Original Research

Current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era

by Tatiana A. Dmitrenko and Azat A. Akhmadullin

Tatiana A. Dmitrenko Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia dmit.t.a@mail.ru

Azat A. Akhmadullin Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia azat.ahmadullin.99@mail.ru

In the digital era, a new concept of teaching foreign languages using digital technologies has been developed. Today's emphasis is on cultivating highly competitive specialists who not only possess fluency in their respective professions to meet global standards but are also prepared to actively leverage digital technologies. The purpose of the article is to reveal current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era and to assess the opportunities and main ways to improve foreign language training for future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, since the digitalisation of education has brought foreign language teaching to a qualitatively new level. The article explores the methodological foundations underpinning the concept of foreign language training for a competitive specialist through the integration of digital technologies. Employing analytical-synthetic methods, the comparative approach, and contrastive analysis of national and foreign educational practices, the study looks into the aspects of language training in the contemporary context. The authors reveal the content of the concepts 'digital educational environment', 'digital technologies' and 'digital educational resources' and identify problematic aspects of modern professional training for a foreign language teacher in the context of digitalisation of education. The identification of the most prominent trends in modern foreign language education was a key focus. The imperative shift towards utilising digital tools in language instruction was underscored, affirming their role in attaining high-quality outcomes in the training of competitive specialists. The article's scientific novelty and theoretical significance stem from the authors' rationale for incorporating digital technologies and establishing a digital learning environment in foreign language instruction. This entails not only an optimal blend of promising technologies but also the utilisation of a comprehensive array of tools and software. These tools enable the development of more advanced educational materials and foster foreign language speech activity among students through immersion in a dynamic digital language environment.

KEYWORDS: *foreign language training, intercultural communication, digitalisation of education, digital technologies, modern trends, professional training, competitive specialist*

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has had an impact on the teaching of a foreign language in both schools and universities. In the context of digitalisation of education digital tools have appeared, which marked the emergence of a new didactic tool for teachers to organise the educational process. In this regard, the professional training for linguists and foreign language teachers has changed dramatically. The concept of teaching foreign languages has changed as well. The concept involves the training for a competitive specialist in the field of intercultural contacts using digital educational resources, and for those who are ready to '*use digital technologies that provide unlimited opportunities for self-realisation in future practical activities*' (Bartosh et al., 2017). Digitalisation of education envisages the creation of a digital learning environment in the process of teaching students a foreign language. The environment is a set of digital resources that provide the learning process, aiming at personalised educational activities organised in the digital educational space. Educational materials presented in digital format are significant components of such an environment. The processing of digital data, its exchange and analysis allow each of the students to achieve qualitatively new educational results (Dmitrenko, 2020). At present, the concept of language education involves a revision of its content, the creation of optimal conditions in the educational process for the disclosure of students' personal potential. These conditions aim at revealing individual abilities, at self-education of the student's personality in a multicultural environment and digitalisation of education. This transformative approach seeks to empower students not only linguistically but also personally, fostering self-directed learning and adaptability.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The research conducted in the field of foreign language training and the analysis of educational practice indicate that a foreign language teacher purposefully explains the culture of both speech and thinking since a foreign language is one of the main tools for educating people in a multicultural society allowing the formation of a planetary vision. In this regard, a foreign language teacher has to revise the educational material creatively, and rearrange it in view of the contingent of students. Moreover, the teacher has to put the educational material in other forms for presentation and use innovative technologies for teaching foreign language communication.

Today, the foreign language training for a competitive specialist is characterised in higher education by the introduction of advanced learning technologies into the educational process in view of the latest achievements of science and technology, for example, digital learning technologies, etc.

One of the current trends in the education system is the expansion of opportunities for each student to choose their own educational trajectory, the creation of optimal conditions for self-development and self-realisation already in the process of professional training itself. It includes foreign language training, which is a priority task for updating the entire education system. Students' needs, abilities and aspirations come to the forefront in the emerging unified digital educational space nowadays. It reflects the awareness of the justified need for fundamental transformations, changing semantic accents in foreign language training (Calderón, 2018).

The most significant innovative trend in the language education system is the creation of a digital educational environment in the process of teaching a foreign language. The analysis of the survey conducted of teachers on the use of digital technologies in the process of teaching a foreign language to students of a pedagogical university shows that the digitalisation of foreign language education involves, on the one hand, the use of digital resources in education designed to optimise the educational process, and on the other hand, training future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts to work with digital technologies and the formation of appropriate competencies. Thus, future specialists will have access to high-quality educational digital content, allowing them to freely navigate information in a digital environment (Dmitrenko & Kadilina, 2020).

The creation of a unified digital educational environment ensures the operation of large amounts of information, as well as a comprehensive impact on the main channels of perception of students. The foreign language training for a competitive specialist provides for the widespread and consistent use of digital learning technologies (online courses, mobile learning, etc.) and the creation of a digital learning environment. It leads to the creation of optimal conditions for self-development in the process of professional and foreign language training offering the student a personalised trajectory of the educational process (Ballard, 2013).

The process of foreign language training in digital education involves the use of digital technologies. The implementation of these technologies into the educational process can occur at different levels.

At the first level (low), some traditional learning tools are usually replaced with digital ones. For example, students switch from reading texts in a traditional printed textbook to electronic reading, while the teacher's instruction practice does not change.

At the second level (middle), pedagogical practice is already being enriched as a result of replacing the traditional teaching tools with digital ones. For example, the demonstration of educational material using a multimedia projector in a foreign language lesson improves the quality of perception of the material due to its fascinating display and increases the effectiveness of its assimilation by students.

