

**ISCKMC 2022****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****SOCIAL NETWORKS TO AROUSE COGNITIVE INTEREST OF  
ADOLESCENTS IN LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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**Abstract**

The article substantiates the relevance of developing the cognitive interest of students in the educational process, in particular, the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages using the capabilities of social networks by teachers. This is proved by the modern trends in social development identified by the theoretical and methodological analysis of scientific literature (globalization and digitalization of society and education, etc.) and is confirmed by the data of the conducted empirical study, which showed the forced need to organize distance learning during the pandemic and the demand for an attractive environment of social networks for teenagers and underestimation of its pedagogical capabilities by teachers. Structural and comparative approaches to the theoretical analysis of studies enabled to consider the socio-psychological functions of social networks in conjunction with the structure of cognitive interest, in which, in addition to the intellectual and volitional components, the emotional one is particularly significant. This complex includes general pedagogical opportunities that increase the effectiveness of various aspects of the educational process, and specific opportunities for developing the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages. The generalization of the existing experience of using social networks for various educational purposes enabled to meaningfully reveal this complex by differentiating 14 opportunities of applying them in the educational process into general pedagogical and specific ones (aimed to develop cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages).

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## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, globalization gets into all spheres of public life and imposes a number of requirements on the individual, one of which is the obligatory knowledge of a foreign language. Teaching foreign languages at all age levels, from preschool and even early childhood to retirement, is a modern educational practice (Oga-Baldwin, 2019; Vladimirova, 2016). Cognitive interest is a justified consistency of the educational activity effectiveness, its driving force and motivator. Modern trends in social development (such as the digitalization of society and education, the forced need for distance learning during a pandemic, etc.) initiate the search for modern interactive ways organization, methods and means of education (Cross et al., 2001; Pulgar, 2021; Vladimirova, 2016). The use of the pedagogical potential of social networks in the development of the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages can be a vivid example of this phenomenon.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Psychological and pedagogical scientific research and analysis of personal pedagogical experience convincingly prove the need to develop the cognitive interest of students. The choice of the ways and pedagogical means used in this process is determined mostly by the age characteristics of the students and the specific features of the subject under study. The use of the possibilities of social networks in the development of the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages by the teacher meets the necessary conditions: the needs of adolescents in communicating with peers (as the leading type of activity), inevitable involvement in communication (as a condition of a state in a social network and a condition for improving educational results in a foreign language), external attractiveness of social networking tools (as a condition for additional motivation to master a foreign language and cognitive interest in learning it).

A number of scientific studies by Vygotsky, Galperin, Davydova, Leontiev, Petrovsky, Elkonina, Yakimanskaya devoted to the development of students' cognitive activity consider the essence of the concept "cognitive interest", psychological and pedagogical ways of enhancing educational activity (Bozhovich, 1955; Rubinstein, 2002; Schukina, 1988). The problem of using social networks for educational purposes, in teaching a foreign language as well, is disclosed to a much lesser extent (Pulgar, 2021; Sadigova, 2012; Strokan, 2017), existing studies do not fully reveal the aspect of using the pedagogical capabilities of social networks to develop the cognitive interest of adolescents to learning foreign languages.

## **3. Research Questions**

Comparison of the structure of cognitive interest and the functions of social networks determined the subject of our study being the pedagogical potential of social networks in the development of cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The article considers a complex of pedagogical potential of social networks concerning the development of cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages. By this complex we mean a set of mutually conditioning properties of social networks being web services for remote interaction between people united according to certain characteristics, initiating and stimulating personality activity of a teenager with regards to mastering a foreign language and including general pedagogical and specific opportunities.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Theoretical and methodological analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature was the most significant method of our research. Its use contributed to clarifying the main categories of research, identifying the essence and structure of cognitive interest, the essence and main functions of social networks, and enabled to determine and structure the complex of pedagogical possibilities of social networks for the development of cognitive interest of teenagers to learning foreign languages.

