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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

**INFORMATION CULTURE OF THE RFL TEACHER: CONTENT,
PRESENT CONDITIONS, PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract

Nowadays, the rapid digitalization of social life has a great impact on the development of the modern educational space which tends to optimize the teaching process by means of electronic resources. This implies that a university teacher has to meet new information literacy requirements. One of the components of a teacher's professional activity is the development of electronic teaching materials suitable for distance interaction between a teacher and students as on-line teaching has already become an integral part of the effective educational process. The article deals with the information literacy of the RFL teacher which is a necessary component of the teacher's profession under the conditions of digitalization of the educational space. The authors consider the types and forms of educational and methodological activities of information literate RFL teachers. In addition, in the article the researchers analyze the results of the questionnaire filled in by the teachers and suggest the ways to promote information literacy.

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Keywords: Information literacy of the RFL teacher, profession of the RFL teacher, e-learning.



1. Introduction

The modern anthropocentric paradigm of scientific knowledge influences pedagogical concepts (Shaklein & Mikova, 2018). A modern student is a representative of the new “digital generation” (Prensky, 2001). In the present conditions the teacher should have strong computer skills to be able to efficiently use the Internet and modern computer technologies to organize an educational process, because “the great popularity of the Internet and the widespread use of mobile information and communication technologies has significantly changed the social environment and social communication” (Bylieva, Lobatyuk, & Rubtsova, 2018, p. 226). Scientists point out visual nature of modern information: «The modern era is the era of total visualization of information. A person receives the information necessary to him, not through words and meanings, but through vivid images and simple signs» (Simakova, 2017, p. 107). According to Demidova, Slyusarenko and Shapranova (2018), a teacher who does not use additional information sources and technical capabilities of multimedia technologies will not be able to fulfil his professional tasks and functions successfully (p. 1585).

For foreign language teachers, in particular, for RFL teachers, e-learning is not just a modern form of the educational process. It is also an important component of the effective educational activity that improves classroom teaching and helps to combine distance learning with the traditional educational process. However, online interaction does not replace the traditional form of teaching, communication between the teacher and students in the classroom and learning through a textbook. On-line courses motivate students to learn on their own and to consolidate the knowledge they gain in the classroom. This is just one of the additional methodological techniques promoting pedagogical cooperation under the modern conditions of the development of the society. At the same time, it is a challenging task for teachers to organize online interaction. In addition, according to the Federal State Educational Standard, RFL teachers have to develop their general cultural competence, which means that they have to be able to use information technologies to acquire new knowledge and skills and to apply them in different spheres of activity.

The effectiveness of the system of professional training, first of all, is determined by the demand of the society of the specialists with different professional profiles and with the required level of qualification (Mitrofanova, 2018; p. 1809). Multimedia technologies are helpful for instructors, «as they prevent them from professional burnout despite of heavy study loads, encourage them to find new solutions to already known problems, create and self-develop» (Cho, Lim, & Lee, 2017, p.167).

2. Problem Statement

The authors of methodological works, devoted to the digitalization of education, argue that this process is rapid and prospective. However, in practice, there are some contradictions:

- a) despite a wide range of modern electronic resources, teachers have no specific methodological resource to optimize the educational process;
- b) highly qualified teachers do not meet information literacy requirements;
- c) there is a variety of methodological and didactic teaching strategies, however, teachers do not apply them in the digital educational environment.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. Information culture requirements RFL teacher have to meet.
- 3.2. The content of the information culture of the RFL teacher.
- 3.3. The problems the teachers face in the digital educational environment.
- 3.4. The prospects for the development of information literacy under the conditions of further digitalization of the educational process.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the content of the information culture of RFL teachers and the level of formation of its components in their professional activity. The research is also aimed at analyzing teachers' willingness to meet the information culture requirements.

5. Research Methods

The research was based on the analysis of theoretical works devoted to the problem under discussion as well as on the analysis of the results of the questionnaire that the teachers were asked to fill in.

6. Findings

In the modern educational environment, information literacy of RFL teachers is an integral part of their profession ("norms and special requirements for the professional activity and personal qualities of a specialist" (Markova, 1996).

