, needs special modelling, including all possible resources to motivate students to learn a new means of communication for them and a fairly intensive language practice allowing to use a foreign language in intercultural dialogue (Green, 2016).

4.   Purpose of the Study

In this context, it is important to consider the place of the subject area "Foreign language" in the educational environment, and describe tasks for each level of the hierarchy of IOS, the solution of which will lead to the improvement of students' knowledge of a foreign language, and learn to use foreign language as a tool of cognitive and intercultural communication skills.

5.   Research Methods

To achieve this goal, we studied and summarized data on different levels of IOS in general pedagogical, didactic, psychological and methodological literature, analyzed educational materials of different formats (textbooks, manuals, work programs, normative documents, etc.), websites of educational institutions, computer training programs, and other opportunities provided by modern educational technologies (Bataev, 2015; Moreau, 2020).

6.   Findings

The information and educational environment (IOS) is understood as "the result of the creation by the subjects of the educational process of a certain set of information, methodological and technical resources used to achieve the goals of training and education. These resources include: information and communication technologies that provide both work with information and interaction of participants in the educational process; pedagogical tools for organizing the learning process, such as educational technologies, educational and methodological complexes, electronic textbooks", etc. (Osmolovskaya, 2015, p. 21)

Current research highlights the following levels of IOS (see Figure 01).

General educational IOS, which can be described as a universal information model of the real educational environment, where all its tools, resources, technologies, and methods are presented in the information language. By means of this level of IOS, the main tasks in the education plan are implemented: organizing work in a single information database; ensuring the collecting, processing and publication of information; collecting and processing data on the state of the educational process; monitoring the quality of education.

At the next level, specifying the IOS for the tasks of a definite educational institution, it is envisaged to create a pedagogically and technically organized sphere of information interaction between participants in the educational process. Thus, it becomes possible to solve such tasks as providing the educational process with staff, information and material resources; organization of automation of administrative and pedagogical processes within an educational institution; coordinated processing and use of information and creating conditions for full-fledged information exchange between participants of the educational process, as well as creating a regulatory and organizational framework and providing technical and methodological support for the educational process.

Of particular importance is the level of IOS, which is aimed directly at the main subjects of the educational process: the teacher and the student. At this level, you can identify the personal IOS of both the teacher and the student.

The teacher's personal IOS is a collection of tools, resources, and so-called components (educational component, learning results evaluation component, methodological component, extracurricular component, administrative component) (The main components of the content of foreign language teaching in secondary schools, 2020), designed to organize an effective learning process on the subject and to improve the teacher's professional skills. The content of this level of IOS is determined by such functions of the teacher as management of the learning process, selection and organization of educational information necessary for mastering a foreign language as a tool of creating the dialogue of cultures in the classroom and outside it, solving educational and developing tasks, monitoring the learning process, etc. Thus, through the IOS of this level, the teacher implements the tasks of mastering the information and educational environment of the school as a space in which professional pedagogical activity is carried out, information and professional interaction with students, colleagues, administration, parents, including through information technologies provided by the information and educational environment; tasks of using (when it is necessary) ICT capabilities for mediated management of each student's personal information environment in order to increase interest to the subject, develop educational initiative, independence and creative potential; modelling a real communicative foreign language environment in order to develop the need for students to use a foreign language as a means of communication and knowledge; development of students' abilities to search, process and use information in the foreign language. As part of the personal IOS, the teacher also gets the opportunity to implement several other important functions in the context of technological progress, namely the development of personal qualities of students, appealing to their emotions and feelings, working with them on the right emotional attitude to study in new conditions, creating conditions for them to interact in the community of their classmates. In these conditions, students do not move away from each other, but learn to perform pair and group tasks. It is the teacher who can explain to his students what connection exists between the educational material in the course of the subject "Foreign language" and other disciplines, as well as draw a parallel with life situations.