The author's empirical study aimed to consider the demand for social networks in the pedagogical activities of subject teachers and adolescents. It used a survey of 117 pupils of 8th and 11th grades of schools in Chelyabinsk and the Chelyabinsk region in 2017 and 2021 (67 and 50 respondents, respectively), which showed the popularity of social networks among adolescents (98 % were registered in at least one social network, 73 % – in two or more social networks), their use for educational purposes (58 % were subscribed to groups engaged in educational activities, of which only 25 % were devoted to learning foreign languages), recognition of social networks as a convenient and effective means of learning and self-education (56 %, another 36 % considered them partially useful), initiation of self-study of a foreign language by materials of social networks, including search for additional information using Internet search tools (87 % searched for translations of foreign words, song lyrics, content and meaning of videos, memes, etc. found on social networks). Cardinal changes in the use of social networks by teachers to interact with students for educational purposes have occurred in the Russian Federation since 2020. They were initiated by the corona virus pandemic after the widespread introduction of distance education (according to the study conducted in 2021). These changes are as follows: the use of social networks by adolescents for educational purposes has reached 100 % (an increase of 42 %), 100 % of adolescents have started interaction with at least one school teacher on educational issues in social networks (73 % increase), the desire of adolescents to communicate with teachers on social networks on educational issues has fallen from 73 % to 61 %, 47 % of adolescents have experienced interest in a subject, a desire to study it as a result of such interaction. The study convincingly proves the relevance of using the pedagogical potential of social networks to develop the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages and the insufficiency of its theoretical and technological development.

## 6. Findings

Studies of the concept “interest” in psychological and pedagogical science are developing in several directions that connect it with individual needs, orientation and motivational sphere of the individual. We commit to Rubinstein’s consideration of “interest” as a motive, and we consider cognitive interest to be the motive of cognitive activity. The relationship between cognitive interest and knowledge has been proven (Rubinstein, 2002). Knowledge being the foundation of cognitive interest, the “cause” of its appearance, is also the result of satisfying interest, leading to actualization, growth, and deepening of knowledge. The emotional component of cognitive interest in its structure is significant (Morozova, 2009). Interest being an emotional-cognitive attitude can develop into an emotional-cognitive orientation of a person under appropriate circumstances, contributing to the depth and strength of knowledge; developing and improving the quality of mental activity; determining the activity of the child, stimulating the abilities development, cultivating a non-standard approach to various types of activities; increasing the overall emotional tone, creating a positive emotional background for the flow of mental processes, etc.

In addition to the emotional component mentioned above, which manifests itself in a positive emotional attitude towards the object and activity in its cognition, two more interrelated components have been distinguished in the structure of cognitive interest (Schukina, 1988). Specifically, they are as follows: an *intellectual component* being manifested in the focus on cognition of the object, the desire to comprehend its essence, and a *volitional component* being manifested in the focus on this object, the intensity of efforts to achieve the goal and the stability of interest.

The emergence and development of the cognitive interest of students depends not only on their personal characteristics, but also on the organization of the educational process, the individual characteristics of the pedagogical activity of a particular teacher (Shabalina et al., 2021), the specifics and method of presenting educational material to them, etc. The study of various ways of developing the cognitive interest of students, as well as age-related characteristics of personality development and educational activities of adolescents, led to the identification of the pedagogical potential of social networks in the development of adolescents’ cognitive interest in learning foreign languages.

Social networks are platforms on the basis of which participants can establish relationships with each other (Patarakin, 2017). The list of functions of social networks is rather extensive and is as follows (Sadigova, 2012):

- i. Communication goal: establishing contacts, exchanging news and other information, cooperation to achieve common goals (rallying, maintaining social ties).
- ii. Entertainment goal: exchange of multimedia files, text messages, the use of widgets being mini-entertainment programs to enhance the user’s capabilities (games, media applications, etc.).
- iii. Informational goal: interchange (receiving and transmitting) information (photos, video and audio materials, links to sites, comments, messages, etc.).

- iv. Socializing goal: “free communication” (excluding the difficulties of real interpersonal and/or intergroup communication), gaining a sense of “us” (joining communities depending on interests, type of activity, etc.), self-reflection in the system of “friends” and “groups”.
- v. Self-actualizing goal: self-presentation, the ability to create any image.
- vi. Identification goal: creating an individual profile, filling it with open/restrictedly open personal information (name, age, place of residence, study, work, interests, etc.) and searching for people and groups according to specified criteria.

