

**EEIA 2019**  
**International Conference "Education Environment for the  
Information Age"**

**SCHOOLCHILDREN'S LANGUAGES AND READING CULTURE  
DEVELOPMENT IN INFORMATION SOCIALISATION ERA**

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***Abstract***

In the modern world child's personality development occurs in information environment, influenced by digital technologies. The sole human evolution scenario, with no alternative, where traditional ties between individuals are replaced with virtual connections supported by technologies, causes serious concerns among scientists. Therefore, current research questions include not only psychological and pedagogical consequences of Internet communication but also the detection of the peculiarities of individual's search for identity, the identification of new forms of value transmission in interaction between teachers and pupils. The authors reveal the role of the humanities in the formation of traditional values, consider the specific features of language competence development in the situation of information socialization, and schoolchildren's perception of language norms and literary images. The paper represents the outcomes of the study which investigated the motivation of fifth grade students at Russian language lessons, and value orientations and literary preferences of high school students. There search showed that it is important to emphasize spiritual and moral meanings of Russian literature and to improve lessons through the implementation of innovative methods for the efficient perception of literary works. The authors actualize the development of new methods of the improvement of schoolchildren's language competence and reading culture, the use of the technologies that help form and develop moral and aesthetic experience of a person, and the need of taking into account the lack of emotional interaction between pupils and teachers.

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**Keywords:** Schoolchildren, language, literature, information, socialization, values.



## 1. Introduction

In recent years, socialization has been studied not only as the development of a socialized individual in social environment but also as a complex process in the world of permanent social changes. New theories suppose that people, knowledge and environment constitute a part of socialization, and an individual is just one of its participants (Höppner, 2017). Information culture is perceived as one of the most influential agents of socialization, determined by the media, and the transformation of the verbal type of European culture into visual and audio-visual is seen as an interdisciplinary problem.

The peculiarities of the perception and processing information were investigated in numerous studies (A.Ye. Voyskunsky, Ye.P. Belinskaya, Ye.M. Dubovskaya, G.R. Khuseyeva, I.V. Usoltseva et al) (as cited in Usoltseva, 2010).

Different aspects of information socialization were also studied different researchers (López-Paredes, 2017). The work by Genner and Süss (2017) “Socialization as Media Effect” is of particular interest to us as it emphasizes that repeated exposure of the media has the potential for education and long-term consequences for behavior as well as for worldview and values formation.

The ideas about digital preferences of contemporary youth are presented in the works by Ayanyan and Martsinkovskaya (2016), Grebennikova (2017) who emphasize the significance of the understanding of information socialization complexity. In different studies information is interpreted both as the way of world structuring that imposes great responsibility on information sources and as the way of its transmission to teenagers and young people (Lenhart, 2015; Lee & Porfeli, 2015).

Recent research notes a controversial influence of information socialization on a personality. On the one hand, researchers have revealed a wide range of information technologies that improve the learning process (Schuck, Kearney, & Burden, 2017). On the other hand, teachers, school practitioners and scientists believe that the human development scenario, where virtuality replaced a real life, cannot but cause worry and concern. “The content of education is substituted with the content of learning, as a result of which a standardized individual should appear” (Slobodchikov & Ostapenko, 2017, pp.10-11). The issue of the identification of the developing and educational potential of school subjects is very important as it helps overcome the trend towards making the learning process excessively technological (Cable et al., 2012).

According to some research, emotional learning in the conditions of prevailing non-verbal culture is one of the important aims of pedagogics (Mohanty, 2011). In Wagner’s (2016) opinion, to awaken schoolchildren’s interest in language and literature of the past it is important to clarify the role of emotions in the texts and to understand their meaning. At Russian language and literature lessons a student can get a great chance to adopt national and universal values (Martinsen, Popkin, & Reyfman, 2017).

The problem of the improvement of language competence and reading culture in the situation of information socialization should be solved with the understanding of the significance of schoolchildren’s familiarization with the value heritage of language and literature. The investigation of a person’s assimilation in information environment enables to identify new methods of education and development at Russian language and literature lessons as well as to update the content of school subjects.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Russian philologists and educators establish the objectives of philological education recognizing that language and literature learning in school should be oriented towards general cultural development of personality (Lanin, Slemzina, Antonova, & Atmaeva, 2017). The study considers the process of schoolchildren's perception of language norms and literary images which is determined by the choice of visual and auditory ways of information processing, the prevalence of the rational-logical way children acquire knowledge about the world, autism, the inability to find a role model (Kaznacheeva & Shubina, 2016).

The study revealed that students experience difficulty in understanding and emotional perception of language and literature norms and values. Most schoolchildren showed the prevalence of cognitive development while their worldview and value orientations are not sufficiently developed. Students have poor knowledge of lexical and grammatical systems of Russian language, they also lack reading culture and aesthetic experience.

