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PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL REACTION OF STUDENTS TO THE DISTANCE LEARNING FORMAT

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the speech receptive reactions of students who were forced to switch to a distance learning format due to the widespread spread of COVID-19 infection. In the fall of 2020, at Siberian State Highway University (Omsk, Russia), an associative experiment was conducted with second-year students in order to assess the experience of mass introduction of distance learning technologies, assess the psychoemotional reactions of students, revealing the degree of psychological and emotional comfort of students studying in a pandemic circumstance. The aim was to identify zones of comfort and discomfort, difficulties that students had to face during the period of distance learning, their sources and degree of frequency. Based on the results obtained, a number of methodological recommendations were developed, the purpose of which is to reduce negative psychoemotional reactions and increase the degree of effectiveness of the educational process in a distance format. Through an associative experiment, we were able to identify and analyze the psychoemotional assessment of the components and their frequency within the modified concept of "distance education"; practical recommendations of a didactic nature were proposed for reducing negative connotations and removing psychological barriers in the process of distance learning.

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1. Introduction

Distance learning before the spread of coronavirus infection was a form of mediated interaction between a teacher and a student through Internet technologies or other technical means that allow transferring the required information format (Polat et al., 2004). Widespread forms of distance learning were webinars, conferences, developing educational platforms, including many types of educational activities (Polat, 2006).

Distance learning was born in Europe at the end of the 18th century in the form of "correspondent learning". When teaching materials were delivered to the students by mail, the completed work was sent by mail to the teacher, exams were passed to a trusted person or in the form of a scientific work (Khusyainov, 2014).

In Russia, the distance learning method first appeared at the end of the 19th century. This was due to intensive technological progress, which caused the modification of many areas of activity, including education. The educational audience expanded, whole cycles of educational programs appeared.

In 1969, the world's first distance education university, the Open University of Great Britain, was opened in the UK. In Russia, the date of the official development of distance learning can be considered May 30, 1997, when the order No. 1050 of the Ministry of Education of Russia was issued, which allows conducting an experiment of distance learning in the field of education (the experiment was subsequently extended) (Zaychenko, 2004).

In Russia, the original form of distance learning was intended primarily for people who, for various reasons, did not have the opportunity to study full-time. In addition, this training format allowed solving a number of economic issues, such as reducing rental and road costs (Ivanchenko, 2005).

Society is constantly adapting to new living conditions. The coronavirus infection Covid-19 has changed the way of life around the world. And only modern information and communication technologies have helped to provide access to a variety of sources of information and to solve current problems in a consolidated manner, including those of an educational nature. New technologies contribute to the active involvement of students in the educational process, make it possible to automate this process, in contrast to most traditional forms of education. In recent decades, distance education in Russia has developed very intensively. The main advantage of distance learning is territorial accessibility for any category of students.

During the Coronavirus Infection - COVID-19 pandemic, the key advantage of the distance format was the lack of direct contact between students, which made it possible to maintain the continuity of the educational process and ensure social distance, preventing the further spread of the infection.

2. Problem Statement

In 2020, distance learning has become the only one possible in the context of the coronavirus infection pandemic - COVID-19. In Russia, many universities have carried out online learning using Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, or have developed and implemented their own educational platforms. New circumstances demanded new methods of teaching, processing and assimilating information. Methodological techniques and complexes of creative learning exercises were developed for analyzing foreign-language texts in a non-linguistic university (Bukovski, 2020). The development of the problem of