It convinces us that the central subject of the educational process is, of course, the student, who also has a personal information and educational environment. The personal IOS of a student is a set of tools, resources and so-called components (educational component, educational component, extracurricular component) for the purpose of obtaining knowledge on the subject and forming subject skills and abilities, as well as such concepts as civil identity, moral guidelines, personal responsibility for their actions, etc. At this level, the student implements such tasks as the development of the school's IOS as a space in which educational activities are carried out; the formation of the ability to search, select, analyze, systematize and present information in accordance with the required educational tasks; the development of skills for independent work and cooperation; the formation of reflexive skills. With a well-built IOS, the student, as a subject of educational activity, finds himself in a development situation that provides an opportunity to use his own individual style of activity (hereinafter-ISA). ISA is a stable individual-specific system of psychological tools, techniques, skills, methods, and ways of performing a particular activity. ISA allows students with different individual typological features of the nervous system, different structure of abilities, temperament and character to achieve equal efficiency in performing the same activity in different ways, while compensating for individual characteristics that

prevent success. (Tikhomirova, 2018) Personal IOS of the students contributes to the formation of the experience of self-expression, which is one of the mechanisms of self-realization, development of self-confidence as a personal quality and ability to present themselves to the world around, to create their image, self-objectification in interpersonal and business sector, and then in the future profession.

An integral element of the student's IOS is the teacher as an organizer of the learning process as a whole and as a carrier of the most important subject knowledge, moral and ethic guidelines.

Along with these levels of IOS, there is a need to allocate subject information and educational environment in which both subjects of educational activity (teacher and student) interact, and which provides updating of the content of education in the subject area "Foreign language" using both traditional resources (textbooks, workbooks, visual AIDS) and modern network and electronic resources (electronic textbooks and multimedia tools, Internet resources, cloud technologies, training programs, distance courses, SKYPE, MES), mobile applications (Duolingvo, Listeningdrill, Bykimobile, Busuu, etc.), as well as new educational concepts (adaptive learning, virtual classroom, MOOC – mass open online courses, synchronous and asynchronous learning, etc.).

Subject IOS can be described as a methodically and technically organized space of information interaction between the subjects of the educational process in order to organize a holistic process of teaching a foreign language. Taking into account the specifics of teaching the subject, the main task of which, along with mastering the content, is to ensure the speech interaction of students, all communication partners present in person or remotely should be included in the subjects of the educational process. First of all, these are classmates, between whom pair and group communication is organized both in the presence of the teacher and without.

Integration of the traditional environment of school foreign-language education with new opportunities provided by information and communication technologies (ICT) can strengthen the development of the student as an active creative person and recreate the missing foreign-language environment. It is obvious that in this case, not only the form changes, but also the content of teaching a foreign language is significantly transformed and enriched.

Let us clarify that the content of teaching foreign languages includes completely different categories of concepts: from language units of different levels (sounds, words, phrases, texts of different genres, styles and forms on different topics), concepts about the structure and laws of functioning of the foreign language under study to target communicative skills in speaking, reading, listening and writing, which are provided with formed and automated language skills managing language units of different levels. The content of teaching a foreign language also includes exercises that provide the formation of skills managing the language units, that is, pronouncing, graphic, spelling, lexical, and grammatical skills. In addition, a large layer of foreign language teaching content consists of socio-cultural knowledge both of the countries of the language under study and of their own country, which ensures adequate behavior of the future communicant in a foreign-language cultural environment.

A well-organized subject IOS can provide students with the opportunity to master all this content at their own pace and taking into account the individual style of activity mentioned above.

It is important to provide students with the opportunity to independently track their educational outcomes, that is, to develop and to improve their reflective skills. This can be achieved by including

specialized databases in the training tools, designed for self-control and self-correction in the course of mastering foreign language. Especially in a modern Russian school regular procedures for system monitoring of educational achievements of students are provided at all stages of education from primary to high school. So, since 2016 All-Russian Control Works (ARCW) on various subjects have been conducted regularly that allow you to objectively evaluate your knowledge, skills and abilities of primary, secondary and high school students (All-Russian Control Works, 2020). In addition to the CRP monitoring educational achievements of students are carried out within the framework of National education quality research (NRQE) (2020), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2020), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2020), Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (2020).