Thanks to the development of digital technologies and Internet, there are new forms of learning such as distance learning, online learning, and learning through the use of electronic educational resources. Implementation of these new technologies totally depends on the "information culture of the teacher", which implies a formed information worldview and the system of knowledge and skills that provide targeted independent activity to meet individual information needs by means of both traditional and new information pedagogical technologies (Deryabina, D'yakova, & Zherebtsova, 2015, p. 14).

Today there are different kinds of technologies in education: "electronic textbooks, interactive learning trainers, virtual realities (virtual museum, virtual travel), computer presentations, electronic text and exercise databases, reference and information material (online translators and dictionaries), electronic libraries and collections (audio-, photo-, video files), web-based applications for textbooks, modes of communication in social network services etc." (Nizova & Potapov, 2014, p. 97). Osipova (2018) shares personal experience of using corpus linguistics technology in foreign language teaching, presents a set of corpus-based exercises and describes the procedure of the learners' work with the basic corpus tools (p. 273).

Let us analyze the content of the teacher's information culture in the framework of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

1. Finding information

RFL teachers should have a formed information worldview, to be able to find the information they need and to use it in the teaching process.

2. Methodological materials for e-learning

Teachers have to be aware of the most effective methods and materials that can be used in e-learning and on-line interaction with students.

3. Use of electronic teaching materials

To organize the e-learning process, teachers need to use lots of digital educational materials on Russian as a foreign language: multimedia learning kits, online tutorials, online teaching materials, web-based applications for printed textbooks and teaching materials, network test systems, and specialized information resources. The RFL teacher should use specific materials to organize the educational process in accordance with the objectives of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

4. Development of electronic teaching materials

To organize the educational process in the digital educational environment, teachers need to meet information literacy requirements. They need to have skills in administering LMS systems (learning management systems), to be able to organize online teaching, to have basic knowledge of HTML and computer graphics. Teachers also have to arrange the e-learning process through electronic educational portals (for example, Derzhavinsky in the network). To use educational portals of universities teachers provide e-courses, attach pictures and videos, infographics, links to video / audio materials, and to create multiple-choice tests. These educational platforms «expand the teacher's profессиogram which includes more competences. Teachers should be able to develop new materials for the system of the distance education and by means of IT interact with students and monitor their progress online» (Deryabina & D'yakova, 2018, p. 606).

5. Teaching online

The RFL teacher should be able to model the e-learning environment using:

- modern video messengers (Skype, Viber, WhatsApp) in teaching online;
- websites to arrange webinars (for example, My Own Conference, Webinar.ru, Mirapolis Virtual Room);
- interactive electronic teaching materials in online communication with students (presentations, pages of textbooks, audio and video materials, links to Internet resources);
- interactive functions of video messengers (for example, "Demonstration of the screen", etc.).

It is rather difficult for RFL teachers who lack special training to meet the information literacy requirements. Thus, university teachers should be provided with methodological support to improve their professional competencies and to regularly use modern digital education tools in the process of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

To measure the teachers' involvement in the modern online educational process, the authors of the article asked 50 Russian lecturers and professors to fill in the questionnaire. The respondents teach Russian as a foreign language at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, at Tambov State University named after G.R. Derzhavin and at Tambov State Technical University.

Table 1. The results of the questionnaire filled in by RFL teachers

Questions	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you use digital education tools in the process of teaching?	60	20	10	10
Do you have problems finding information for educational purposes through various search engines (Google, Yandex etc.)?		10		90
Do you know how to arrange online interaction with students?	100			
Do you use multimedia learning kits, online tutorials, online teaching materials, web-based applications for printed textbooks and teaching materials?	50	30	10	10
Do you use network test systems in the classroom?	10	10	30	50
Have you ever developed teaching materials for electronic resources (e.g. for Internet educational portals on the basis of MOODLE, TUIS, etc., such as “Derzhavinsky in the network”)?	40	10	0	50
Have you ever given lessons online?	5	5	5	85

According to the results (table 1), most RFL teachers are able to find information for educational purposes through various search engines, they use digital education tools, multimedia learning kits and web-based applications for printed textbooks, and they are able to arrange online interaction with students. All RUDN teachers and 20% of the teachers from TSU who filled in the questionnaire need to develop teaching materials for electronic resources (Internet educational portals of the universities).