interdisciplinary integration of academic disciplines continued (Voronina, 2020). The problem of the introduction of automated educational activity is acute (Nuriyev & Starygina, 2020). Much attention is paid to the age-related receptive characteristics of students in a single information space (Sorokoumova & Lobanova, 2020). During a pandemic, the question of the need to improve the qualifications of the teaching staff and the adaptation of educational institutions to work online arose sharply (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; AgAhmad, 2020; Crawford et al., 2020; Korepanova & Shuvalova, 2020). Many scientific articles have been written and published highlighting new approaches and problems arising from their implementation, for example, cognitive barriers in secondary school (Mailizar et al., 2020), problems of a socio-economic nature when using distance learning (Ben Amram & Davidovitch, 2021; Zhong, 2020). The question of the need to strengthen methodological support (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020) is touched upon, more and more people are beginning to talk about the need to take into account the influence of psychological factors (Armakolas & Panagiotakopoulos, 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Misirli, 2020; Parczewska, 2020), about the active adaptation of the educational process to new conditions (Armakolas, 2021; Bozkurt & Sharm, 2020; Chang & Satako, 2020; Kanellopoulos et al., 2020). The whole world is striving to overcome the crisis and maintain the education system (UNICEF…, 2020).

Distance learning has become part of the personal experience of all students. There was an extrapolation and interiorization of this concept among the population, which entailed changes in the content of this concept in the linguistic consciousness.

When modeling the mental sphere of students, we need to take into account the fact that when producing speech, the speaker relies on his semiosphere, a conglomerate of objects, assessments, facts and events. The speaker's activity is determined by at least two semiotic models of the world: national and individual (Maksimyuk, 2010). "Consciousness is composed and realized in the sign material created in the process of social communication of the linguistic community" (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 243).

The structure of consciousness is "a set of images of consciousness, formed and externalized with the help of linguistic means - words, free and stable phrases, sentences of texts and associative fields" (Tarasov, 2000, p. 25).

Consciousness reflects the reality around us and is a set of images of the world, perceived and unperceived by the subject and left unconscious for him sometimes. The qualitative and evaluative characteristics of these images are formed in the course of the subject's cognition and assimilation of reality and culture. Reality is a complex form of being, filled with subject-object relationships (Gavrilina, 2003). Awareness comes as a result of understanding the images of consciousness, emotional and evaluative experience of multiple connections and relationships in the discourse of extralinguistic factors. The role of a reference point is played by perceptual-cognitive-affective supports, instantly supporting understanding through chains of diverse knowledge-experiences, which in the processes of cognition and communication are formed according to the laws of mental activity, but under the control of society (Trzcińska, 2020).

Perception is a special kind of constructing in the consciousness of an individual a multidimensional image of the world, an image of reality. In other words, the psychology of an image is concrete scientific knowledge about how in the process of their activity individuals build the image of the world - the world in which they live, act, which they themselves alter is knowledge of how this image of the world functions, mediating their activity in the objectively real world (Leont'yev, 1979).

Leont'ev (1999) notes the volume, nonlinearity of the structure of consciousness. Its components are the image of the world, mechanisms of construction, mechanisms of comprehension, inner world, reflection. The process of comprehension is triggered by reflection, which permeates all levels of awareness. The presence of a subjective factor is manifested in the presence of a stable categorical-evaluative scale. It performs the function of differentiation, assessment of the object and forms an attitude towards it. The image of the object in the speaker's mind is formed under the influence of the motives and attitudes of the personality, forming the personal-semantic transformation of the object (Leont'yev, 1999).

Knowledge is accumulated in the form of concepts that reflect not just personal or national experience, but its enrichment, since it is formed in the process of structuring and understanding information about objects and their properties (Pimenova, 2004). The structure of the concept is made up of generalized features necessary to identify an event, object or phenomenon. Differential and integral signs can be actualized or de-actualized depending on external events and the speaker's attitude to them. Connotative features can retain an individual-personal, subjective-personal character, and can acquire the significance of a national and even interethnic character. The definition presented in the dictionary does not fully reflect the content of the concept. Over time and under the influence of various factors, the content of the concept can be transformed. This is what happened with the concept of "distance education". From a conceptual concept, he moved to the rank of psychoemotional concepts.

This made it possible for us to analyze the psychoemotional reactions of students during the implementation of distance learning programs from the point of view of psychological comfort for students and to give a number of methodological recommendations in order to increase the degree of efficiency of mastering the material by removing barriers of the psycho-emotional plan.

