

Developing Cross-Cultural Communication Through Digital Educational Resource “Linguistic And Cultural Studies”

By

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Abstract

One of the priorities of the Government of the Russian Federation is to ensure the global competitiveness of Russian education and create a modern and secure digital educational environment that ensures high quality and accessibility of education of all types and levels. In terms of internationalization and integration of domestic education, a special role is assigned to such a subject as “Linguistic and Cultural Studies”, since it assumes understanding of culture of other nation, develops their ability to join the system of value orientations of another nationality, understanding their mentality, behavior stereotypes, tolerant attitude. The article is devoted to the problem of development of cross-cultural communication in the process of using a digital educational resource for the course “Linguistic and Cultural Studies”. The authors identify pedagogical approaches to the development of cross-cultural communication: competence-based, personality-oriented and modular; present the structure and content of digital educational resource, which consists of 10 modules, thematic units in accordance with the program of the discipline; reveal the features of the use of a digital educational resource for the course “Linguistic and Cultural Studies”. The authors present the results of a survey of students at the end of the approbation of a digital educational resource in order to improve the quality of the organization of the educational process in this discipline and make adjustments to the digital educational resource.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, national character, cultural specifics, language and culture, foreign language, digital educational resource

1. Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has made adjustments in all areas of life, including education. Under these circumstances, educational institutions try to implement a safe model of organizing training sessions using digital technologies for teaching students online. One of the key tasks of the Government of the Russian Federation at the present stage is to increase the competitiveness of Russian education, create a modernized and secure digital educational environment that guarantees the availability and quality of education at all levels. IT-

technologies set new trends in different spheres including education and pedagogy. New technologies create conditions for a fundamental change in the entire educational process and in teaching foreign language in particular. For example, educational web blog technology, with the help of which it is possible to develop almost all types of speech activity: writing, reading and listening, as well as improving the sociocultural competence of students [Zakirova, Yashina and Kazachkova, 2019], or a new technology of the "flipped classroom" in the process of education [Abdullina, Ageeva and Gabdreeva, 2019].

Cross-cultural communication refers to interpersonal communication and interaction across different cultures. Effective cross-cultural communication is concerned with overcoming cultural differences across nationality, religion, borders, culture and behavior. The effective development of cross-cultural communication of students in the post-pandemic space requires the use of new digital resources and information and communication technologies. One of the effective ways to develop students' cross-cultural communication, from our point of view, is the integration of information technologies, in particular digital educational resources, into the learning process. The integration of digital technologies in the process of teaching foreign languages corresponds to the requirements for the results of the implementation of the educational program in accordance with the federal state educational standard [Titova, 2017].

Digital education is education that is carried out in a network society, through the use of distance learning, electronic textbooks, various web resources, social networks, blogs, and using modern devices (smartphones, interactive whiteboards, etc.). The key components of digital education, from our point of view, include such aspects as: digital educational environment, digital learning processes, digital knowledge testing processes, digital learning technologies, digital content, digital interaction technologies and digital resources [Vayndorf-Sysoeva and Subocheva, 2018]. Among the components of the digital educational environment, we also include the electronic educational resources (electronic educational resources in support of a particular discipline). So, a digital educational resource is educational materials in the form of a hypertext logical structure with multimedia applications, a course navigation system and management of its components, the ability to organize and conduct intermediate and final certification [Fakhrutdinov, B., Iudintseva, A., Shalamova, G.].

In the context of globalization and internationalization of education, a special role is assigned to such subject as "Linguistic and Cultural Studies", since the linguistic and cultural training of students involves understanding the culture of another people, developing their ability to join the system of value orientations of different nationality, understanding their mentality, stereotypes of behavior and national character. National character is a key to understanding the life of a nation, it is reflected in the language and connects the individual with his culture [Sabirova, Solovyova, Pomortseva and Antonova, 2019]. Cross-cultural communication is a combination of various forms of relations and communication between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures. In this regard, we have developed a digital educational resource for the course "Linguistic and Cultural Studies", since the use of digital educational resources and technologies in the educational activities of students today is a direct need for successful and effective learning [Sagitova, 2020].

2. Methodological Framework

2.1. Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the paper are: 1) to examine the role of digital educational resources in developing students' cross-cultural communication; 2) to present the structure and content of digital educational resource on the course "Linguistic and Cultural Studies"; 3) to reveal the features and results of using the digital educational resource for the course "Linguistic and Cultural Studies".

2.2 Theoretical and Methodological Basis of the Research

Our study is based on the following research methods a) theoretical – the analysis of national and foreign philosophical, pedagogical, methodical literature on a problem; study and generalization of innovative pedagogical experience; analysis of Russian educational standards of higher professional education of the third generation, educational programs in a foreign language teaching; b) empirical – research and analysis of pedagogical experience; observation, interviews with teachers and students.

