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Pedagogical Support and Development System for Gifted Schoolchildren: Language Training Context

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Abstract

The relevance of this research is ensured by the need to create a system of pedagogical support and development of gifted schoolchildren. The aim of the study is to identify the approaches to building a pedagogical support and development system for gifted schoolchildren in the context of foreign language (English) learning. The analysis of the data is based on the theoretical foundations of the studies devoted to the school system as a source of linguistically gifted child development. The authors rely on a set of experimental methods found important for the integrity of the research results: methods for diagnosing and testing secondary schools' students, those who are involved in the English Olympiad movement (expert assessment, test assignments, self-assessment); questionnaire methods; pedagogical observation; praximetric methods. The case study of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tatarstan is given the primary focus. The study revealed the following: the didactic architecture of the pedagogical support and development system for gifted schoolchildren should be considered as a combination of educational constructs: systematic mentoring; involvement in regular network research and educational projects; participation in special language camps; support for individual educational paths; participation in Olympiads, competitions, forums, scientific and practical conferences. The key points that need to be taken into account when developing a system of pedagogical support and development of gifted schoolchildren are: systematic work; developmental educational environment; in-time identification of gifted students; greater flexibility in educational paths; provision of the continuity and sustainability of the development system for gifted individuals.

Keywords: gifted schoolchildren, support and development, language training, linguistically gifted, Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Uzbekistan.

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Introduction

In a rapidly changing and complex world, with the growing role of new formats of intercultural communication, the development of human capital that helps prepare the new generation for the challenges of today has become a priority for the educational policies of most countries. The demands of modern society for the training of specialists with professional and supra-professional qualities, thinking, motivation, dynamism, readiness for sustainable professional growth require the educational system to bring up young people who are capable of becoming part of the driving force in shaping the global intellectual, socio-cultural, and economic agenda, solving extraordinary problems, and being ready to function in a multitasking environment.

The importance of building the country's future potential in the present has been stated in a number of government documents. It has been stated: 'Our entire educational system must be based on the fundamental principle that every child and teenager is gifted and capable of succeeding in science, creativity, sports, their profession, and life' (Address, 2016). In 2012, the Concept of a National System for Identifying and Developing Young Talent, which focused on "creating conditions for the development of the abilities in all children and young people, regardless of their place of residence, social status, and family's financial capabilities; supporting the best teachers and educational institutions, disseminating best practices and advanced teaching methods; supporting top-tier educational institutions for children, adolescents, and young people who have demonstrated outstanding abilities" was approved in Russia (Concept, 2012).

At the regional level, there are programmes to implement a nationwide system for identifying and developing young talent. For example, in the Republic of Tatarstan, the State Programme 'Strategic Talent Management in the Republic of Tatarstan' was approved in 2023. The programme aims to solve a number of tasks: to provide a comprehensive system for identifying gifted and talented children and young people; to provide individual guidance, competence development and support for gifted and talented children and young people who are highly motivated and have demonstrated outstanding abilities; to develop the institution of mentoring for working with gifted and talented children and young people (State Programme, 2023).

For example, the Strategy for Innovative Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 points out the importance of further developing human capital in the management of innovative activities by developing creativity, innovative entrepreneurship, and rationalization skills at all stages of education. This

poses new challenges for both the school and higher education systems (Strategy, 2022). Thus, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 2019 ‘On measures to organise the activities of the Agency for the Development of Presidential, Creative and Specialised Schools’ states: “additional measures are required to create a unified and effective system for working with gifted young people, supporting their initiatives to accomplish the talent and potential of the younger generation, publishing textbooks and teaching aids, including electronic forms, based on the requirements of advanced foreign experience, as well as ensuring the training of sought-after specialists capable of representing the interests of our country at a high professional level in the international arena” (Decree, 2019).

In this context, the authors of the article state the need to consider and study the phenomenon of linguistic giftedness, its theoretical and methodological aspects, which is one of the tasks in the updated, reforming educational system. The study aims to substantiate modern approaches to the identification and detection of linguistically gifted students and their advancement in the school-university system. This is facilitated by an understanding of the accumulated experience of working with linguistically gifted students in the school and university educational systems. The pedagogical system for supporting and developing such students includes the development of teaching strategies, as well as the creation of psychological, pedagogical, and organizational conditions, taking into account the requirements of educational policy and state educational standards.