It is essential to search for new methods of Russian language and literature teaching as they play a growing role not because of their competition against non-verbal information sources but given a new potential of language and literary images, as well as their influence on person's moral sphere.

## **3. Research Questions**

It is important for us to identify which technologies best facilitate the improvement of students' language competence and reading culture in the situation of information socialization; how to awaken their interest in Russian language and literature, to motivate them towards the study of Russian language richness, to develop the ability to feel and display empathy with literary characters and to build up personal attitude to literature.

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

The purpose of the study is to investigate the level of the development of schoolchildren's language competence and reading culture in the situation of information socialization, to develop new methods for the improvement of language and reading literacy.

## **5. Research Methods**

To analyze the level of students' reading culture we developed the questionnaire "Students' individual and collective notion of the system of significant values, reading and information preferences". It contained following questions: "What do you value most in a literary work?", "Name your favorite literary work", "Which writers influenced your opinions and your guiding principles for life?", "Can you name 'enriching' the way literature influence people?", "Do you agree with A. Tarkovsky's words – 'Art has never solved problems, it has posed them'".

To reveal the interest in the school subject Russian Language we performed a diagnostic evaluation of students' motivation in the classroom and the efficacy of the lessons. We used the methods

of observation, the analysis of students' performance, interviews, and performed the diagnostic work for the identification of emotional attitude to learning, school subjects etc. The diagnostic questionnaire corresponded to the students' age-related characteristics.

## 6. Findings

We conducted a study of the motivation of fifth-graders to study the Russian language. It was found that the students consider the grade they get at the lesson as an indication of their learning success, classmates' respect, teacher's and parents' attitude towards their performance. The interviews revealed the clear coherence of the interest in learning and the current achievement level.

The analysis also showed that the students experienced difficulty in acquiring the knowledge on lexicology, morphology and syntax, had problems with the home work, and demonstrated a low level of the understanding of text meaning. The study revealed that students' insufficient motivation had a destructive impact on their subject outcomes and caused difficulty in learning and interaction with classmates and teachers.

Traditional Russian language lessons were given only in the first sub-group of the fifth grade, where the students mastered the learning material relatively well, but not all of them were active in the classroom. Some students noted "incomprehensibility and complexity" of the school subject "Russian language" and the need for patience to learn it. This choice was typical for low-performing students and for the students with insufficient motivation.

To develop literary competence, we planned three stages of the experimental work –diagnostic, formative and summative.

At the diagnostic stage the study of students' information preferences was conducted. It showed the discrepancies in students' value orientations, moral infantilism and social immaturity. The questions "What kind of books do you like to read?" and "Which writers of the 19th and 20th centuries facilitated the development of your feeling of humaneness?" were answered as follows: 40% of students said "Mainly science fiction", "Do not know, I live my own life", "Books don't influence me", "Literature cannot have a great meaning without practice". Only 10% of respondents considered Russian classic literature and foreign literature as their value priorities. So, we can note a shallow interpretation of literary images, superficial understanding of author's position, inability to perceive the meanings of literary works, to have aesthetic and moral experiences.

At the formative stage we analyzed the achievement level of the fifth graders in the control group and came to the conclusion that after a series of non-traditional lessons student performance improved. The main indicator of increasing student motivation was the answer to the question "Do you like to actively work at Russian language lessons?" At the first stage of the study the answer "Yes" was found in 40% of the questionnaires of the fifth graders, the answer "No" – in 50%. After a series of non-traditional Russian language lessons already 80% of students answered "Yes" to the same question and only 10% - "No".

For the improvement of students' interest in language and literature we used such work forms as the linguistic games "So, what then is my name to you?", "Create your own neologism", the quiz-games "Guess a neologism", "Build your own word house", the creative contests "The copyright for Russian

language”, “I’m also a dictation author”. Students’ cognitive motivation changed to some extent as many of them chose the options “the subject is very engaging”, “it helps develop my general culture”, “Russian language learning positively impact my knowledge of the world”. In comparison with the previous tests we revealed a higher level of learning motivation.

The assessment of learning motivation level showed that 46,7% of the fifth-graders have positive motivation, whereas before a series of non-traditional lessons positive motivation was demonstrated only by 13,3% of the students in the experimental group. Achievement assessment confirmed the need for the implementation of non-traditional lessons. The fifth-graders learn to actively express their opinion, to correctly understand and use the meanings of the words and idioms of modern Russian language and literature of the past, they like creative work with words.