All the above-mentioned information about the levels of IOS that ensure students ' mastery of a foreign language can be presented in the form of the following diagram:
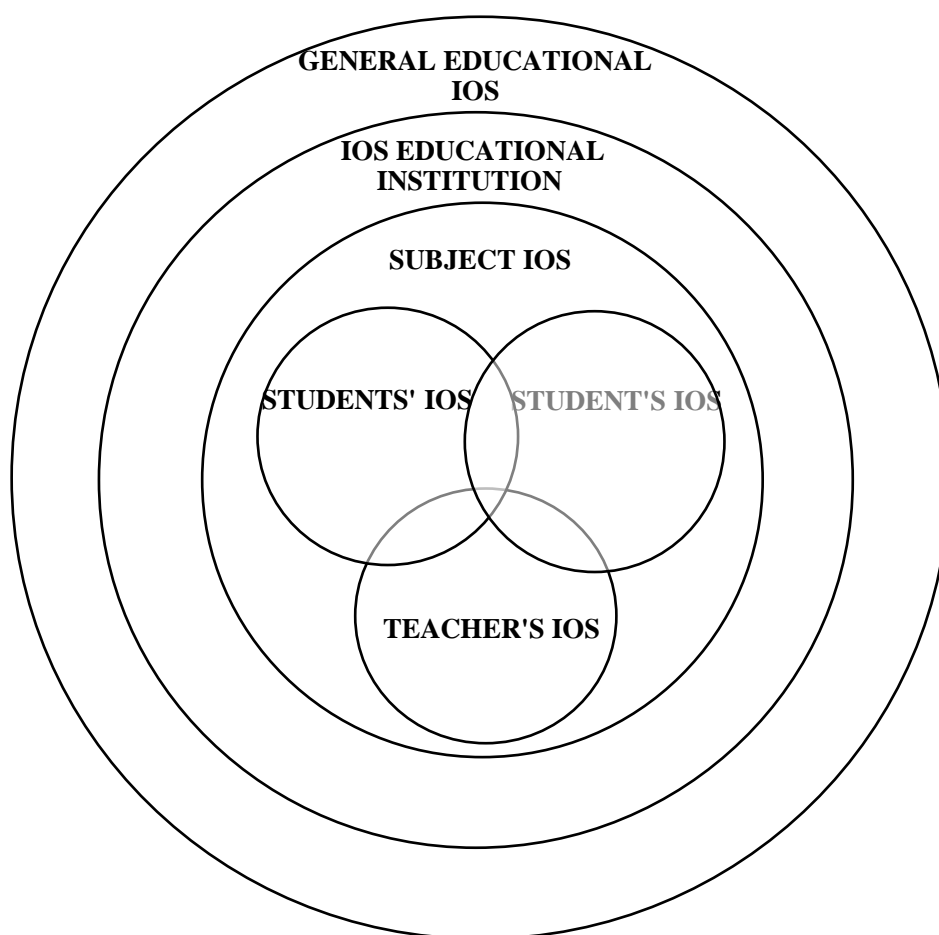

Figure 01. IOS Levels

Thus, in the conditions provided by the modern multi-level information and educational environment, it becomes possible to solve the following tasks that significantly improve the conditions for mastering a foreign language:

- modelling the information and educational environment of the subject "Foreign language" for interaction between the teacher, student and other potential participants of the educational process;

- establishing direct contacts with native speakers, which can be organized in different forms: personal correspondence by e-mail, joint research and application projects, discussions on current topics, exchange of country-specific information (about Russia as a whole, about the native land) with representatives of other cultures, teleconferences, etc.;

- thereby increasing the motivation of students to learn and use the foreign language as a tool of intercultural communication;

- differentiation and individualisation of the process of teaching a foreign language, taking into account the needs, interests and characteristics of students, in particular their individual style of activity;

- orientation to multi-level programs for learning a foreign language in connection with the diversification of educational contexts and students' requests;

- integration of full-time and distance learning (blended learning), which is relevant for school education in Russia, given its scale, the needs of certain groups of students for whom distance education is the most realistic and effective;

- providing access to authentic information (verbal, audio, multimedia), including information of a country-specific nature, which serves as the basis for the formation of socio-cultural competence of students, which is part of the foreign language communicative competence;

- creating the ability to search for information for a specific speech or research task using e-books, electronic libraries, search systems, etc.; expanding cross-subject integration;

- providing access to reference materials (catalogs, dictionaries, reference books, encyclopedias);

- providing access to distance learning courses hosted on educational servers both domestic and foreign, training Olympiads, quizzes, web quests, etc.

- creating databases containing up-to-date links to additional training programs, Internet resources, cloud technologies, educational concepts, file editing, data storage and transfer, tools for organizing collaboration, and tools for managing applications.

- introduction of mobile device technology to motivate students to study foreign languages by expanding the range of learning tools.

7. Conclusion

Updating the content of foreign language learning, taking into account the opportunities provided by a multi-level IOS (see Figure 01), will increase motivation to learn a foreign language, provide an opportunity to build an individual educational track, and meet the individual needs of students allowing them to master a foreign language as a means of creating intercultural dialogue. Moreover, the purpose of the IOS is not only to meet the information needs of students by providing information in a ready-made form, but also to form a person who can analyze information obtained from various foreign-language sources and create derivative information.

Acknowledgments

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