The general focus of the research is to reveal the features of the pedagogical system for the development and support of gifted students construction as a set of components, conditions, and measures – interaction between social institutions; implementation of programme activities, including intellectual tests in foreign languages; development of innovative educational programmes that ensure the development of young people’s abilities in order to motivate them to achieve high personal and professional results and sustainable development throughout their lives.

Purpose and objectives of the study

Gifted students have high potential for learning foreign languages, but their abilities require special pedagogical support, appropriate methods, conditions, and teaching strategies. Without a proper support system, gifted students may lose their potential, become demotivated, and experience psychological burnout.

The aim of the study is to identify the approaches to building a pedagogical support and development system for gifted schoolchildren in the context of foreign language (English) learning. The research is based on a multi-component analysis of school education systems, using the examples of Russia and Uzbekistan.

Achieving the stated goal requires solving a number of tasks:

to clarify the concept of ‘linguistic giftedness’; to identify and justify the components of the pedagogical system for the development of gifted students as an evolving system; to reveal the features of a system in organizing intellectual tests (English language competitions, contests on local history knowledge, etc.) with the aim of maintaining the necessary ‘intellectual climate’.

Literature review

Issues related to working with gifted students in general, and linguistically gifted students in particular, have been adequately covered in the works of national and foreign researchers. Thus, the theory and practice of working with gifted children has been studied in the work of Rubtsov (2012); Rumyantseva’s (2006) dissertation research is devoted to the issues of teaching foreign languages to linguistically gifted schoolchildren in the context of supplementary education; the concepts of ‘ability’ and ‘giftedness’ are explored in Teplov’s (2014) research; a detailed analysis of the English language Olympiad movement in Russia as one of the effective tools for identifying and supporting linguistically gifted students is provided in the doctoral research of Gulov (2023); a structural and functional analysis of the essence and technologies of identifying linguistic giftedness was conducted by Bogus (2023).

Professors N.S. Beloborodova, V.V. Sal’nikova, and Z.S. Akhmat’yanova emphasize the digital environment in opening up new opportunities for personalizing tasks and monitoring progress while working with linguistically gifted children (Beloborodova, 2018). We agree with the authors and emphasize the emerging digital-centricity of modern foreign language teaching methods.

Associate Professor M.V. Rumyantseva points out that standard school curricula often do not meet the needs of such students for expanded language material. That is why language laboratories, Olympiad preparation and intercultural communication practices are particularly important (Rumyantseva, 2006).

In her dissertation ‘The Concept of Practice-Oriented Chemistry Education for Gifted Children in the System of Continuous Chemistry Education,’ Professor F.D. Khalikova emphasizes that the continuity of education is a determining factor in revealing the abilities of gifted students not only in chemistry, but also in other scientific fields, including linguistics (Khalikova, 2022).

The research of Uzbek scientists Jalolov (2013), Jusupov (2005), Ergasheva (2020), Samandarov (2022), and Turdiyeva (2018).

Professor B.M. Teplov, analyzing the problem of abilities and giftedness, emphasizes that “the predisposition for giftedness in schoolchildren is only a potential prerequisite for the formation of true talent, which ultimately depends on purposeful training and development. Consequently, when considering linguistic giftedness, it is necessary to analyze both the natural characteristics of the individual and socio-educational factors” (Teplov, 2014).

A similar thesis is postulated in the works of D.A. Liferenko, which emphasize that linguistic giftedness is based on a complex of abilities formed on the basis of innate predispositions. Considering separately the internal factors that influence the development of schoolchildren's abilities, she notes that aspects such as phonemic hearing (the ability to finely differentiate the sound system of a language), speech intelligence (the ability to use different speech units in communicative situations), and the ability to model language (analytical and synthetic transformation of language structures) play a great role (Liferenko, 2013). However, it seems clear that having many abilities does not mean being gifted, i.e. ‘a map of abilities is not a gift’.

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences O.N. Igna considers indirect indicators of language abilities: success in mathematics, Russian language and literature, singing ability, musical ear, good memory, fairly high speech rate, fluency in reading in the native language, and general speech development (Igna, 2013).