3.   Research Questions

Through an associative experiment, we will try to identify and analyze the psycho-emotional reactions of students to the stimulus word "distance education" in order to identify the psychological comfort grade of students who were forced to switch to distance learning during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. The results of the experiment will allow us to identify problem areas, analyze the causes of their occurrence and offer practical recommendations for their leveling. The concept of "distance education" has undergone a great transformation and acquired many connotative meanings. The description and analysis of the associative reactions of the respondents will allow us to offer a number of practical recommendations of a didactic nature to reduce the emergence of negative connotations in the future in the process of distance education and will help remove psychological barriers in the process of distance learning.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess the degree of psychoemotional comfort of students during the period of emergency transition to distance learning as a result of the application of restrictive measures aimed at preventing the further spread of the spread of infection, developing practical didactic recommendations of coronavirus infection during the first and second waves for reducing negative connotations and removing psychological barriers to distance learning.

5. Research Methods

The work used the methods of questioning, associative experiment, cognitive-semantic and statistical analysis.

An associative experiment is often used to reconstruct the national linguistic picture of the world of a linguistic community. The results of the associative experiment make it possible to identify integral and differential signs of national culture, worldview, mentality of a linguistic personality and linguistic community. This became especially relevant in the historical period when the whole world under the influence of external threatening factors (Coronavirus Infection - COVID-19) underwent global changes in all spheres of activity.

Association formation is a process as a result of which one phenomenon becomes a marker of another. This process is based on a conditioned reflex. In Russian psychology and psycholinguistics, the associative experiment was successfully tested and improved in works (Frumkina, 1989; Leont'yev, 2001; Luriya, 1979; Zalevskaya, 2000).

In the course of the associative experiment, various linguistic connections are actualized, since all the material is refracted through the prism of systemic paradigmatic and syntagmatic connections of the language. In addition to linguistic information, the discourse is also filled with extralinguistic information. In the course of the experiment, situational connections and conceptual connections inherent in cognitive models of situations (typical or personally significant), in which the individual experience of the carrier is fixed, are explicated. Extralinguistic and thematic connections that are not identical to each other function as substitutes for linguistic connections proper and are easily transformed into each other (Dotsenko, 2003).

The data of experimental studies allow us to reveal how the heterogeneity of ideas about the world around and the non-identity of assessments of modern phenomena, make it possible to identify the degree of consistency of the content of images of consciousness, the dynamics of the actualization of reference under the influence of extralinguistic factors.

The material for the study was the psychoemotional verbal reactions of the 2nd year students of different profiles and specialties of Siberian State Highway University, who were surveyed in September 2020. The choice of the course was due to the fact that as a result of the application of restrictive measures aimed at preventing the further spread of coronavirus infection, it was the second-year students who were forced to switch to the distance learning format twice. The survey involved 150 people. Two tasks were presented. The first task consisted of answering a question aimed at identifying the preferences of the form of education of full-time students. The question was posed as follows: "What form of education do you prefer full-time or distance learning?" Seventy percent of the students surveyed preferred full-time education. Thirty percent of the surveyed students preferred distance learning. In the second task, the students were given the task, without prior thought, to write three associations that are born in them when they hear the stimulus word "distance education".

6. Findings

As a result of the analysis of the data of the associative experiment, it was found that only eight percent of students evaluate the word stimulus "distance education" neutrally, through the differential