2.4 The Basis of the Research

The 1st year students of Teacher Training program (Bachelor of Education) of the Institute of the International Relations at Kazan Federal University were involved in using digital educational resource on the course "Linguistic and Cultural Studies".

3. Results

3.1 Pedagogical approaches of the development of cross-cultural communication

The analysis of the appropriate literature on the development of cross-cultural communication allowed us to base our research on the following pedagogical approaches: competence-based approach, personal-oriented approach and modular approach.

1) Competence-based approach. This approach corresponds to the understanding of the fundamental purposes of education formulated in UNESCO documents: to teach to gain knowledge (to learn to learn); to teach to work and earn money (the doctrine for work); to teach to live (the doctrine for life); to teach to live together (the doctrine for joint life). Competence-based approach involves the formation of professional competencies, personal qualities, integrated within the framework of general cultural competencies [Solovyova, Kondrateva, Pomortseva and Sattarova, 2019]. As a result of mastering the discipline "Linguistic and cultural studies", it is assumed that students will develop such general cultural competencies (according to federal state educational standard) as: the ability to communicate orally and in written form in Russian and English languages to solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction (General Competence 4); the ability to work in a team, to tolerate social, cultural and personal differences (General Competence 5); the ability to self-organize and self-educate (General Competence 6).

2) Personal-oriented approach. Within studying this course, it also assumes the formation of such professional competence as: the ability to design the trajectories of their professional growth and personal development (Professional Competence 10). Personal-oriented approach includes the ability of students to manage their educational activities, in the process of which it is supposed to design their individual educational route for mastering this course, when a student can work with a digital educational resource offline. We consider the individual educational route as purposefully projected individual educational program providing to the student a position of the subject of educational professional activity promoting formation of its

self-educational activity on the basis of psychological and pedagogical support of its choice in self-realization [Sagitova, Khanipova and Valeeva 2020]. So personal-oriented approach promotes students' developing cross-cultural language communication using digital educational resource on the course "Linguistic and Cultural Studies".

3) The modular approach. The analyses of the pedagogical and methodological literature allow us to consider that module is a methodological structure of an academic discipline, which includes didactic goals, a logically completed unit of educational material based on intra-subject and interdisciplinary connections, methodological guidance (including didactic materials) and a control system. The modular approach is based on the structuring of educational material in certain thematic blocks, modules. It is designed to achieve specific didactic goals within this digital educational resource.

3.2 The structure and content of the digital educational resource on "Linguistic and Cultural Studies"

The main aim of the course is to develop students' cross-cultural language communication. The key tasks of the course we consider: 1) the study of language units that most clearly reflect national characteristics of the country: its realities (designations of objects and phenomena that are characteristic of one culture and absent in another), connotative vocabulary (words that coincide in their main meaning, but differ in cultural and historical associations); 2) mastering a system of background knowledge, including the worldview and views prevailing in a given society, ethical assessments and tastes, norms of speech and non-speech behavior; 3) the ability to use the potential of the language to achieve communicative goals, to navigate the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences.

The digital educational resource on "Linguistic and Cultural Studies" includes a total of 72 hours, 20 hours of lectures, 12 hours of practical training and 40 hours of independent work. The time frame of the course is 10 weeks: 1 lecture (2 hours) and one practical class (2 hours) per week [Sagitova, 2020].

The course is divided into 10 thematic units (modules): 1) The history of the English language. 2) Some Points of the UK History. 3) The development of the English language: historical conditions and linguistic characteristics. 4) The British Political System. 5) The British Education System. 6) British Economy. 7) British Society. British way of life. 8) The English Renaissance. 9) Victorian Era. 10) British Empire.

The course includes 10 thematic units in accordance with the working program of the discipline, each of which includes a separate topic with theoretical material, which is presented in the form of a lecture (video lecture) and is accompanied by a presentation to it. For a comfortable understanding of how to work with the material inside the educational resource, each module comprises methodological guidelines with step-by-step instructions for studying the topic; basic and additional literature on the topic with specific chapters, sections, pages in the sources and links to them. Each topic is accompanied by a glossary and information support, which includes various open Internet resources (mass open online courses, links to YouTube, podcasts, audio-video casts, etc.). One of these free Internet resources that we use in the digital educational resource in almost all modules is the audio and video podcasts of the University of Oxford. For example, King Alfred the Great by Francis Leneghan at <http://writersinspire.org/content/king-alfred-great>, Old English in Context Lecture 2 - Society by Stuart Lee at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/via> <http://writersinspire.org/content/old-english-context-lecture-2-society>, Beowulf - Scyld Scefing's Funeral by Matt Love at <http://poppy.nsms.ox.ac.uk/woruldhord/> via <http://writersinspire.org/content/beowulf-scyld->

scefings-funeral, Julian Thompson on Sir Walter Scott by Julian Thompson at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/> via <http://writersinspire.org/content/julian-thompson-sir-walter-scott>, Old English Tour - British Library by Stuart Lee at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/> via <http://writersinspire.org/content/old-english-tour-british-library> and others.