An interesting position is taken by Professor A.P. Gulov, who includes linguistic intuition, analytical thinking, and communicative flexibility in his concept of giftedness. In his study ‘Methodological Foundations for the Development of Foreign Language Olympiads,’ the researcher argues that subject-specific Olympiads, which began as part of a system for identifying talented schoolchildren, have become an independent area of work with gifted students, and their structure and content began to take into account the specifics of language education, rather than just formal control of language knowledge (Gulov, 2023).

However, despite the extensive theoretical basis, issues related to the development of a pedagogical system for the support of linguistically gifted students have not been sufficiently researched. In this study, the authors attempt to reveal the features of the structure and functioning of this system in the educational space of the Republic of Tatarstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Using a number of projects implemented in the two countries as examples, the study highlights the flexibility of educational paths for developing gifted students’ talents in both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Methodology

The main research method used in this work is the analysis of scientific, pedagogical and methodological literature on the problem of abilities, giftedness, linguistic giftedness, Olympic movement, training teachers

to work with gifted schoolchildren, as well as on issues of pedagogical design of the system for the development and support of gifted schoolchildren. Particular attention was paid to the development of a such system in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tatarstan. For a comprehensive understanding, the authors analyzed government documents (decrees, orders, programmes, resolutions and other regulatory documents governing the work of educational institutions in identifying and developing gifted students).

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study consists of a set of concepts and models (Babaeva, 1997; Matyushkin, 1989), ‘Psychology of Child Giftedness’ by Savenkov (2025); the methodology for diagnosing giftedness, revealed in the scientific works of both foreign and domestic researchers: L.A. Venger, N.F. Dika, A.A. Loseva, A.V. Zakharova, V.A. Zashikhina, N.F. Kochurova, A.A. Margolis, T. Meisner, B. Minto, G.L. Parfenova, Yu.A. Poluyanov, and others; the activity approach outlined in the works of A.G. Asmolov, L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leontiev, S.L. Rubinstein, and others; the competence approach, which has been studied by A.A. Verbitsky, A.M. Kalimullin, M.B. Klarin, Ya.A. Kamensky, S.S. Lazareva, N.A. Pasternak, I.V. Patrusheva, M.V. Bulanova-Toporkova, E.V. Semchuk, E.O. Smirnova, and others.

The theoretical basis for the multifactorial definition of ‘giftedness,’ the need for longitudinal dynamic diagnosis, and the individualization of education for gifted children within the framework of general education schools has been provided by the research of American psychologist and educator Renzulli (2020) (Sabirova et al., 2024).

The set of experimental methods used was important for the integrity of the research results: methods for diagnosing and testing students of secondary education schools in the Republic of Tatarstan who participate in the Olympiad movement (expert assessment, test assignments, self-assessment); questionnaire methods (questionnaires, conversations, interviews); pedagogical observation; praximetric methods (study of creative written works by participants in English language Olympiads).

The authors’ participation in a number of meetings, discussions, and conferences of the professional community was of great importance for this study. For example, in December 2024, the authors took part in the All-Russian round table ‘Technologies for preparing gifted children for intellectual competitions’, dedicated to topical issues of the English language Olympiad movement. The discussion focused on: effective strategies for preparing schoolchildren for the foreign language Olympiad; typical mistakes analysis; the complexity and uniqueness of Olympiad tasks; difficulties in conducting Olympiads, and perspectives for the development of the Olympiad movement.

In addition, the strategy for implementing the research plan included a review and analysis of English language Olympiad tasks as an indicator of the intellectual tests changing format in the context of the evolving environment of foreign language education in schools.

Results

Identifying, supporting, and developing linguistic giftedness requires specific approaches to the organization of the school education system, especially in the context of foreign language teaching. We adhere to the view that linguistic giftedness is a predisposition to a successful foreign language acquisition, expressed in: intensive acquisition of vocabulary and grammar; special perception and manipulation of language structures; ability to independently create an individual phonetic pattern; readiness for speech interaction in non-standard intellectual challenges; an increased level of linguistic intuition; readiness to expand one's knowledge horizon in the field of foreign languages; ability to communicate successfully in a multilingual environment; stable linguistic memory.