features of the concept itself or its attributive characteristics. These are answers in the form of lexemes with procedural semantics, conveying the essence of the process and its duration: study, training, assimilation, acquaintance with the material. This group also includes associative reactions reflecting the tools used in the course of distance learning: computer, working with a computer, tablet, laptop, telephone, zoom, chat, Internet. The resulting associative reactions of an instrumental nature have a social and everyday life helped to reveal a number of technical problems that students had to face during the period of distance learning: poor Internet, no connection, system overload, equipment, old computer cannot cope. The presence of such reactions indicates the need to monitor the technical equipment of students, adapt the requirements to personal capabilities, search for the possibility of using alternative ways of solving problems, temporary and quantitative regulation of the load. Faulty equipment or poor quality of communication - all these are additional sources of stress for students, who not all turned out to be mentally prepared for distance learning, where a high degree of self-organization and self-control is required. This was the reason for the appearance of associative reactions from students in the form of lexemes that convey an extreme degree of psychoemotional stress: stress, tension, uncertainty. Technical and psychoemotional problems among students who are forced to be on a distance learning form generate defensive reactions, which are expressed in verbal reactions like: laziness, debts, cheating and misunderstanding. This indicates that the teacher must mentally prepare the trainees for the upcoming types of tasks, students must have in constant access didactic materials of a theoretical nature and examples of solving such practical problems in order to remove psychological barriers and increase the level of academic performance and the degree of mastering the material. The degree of assimilation should be constantly monitored by the teacher. Lack of personal contact with the teacher and friends can give rise to depressive moods: boredom, sadness, drowsiness. Some reactions indicate that distance learning has become a reason for leaving the comfort zone: uncomfortable, torment.

70 percent of the students surveyed gave positive reactions to the stimulus word "distance learning". Such a high percentage of reactions reflects that students, with the transition to a new format of education, did not leave their comfort zone and even found their own advantages in it: convenience, comfort, tea, sleep, free time. The time students spent on commuting, now they can use at their discretion for recuperation or self-development. Associative reactions that convey a positive emotional and physical state of students are very frequent: easy, cheerfulness, comfortable, happiness, home, no need to go, right. At the same time, the assessment of the degree of physical and psychoemotional comfort becomes the main one when verbalizing the nuclear and peripheral zones of the concept of "distance education".

The results of the study showed that in the core of the concept of "distance education" after the first wave of the pandemic, denotative signs were replaced by evaluative ones. This indicates that native speakers do not analyze it, but experience it. It is assessed by each respondent in terms of personal experience. 70 percent of the respondents showed positive reactions, 8% of the reactions were neutral, but the remaining 22% of the reactions showed that there are problems, these are social problems related to the quality of links and technical equipment of students. And a number of problems associated with the fact that part of the students during the pandemic experience stress and panic attacks, which means they need additional psycho-emotional and methodological support.

7. Conclusion

Our survey and associative experiment allowed us to analyze what modifications the structure of the concept of "distance education" has undergone, which differential features have become more relevant, and which have gone to the periphery. The concept of "distance education" has acquired the status of being, students do not define it, they experience it, explicating their psychoemotional state and personal assessments. The results of the experiment allowed us to analyze the mass learning experience in a new format during a pandemic, to evaluate which moments were assessed by the students positively (knowledge, repetition, convenience, comfort), and which ones caused psycho-emotional discomfort. Based on the results of the study, we concluded that before presenting requirements for completing tasks in a remote format, it is necessary to monitor the technical equipment of students and search for alternative ways in case of absence (for example, the exchange of voice messages with answers and methodological recommendations via a smartphone).

More than twenty percent of the respondents require psychological preparation for the upcoming tasks, therefore, it is better to present them in advance with a plan of several upcoming classes with a list of topics and requirements for the level of knowledge and skills for them, so that students have an attitude and motivation to learn in advance, to calculate labor costs and evenly distributing them throughout the day. You should not overload the students, often set tasks for repetition, this will psychologically unload the students and check the degree and depth of mastering the material. A constant dialogue with students is required as the teacher get and evaluate the work. The student should not worry that the work was not received in time, he must be informed about all his mistakes in order to avoid them in the future when performing similar tasks. It is necessary to constantly motivate students and diversify the tasks with illustrative audio or video material. It is necessary to provide an opportunity for students to self-actualize, leave them room for creativity. Students need to be involved in completing tasks in a team, this is how a team spirit is formed, students learn to communicate in new conditions for them and find common ways to solve the task set before them.

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