At the formative stage of the study we actualized the educational and developmental goals of literature classes and organized a thorough work with literary texts. In the discussions, the topics and ideas of classical literature were compared with their contemporary interpretation, the students developed the ability to identify the authors’ positions and were motivated to express their point of view. We also analyzed the questionnaires, interviews, which reflected the improvement of students’ critical thinking, their emotional response, evaluation skills and convictions. High school students learnt to develop their own personalized way of perception of literary texts. For example, at the lessons devoted to F. Dostoyevsky’s novel “Crime and Punishment” the discussions focused on the image of Lizaveta which helped realize the idea of that one crime would inevitably result in another one. The assignments for the students included the following questions and topics: “Which artistic means are used for the creation of the image of Lizaveta?”; “Find in her description the words that describe her personality (‘she was very honest’, ‘she spoke as a rule little and ... was very submissive and timid’)”; “Analyze the conversation between a student and an officer in a tavern. Which Lizaveta’s qualities does the student mention?”; “Why does the student talk about the murder of the old woman just after he describes Lizaveta?”; “How do you understand the student’s idea that ‘we have to correct and direct nature, and, but for that, we should drown in an ocean of prejudice’?”; “What message does the author want to send us when emphasizes that Lizaveta is defenseless?”; “Could the writer do without this character to prove the idea that one crime inevitably results in another one?”

The students came to the conclusion that the accidental absurd murder of the meek Lizaveta led Raskolnikov to accept the punishment of his own free will.

At the formative stage of the study audio-visual technologies (multimedia presentations on the lesson topic) were used.

At the summative stage the students were asked to answer the questions connected with the understanding of literary works. The students showed a better text comprehension as well as a deeper evaluation of the author’s position. The relations between the students and the teacher can be characterized as more confidential, the schoolchildren became milder and more tolerant towards each other: “The influence of literature can be named ‘enriching’ because reading broadens our horizons and changes our view of life” (Anastasia O.) The answers to the question “Can you say that literature has an impact on you?” showed a personalized perception of literary works: “Just one book is able to completely

change person's worldview as F. Dostoyevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment" did it with many people" (Maxim I.).

At the summative stage of the study special attention was paid to subject-oriented technologies of learner-centered and heuristic education, discussions, information-communicative techniques etc.

The criteria of students' evaluation of literary works changed. If earlier they could not determine precisely why they didn't like the text ("stupid, boring, idle chatter annoys"), now their criteria include the truth of life found in literary works, the emotionality of images, the richness of characters' inner world, writer's ability to reflect moral ideals, influence on the formation of readers' convictions. The students define the notion of "humaneness" as "the ability to be merciful", "love and care for someone", "respect for a personality", "the ability to express sympathy to people", "non-indifference, love", "compassion, the ability to feel empathy".

Answering the question "Which writers of the XIX and XXth century facilitated the development of your feeling of humaneness?" the students named L.N. Tolstoy, F.M. Dostoyevsky, A.S. Pushkin, A.P. Chekhov, M.A. Bulgakov, H. Beecher Stowe, D. Defoe. And answering the question "Which writers influenced your opinions and your guiding principles for life?" they mentioned I.S. Turgenev, A.S. Pushkin, L.N. Tolstoy, F.M. Dostoyevsky, E.M. Remarque, A. Koestler, J.K. Rowling. The students wrote that these books "learnt to accept and hear each other, made think of the life in society", "learnt not to give up, to help others".

So we can note a significant influence of literature on the development of students' personality qualities, they are interested in putting themselves in the place of literary characters and finding out how difficult it is to make the right choice. "Books help us to understand ourselves, to find the solution of the problem, reflect upon the most important things in life" – that's the conclusion the students came to by the end of experimental learning.

## **7. Conclusion**

The resurgence of interest in Russian language and literature is caused by integrated influence over a personality, when a teacher plays a crucial role awakening students' emotions with the power of the literary word. The improvement of schoolchildren's reading culture is impossible without the ability to listen to the words, to perceive the values of literary works, to hold a conversation. Such teaching techniques as the work in micro-groups, multi-level instruction, discussions, joint projects help promote students' interaction, improve the relations of responsibility, support and empathy.

Under the conditions of growing information environment it is important to consider the acquisition of the knowledge of the humanities, and to develop practice-oriented technologies for the identification of educational resources of information socialization and the reduction of risk impact. It is also significant to take into account the lack of emotional interaction between students and adults and to motivate schoolchildren towards emotional perception of Russian language and literature, the comprehension of author's ideas and the understanding of the richness of artistic associations and language means.

## Acknowledgments

The article is prepared under the government contract № 073-00092-19-00 for 2019 The Federal State Budget Scientific Institution “Institute of Study of Childhood, Family and Education of the Russian Academy of Education” on the project “The scientific base of family and social upbringing of children and youth and the pedagogical support of the development of children’s upbringing and socialization in education system”.

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