In our opinion, the design of this pedagogical system may include a number of components: diagnostic (involving methods for identifying giftedness – questionnaires, tests, observation, interviews, etc.); content-related (providing an educational programme with in-depth, interdisciplinary and practice-oriented content); methodological (selection of effective teaching technologies focused on the development of language competence); organizational (a variety of teaching formats (advanced academic workload groups, conversation language clubs, academic competitions); motivational (creation of a developmental language environment, inclusion of students in project and research activities, participation in competitions, language internships); assessment (functioning of a multi-level system for monitoring results). Mainly 4 approaches to organizing a pedagogical system are considered: systemic, activity-based, personality-oriented, and competence-based approaches.

The didactic architecture of the multi-component process also involves serious psychological, pedagogical, and organizational support for linguistically gifted students. This can be achieved by solving a number of tasks: conducting analytical procedures to assess the effectiveness of measures taken to teach foreign languages to linguistically gifted schoolchildren; ensuring the sustainability of the system to work with linguistically gifted students; identifying and encouraging teachers who provide high-quality education in foreign languages and conduct effective professional teaching activities in terms of supporting and developing such students.

Discussion

As an example of the pedagogical support and development system for linguistically gifted students, we will reveal the features of the organization and implementation of a number of programme activities, in particular, in the format of intellectual competitions/Olympiads in the Republic of Tatarstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Since 2012, the Republic of Tatarstan has been implementing the Concept for the Development and Implementation of the Intellectual and Creative Potential of Children and Young People ‘Perspective’ (2012). On its basis the state programme ‘Strategic Talent Management in the Republic of Tatarstan for 2015-2026’ was developed and approved. The objectives of the programme document include: ensuring a comprehensive system for identifying gifted and talented children and young people; providing individual guidance and support to gifted and talented children and young people who are highly motivated and have demonstrated outstanding abilities; developing the institution of mentoring for working with gifted and talented children and young people; ensuring scientific, expert, methodological, and interdepartmental cooperation in the development of the intellectual and creative potential of gifted children and young people, etc. (Strategy, 2022).

The television history and culture competition ‘Tarkhan’ is an example of an unusual approach to identifying and supporting gifted schoolchildren in the Republic of Tatarstan. Through the achievement of the main goal of the competition – popularizing the history and culture of the Turkic peoples, promoting a culture of reading, and increasing interest in the historical and cultural library heritage – an important task is being accomplished: identifying and further supporting schoolchildren who have demonstrated outstanding knowledge of the history of their native land. According to one of the authors of this article, the host of the above-mentioned competition, Professor R.R. Fakhruddinov, “the participants in the competition are young people who really care about education, culture and traditions. They are gifted and very worthy young people. This technically complex, modern competition has also found resonance among teachers thanks to its talented pedagogical design. We pay special attention to the teachers and mentors who teach and educate our talented young people with great enthusiasm and love. It is a powerful and very cool transformation for those who are not afraid to change and reveal their own talents”.

A number of government initiatives in the Republic of Uzbekistan (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ‘On measures to identify talented young people and organize a continuous system for training highly qualified personnel’ (2019), Decree ‘On additional measures to further improve the education system’ and ‘A new stage in the qualitative promotion of foreign language learning in the Republic of Uzbekistan’

(2020), etc.) highlight the strategic focus on identifying, encouraging and further training the young talented generation to achieve the set goals.

Thus, the Decrees approved authoritative international Olympiads and regional international Olympiads. The aim of these intellectual tests is to support talented young people, improve the quality of education, especially in the foreign language field, and integrate Uzbekistan into the international educational space. Resolution No. 562 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 2021 approves the procedure for holding the ‘Best School for Teaching Foreign Languages’ competition (2021). The aim of the competition is to create a healthy competitive environment among schools, encourage them to improve the level and quality of foreign language teaching, increase teachers’ interest in learning foreign languages, and lay the foundation for achieving high performance in accordance with international criteria and teaching quality standards (Decree, 2020).

The focus on financial support and encouragement for schools that have achieved high results in the competition allows their experience to be promoted and disseminated as best practices. Particular attention should be paid to the network of Presidential Schools, whose goals include identifying talented children, creating an integrated system for their education and upbringing using advanced technologies in the educational process, further support and encouragement of talented young people, forming a spiritually and intellectually harmonious generation.