Less than half of the respondents (30%) use network test systems in the classroom, only 15% have given lessons online.

In addition, the teachers answered the question about the role of e-learning tools in teaching Russian as a foreign language. 90% of the respondents said that they cannot do without those tools as they help to improve the teaching process. However, 10% of the teachers claimed that e-learning tools only provide psychological relief to students.

The teachers were also asked to list the e-resources they used in the educational process, such as multimedia learning kits, online tutorials, and on-line teaching materials, web-based applications for printed textbooks and teaching materials, network test systems.

According to the results of the questionnaire, teachers do not think it is problematic to find the information they need and to use methodological materials for e-learning. However, teachers need special training to develop materials for electronic resources and to teach students online: «Online education is popular nowadays, is developed by educational institutions and is in the sphere of state interests» (Grechushkina, 2018, p. 125). Online education requests electronic informational educational environment of the institution, which «provides access to electronic educational resources, assists communication of students, teachers, etc» (Chupandina & Semenikhina, 2018, p. 104).

Nowadays, e-learning is getting more and more popular in the context of the development of educational digital technologies and the Internet, which means that the teacher must have a number of skills. Thus, distance education and interaction between the teacher and students can be provided thanks to seamless access to the Internet and special programs: 1) websites for arranging webinars (for example,

My Own Conference, Webinar.ru, Mirapolis Virtual Room, etc.) or 2) modern video messengers such as Skype, Viber, WhatsApp. To interact with a group of students, teachers work on websites. Video messengers are more suitable for individual tutorials and teaching a small group of students.

The teacher should be aware of such general concepts as information society, information resources, information flows and files and the ways they function, etc. Moreover, teachers should be able to use a computer-based information retrieval system; to analyze and synthesize information; to be able to find information and use it in their professional and other cognitive activities. Apart from that, a modern teacher should be able to use special programs to provide distance education, to interact with students online, etc. In other words, teachers should have information and communication technology skills to organize the educational process.

Thus, if RFL teachers meet new information literacy requirements, they have no problems using educational technologies to teach students online.

Let us analyze the role of modern computer technologies in e-learning.

Electronic handouts are widely used in distance education. These can be presentations, textbook pages, audio and video materials, links to Internet resources, etc. Teachers create files (each of them is assigned a number) and attach them to the chat window of the video messenger. So, there is no need to have a traditional blackboard to make notes on, as students open these files one by one when the teacher tells them to do that.

Teachers have no opportunities to write on the blackboard when they explain the material online. It is difficult to know in advance what students might ask to explain to them. However, it is not a problem as teachers can demonstrate their screen when they work on special websites or use video messengers. To explain things to students online and demonstrate pictures, photos, tables, e-textbooks etc., teachers can use such programs as Word and Paint.

Teachers find it comfortable to use electronic textbooks when they arrange the educational process online, because «multimedia and innovative technologies create new opportunities for digesting educational material in the format of academic lecture» (Nikulina, Korablina, & Mordvintseva, 2018, p. 922).

Firstly, the information in e-textbooks is systematized. Secondly, electronic textbooks contain multimedia materials: photos, videos, graphics, animation, sound, which helps to model the language environment (typical communicative situations).

By means of electronic textbooks, teachers can:

- provide students with audiovisual information. Students learn to understand natural oral speech analyzing graphical representations of intonation;
- model and plan in advance a communication environment motivating students to learn to interact and to adapt;
- to organize the educational process creating problem situations (with the help of video) and describe the ways these problems can be solved;
- motivate students to speak spontaneously and to learn to adapt to communicative situations;
- choose methods to provide educational materials.

Digitalization of the educational space implies that RFL teachers' profession needs to be changed. In other words, teachers have to meet new information literacy requirements to be able to organize the educational process by means of modern electronic resources and traditional teaching methods.

7. Conclusion

The integration of computer technology into education is a natural process characterizing the modern society. Thus, teachers need to meet modern requirements and keep up with the times, increasing their own information culture. The teacher should be able to skillfully organize the process of distance education by means of special websites and video messengers, and to provide students with traditional and digital learning material. The teacher should be able to skillfully organize the process of distance education by means of special websites and video messengers, and to provide students with traditional and digital learning material.

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