To consolidate the theoretical material on the topic, each module includes a file with a practical task and questions for self-control. The practical task on the topic consists of lexical and grammatical tasks and exercises, authentic texts, linguistic and extralinguistic objects, speaking, listening, reading and writing tasks.

In addition, to consolidate the obtained theoretical knowledge, students develop multi-level projects in groups or individually and prepare presentations on issues. The tasks of practical classes are primarily aimed at developing the skills to independently analyze cross-cultural literature and use the potential of the language to achieve communicative goals.

Upon completion of the module studying, students write a test. A Test on the Topic is a compulsory element of each module and usually consists of 15-20 questions. The final element of each module is the implementation of feedback on each topic in the form of a chat, forum or Wiki, where students can communicate with each other, consult with the teacher, ask questions and discuss problems.

The last mandatory element of the digital educational resource is the final control block, which consists of a list of questions for the final control (credit) and interactive elements of knowledge control: tests. We designed different types of tests: multiple choice, alternative choice, matching, correct sequence, question-essay, short answer, completion, etc. In the final block of questions, the test must contain at least 30 questions. The test is presented in the form of an HTML document – a MOODLE object. The teacher himself (herself) sets the criteria for evaluating students' answers when drawing up tests in accordance with the accepted score-rating system of the university, as well as the time period for completing the test and the number of attempts.

Another mandatory element of our digital educational resource is an Intermediate Control Block which consists of an Intermediate Test including 30 questions. The intermediate control block is designed to test students' knowledge on the topics of several modules.

4. Discussion

After the implementation of this digital educational resource on “Linguistic and Cultural Studies”, we conducted a small survey among students in order to improve the quality of the organization of the educational process in this discipline and make adjustments to the digital educational resource. Participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. Evaluate the informativeness, content and relevance of the educational material of this electronic educational resource: excellent – 91%; good – 7%; satisfactory – 2%; unsatisfactory – 0%.
2. Evaluate the quality of your teacher's lecture work on this course (how interesting and accessible the teacher presents the material, how well he / she knows the material): excellent – 90%; good – 8%; satisfactory – 2%; unsatisfactory – 0%.
3. Rate this discipline according to the criterion "interesting": excellent – 70%; good – 25%; satisfactory – 5%; unsatisfactory – 0 %.

4. Evaluate the discipline of information support (includes various open Internet resources, links to you tube, podcasts, audio-video casts, etc.): excellent – 85%; good – 15 %; satisfactory – 0%; unsatisfactory – 0%.
5. Evaluate the materials of practical assignments for this digital educational course: excellent – 82%; good – 15%; satisfactory – 5%; unsatisfactory – 0%.
6. Rate the tasks for independent work of this digital educational resource: excellent – 72%; good – 18%; satisfactory – 10%; unsatisfactory – 0%.
7. Were you satisfied with the time frame for mastering this digital educational resource? yes – 62%; no – 24%; I don't know – 14%.
8. Does this digital educational resource contribute to the development of cross-cultural communication? yes – 80%; no – 6%; I don't know – 14%.
9. What types of devices did you use while mastering this digital educational resource? personal computer – 3%; laptop – 12%; tablet – 17%; mobile phone – 85%.

5. Conclusion

Digital educational resource “Linguistic and Cultural Studies” helped students to expand their knowledge of national customs, traditions, realities of the country, the ability to extract country-specific information from the language units, achieving full-fledged communication. All this, in turn, contributed to the development of students’ cross-cultural communication.

Thus, we can note that the use of a digital educational resource on the course “Linguistic and Cultural Studies” promotes not only the development of cross-cultural communication of students, but individualization and differentiation of the educational process; designing individual educational routes of students; development of self-educational activities of students; interconnected training in various types of speech activity and improving students’ digital literacy.

Experience has shown that the introduction of digital educational resources in the learning process contributed to a significant increase in students’ motivation to study the subject, high activity throughout the educational process, the development of self-educational activities and the achievement of positive results based on testing.

The choice of this technology, forms and methods are not accidental, as they facilitate the involvement of students in the process of educational and self-educational activities, cooperation with the teacher, implementation of feedback in the process of independent cognitive activity and motivation of students [Harmer, 2007].

6. Recommendations

The results and conclusions of the article extend the study of the theory, methods and techniques in foreign language learning and teaching. The materials of this research can also be used by teachers and lectures at the English classes and in lecture courses on “Linguistic and Cultural Studies”, “Theory of foreign language teaching”.

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