The function of identity formation: the possibility of self-identification, ability to compare oneself with people who have the greatest number of similar traits; positive assessment of each other by similar people (negative assessment of the least similar people is also possible) are the main mechanisms for building relationships with other people and groups.

The above socio-psychological functions of social networks can be effectively embodied in education. Endowing educational process with their psychological, social and pedagogical advantages by means of a teacher enables to determine a unique set of pedagogical means provided by social networks contributing to the development of cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages. By the interest we mean the totality of mutually conditioning properties of social networks as web services for remote interaction between people united by certain characteristics, and causing the initiation and stimulation of a teenager’s activity in mastering a foreign language. This complex includes general pedagogical opportunities that increase the effectiveness of various aspects of the educational process, and specific opportunities for developing the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages. The first group includes the following opportunities:

1. The opportunity to organize various types of interaction (individual, group, mass; joint with teachers/parents/friends) and forms of communication (pages, forums, polls, voting, comments, personal messages, wall, chat, etc.) enabling both business and personal communication.
2. The opportunity to organize active learning activities for students beyond the scope of classroom activities (both additionally and instead of them) in case of missing classes or as part of distance learning, which is especially important for a mass teacher during a pandemic.
3. Massive technical opportunities: the use of video communication (the possibility of live communication), exchange of links (to educational and methodical literature, scientific articles, events, etc.), the visibility of training (video experiments, lectures, multimedia demonstrations, speech of native speakers), etc.
4. The duration, continuity and high speed of communication between a teacher and students mutually increase the responsibility for the result of their activities, as well as activity rates, degree of participation in the learning process.
5. Interaction between learning process participants (complete territorial independence, free of charge basis, minimal dependence on barriers as well as material and time resources, etc.).
6. Attractiveness, comfort, safety of interaction environment for a teenager: the attractiveness of a familiar (thereby safe) and interesting (as alternative to traditional forms and methods of teaching) interaction; the ability to meet basic needs for achievement, acceptance, recognition; an opportunity for

adolescents experiencing difficulties in real communication to feel safe in virtual communication and become active participants in the educational process.

7. Professional and personal growth of a teacher, his/her social accessibility, authority and personal attractiveness for students.

The opportunity of a teacher to interact in social networks used to teach teenagers a foreign language creates a group of specific opportunities that provide the following:

1. Initiation and activation of independent work, communication with a teacher and other social network users, including native speakers of the language being studied, which forms the communicative competence of a teenager.

2. Development of productive language activities, skills of spontaneous oral and written communication, which is given much less attention in the traditionally organized learning process.

3. Independent practice of mastering and consolidating the necessary vocabulary, grammatical and syntactic phenomena due to the need to perceive and understand other people's written texts, auditory and audio-visual examples of foreign speech, including native speakers, as well as producing personal speech.

4. The subtlety of understanding, feeling the nuances of the language due to the possibility of a full acquaintance with the culture, speech etiquette, social norms and accepted patterns of behavior in the target-language countries.

5. Practical mastery of various strategies of speech behavior in various areas of communication (interpersonal, educational and business, etc.).

6. Development of skills and abilities of argumentation, persuasion, predicting the interlocutors' reaction and personal adequacy of response in oral and written communication due to the operation of the "two-way communication law", feedback.

7. Stimulation and motivation of learning a foreign language due to the duration and constancy (albeit with varying intensity) of communicative activity (teenagers turn to social networks every day, maybe ten times more often than to specialized educational Internet services).

## 7. Conclusion

Modern trends in globalization and digitalization of all areas of society, including education emphasize the importance of learning foreign languages at all stages of the age and professional development of an individual taking into account its characteristics, as well as the search and implementation of innovative ways of organizing the methods and means of education with regards to the requirements of technological progress and social development. In line with these trends, we formulated and solved the problem of using the pedagogical potential of social networks to develop the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages.

The presented complex of pedagogical potential of social networks for the development of cognitive interest of adolescents in learning foreign languages is a set of mutually conditioning properties of social networks acting as web services for remote interaction between people united according to certain characteristics, causing the initiation and stimulation of teenagers' activity in mastering a foreign language. The revealed positive influence of the complex of fourteen identified opportunities on the development of the cognitive interest of adolescents in learning a foreign language makes it theoretically

justified and practically expedient for a teacher to use social networks in the educational process to achieve the designated goal.

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