After conducting a brief review of the main pedagogical measures for identifying and supporting gifted schoolchildren in two countries, we can conclude that it is extremely important to take into account a number of key aspects: adherence to the principles of building a pedagogical process for teaching and developing gifted schoolchildren (systematic work; creation of a developmental educational environment; in-time identification of gifted students; greater flexibility in educational paths; provision of the continuity and sustainability of the development system for gifted individuals).

As for the creation of a model for the continuous education and development of gifted schoolchildren, we emphasize the main educational constructs: systematic mentoring; involvement gifted schoolchildren in regular network research and educational projects; participation in special language camps; possibility of remote support for individual educational paths; participation in Olympiads, competitions, forums, scientific and practical conferences, and special resource centres at universities.

According to Professor O.N. Igna, “the traditional model, based solely on standard testing of lexical and grammatical skills, does not provide a complete picture of a student’s potential. On the contrary, the modern

understanding of giftedness requires a comprehensive approach that includes observation of speech activity, analysis of spontaneous utterances, and the child's ability to use language in creative situations" (Igna, 2014).

Given the general direction of the development of the Olympiad movement and the shift in assessment priorities, it is appropriate to move on to a specific analysis of the regional stage of the 2025 All-Russian English Olympiad for schoolchildren. This competition incorporates both the elements of the traditional examination approach and the components focused on identifying more complex linguistic and cognitive skills. Our 30 years of personal experience in organizing the Olympiad movement in the Republic of Tatarstan, analyzing the participants' works, and observing the completion of tasks has allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of what types of speech and thinking activities are triggered by certain exercises, as well as what characteristics linguistically gifted school students display in a real competitive situation. For example, the first component of the Olympiad is traditionally the *Listening and Reading* section. The participants were presented the texts containing rich arguments and non-obvious semantic transitions. Thus, the first listening task presented a science-oriented text on "extensive reading", which did not require so much the memorization of facts but the grasp of the logical reasoning and implicit assessments. In the second task (a dialogue on an interpersonal topic), the participants' speech intuition was clearly evident: gifted students easily recognized the speakers' intonational accents, emotional reactions and pragmatic attitudes.

Speaking of the *Use of English* section, it is worth noting that at first glance, its tasks are playful in nature (e.g., crossword puzzles, matching homonyms, phrasal verbs in the context of anecdotes), but it is precisely in these tasks that the difference between the solutions of a well-prepared student and a truly gifted one is most clearly evident. The latter, as the analysis showed, tend to generalize semantically, can recognize the stylistic coloring of a word, and can identify secondary meanings without relying on direct translation. Thus, in a task where it was necessary to interpret phrasal verbs in a humorous context, only some of the participants were able to grasp the comic effect based on ambiguity.

The analysis of the written part of the Olympiad papers showed that the most successful texts were distinguished by clear composition with subheadings; a logical sequence of ideas; the use of relevant vocabulary; a wealth of syntactic constructions without verbal "overload". All this favorably distinguished the work of those participants in the Olympiad who can be classified as extraordinary and linguistically gifted.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of linguistic giftedness is one of the pressing issues in the theory and practice of modern language teaching. In this regard, being based on different approaches (systemic, activity-based, personality-

oriented, and competence-based), the formation of a pedagogical support and development system for linguistically gifted schoolchildren is seen as crucial in the system of school foreign language education.

The analysis of the educational space organisation (Republic of Tatarstan and Republic of Uzbekistan) in terms of working with linguistically gifted schoolchildren has led to the following conclusions: despite differences in the cultural and socio-linguistic context, foreign and national studies have a common approach to identifying and supporting gifted children. The state policies of both countries in the field of providing resources and implementing specialized support programmes for identified gifted students are common and unifying. The regulatory and legal documents adopted allow us to assert the following: the pedagogical system is a systematic set of approaches, a set of measures and program activities aimed at ensuring the potential of gifted students and their targeted development in the school educational environment, taking into account psychological, pedagogical, linguistic, cultural and other factors.

Among the program activities for the development of linguistic giftedness, a special place is given to foreign language competitions and other intellectual tests. This interdisciplinary approach creates the conditions for more accurate diagnosis and full development of gifted children, including those who speak several languages or are in the process of actively learning them. This perspective unites the efforts of both foreign and national researchers, opening up new opportunities for deepening scientific understanding of the nature of giftedness and improving practical methods of supporting it.

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