At the third level (high), pedagogical practice expands significantly when replacing the traditional learning tool with a digital one. This stage provides an opportunity for a foreign language teacher to improve the quality of teaching through solving a wide range of tasks including the use of slide and streaming digital presentations, as they are an effective way of presenting information to a wide audience in a clear and concise form, for example, in the form of an instructional video clip within the framework of the study topic.

At the fourth level (advanced), a radical transformation of pedagogical practice through the functionality of digital tools is implied. It significantly expands pedagogical practice, which becomes qualitatively different. Digital technologies already give us opportunities that were impossible before, allowing us to solve tasks that cannot be resolved without their application. For example, the Internet is used to communicate with colleagues from other countries to share an experience on professional or non-professional issues in the process of intercultural interaction. At this stage, interactive learning resources or simulations, virtual classrooms, etc. have been widely used.

The analysis of the questionnaire and the survey of foreign language teachers on the use of digital tools, that is, future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, convincingly showed that the use of digital educational resources in teaching not only contributes to the optimisation of the educational process, but also gives students access to high-quality educational digital content, allowing them to freely navigate in a digital environment (Dmitrenko, 2021).

Today, several groups of digital tools can be distinguished. The first group includes instruments that help students organise joint activities (e.g., Padlet, Google Docs, Google Spreadsheets, Google Slides, etc.). The second group includes digital tools that allow feedback (e.g., Google Form, Kahoot, Quizizz, etc.). The third group includes tools that can be used not only to model the cultural space in foreign language classes, but also to design a digital learning space (e.g., Google Classroom, Learning Apps, etc.). The fourth group includes tools that help a teacher to organise online classes in a digital environment (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype (Panyukova, 2020).

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The digital learning space modelled by the teacher permits the operation of large amounts of information as a comprehensive impact on the main channels of information perception by students. The use of digital learning technologies such as online courses, mobile learning, cloud computing, webquest, etc., as well as the design of a digital educational space, leads to the optimal psychological and pedagogical conditions for self-development and self-realisation of the student in the process of foreign language training, offering the student a personalised trajectory of the educational process.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research employed a comprehensive and analytical approach to investigate the influence of digital technologies on foreign language training. The study explored current educational practices, identified trends, and discussed the impact of innovative teaching methodologies. The data collection process included a detailed analysis of contemporary educational practices, focusing on the integration of digital technologies in foreign language instruction. This examination encompassed teaching methodologies, materials, and the utilisation of digital tools across diverse educational settings.

A thorough literature review was conducted to identify key trends, emerging technologies, and pedagogical approaches in language education. This review provided a foundation for understanding the landscape of digital learning technologies in the context of foreign language training. The study looked into the strategic design of a digital learning environment by educators, incorporating electronic means of communication, multimedia, and interactive tools. The integration of mobile learning, cloud technology, gamification, web quests, virtual reality and innovative teaching strategies was explored based on the analysis of educational practices. An interdisciplinary approach was employed to explore the intersection of language education and digital technologies, considering data from pedagogy, technology, and cognitive science.

3. STUDY AND RESULTS

The results of recent studies show that achieving high quality training for a competitive specialist is ensured largely by the use of digital tools, mobile technologies, and the Internet by students. It significantly expands the horizons of knowledge and involves students' skilful use of digital technologies providing unlimited opportunities for self-realisation.

In the context of digitalisation of education, the construction of foreign language teaching on a modular basis dictates a high-quality selection of educational material, which facilitates its assimilation by students. Nonlinear, modular multidimensional presentation of information ensures a transition from a reproductive, verbal form of presentation of material to a visual-logical one, ensuring coordinated synchronous work of the two hemispheres of the student's brain, influencing the main channels of perception.

Digital learning technologies are an innovative way of organising the educational process, based on the use of electronic systems that provide visibility and the possibility of interactive interaction created by electronic means of communication.

Teaching a foreign language using digital technologies involves the use of a whole set of tools and software, among which are simulators, test programmes, graphic editors, multimedia presentations, online diagrams, graphs, tables, modelling programs, digital textbooks, etc. Naturally, this set of tools and software allows one to prepare more advanced educational materials using electronic means and organise a digital educational environment that stimulates foreign language speech activity of students (Ennis & Riley, 2018).

Nowadays, the presentation of the educational content to students using digital educational resources is a specific professional interest, involving both visualisation and interactive communication through the teacher's design of a digital educational environment created by electronic means of communication. The practice of the introduction of digital technologies into the educational process indicates the feasibility of their use. The use of these technologies allows one to diversify the lesson, make it more interesting and meaningful for students, and teach the culture of speech inherent in the people of the country of the language studied. The use of digital technologies involves a transition to interactive methods and styles of learning, activating cognitive activity of students and their independence. It promotes creative comprehension of educational material, as well as gaining experience in the result of the practical application of educational material in intercultural communication (Berrett et al., 2014).

Digital technologies play a significant role in foreign language training in a multicultural environment. They allow one to better assimilate cultural knowledge and develop the ability to understand the mentality of native speakers, as well as the national features of their behavioural communication, since knowledge of such features or ignorance of them play a decisive role in achieving mutual understanding in intercultural communication. Digital educational technologies make it possible to immerse students in an authentic virtual environment, where they have the opportunity to 'visit' the country of the studied language. This environment gives new opportunities in teaching and learning a foreign language, making a transition from mechanical assimilation of information to mastering the ability to independently acquire new knowledge (Vetrinskaya & Dmitrenko, 2017).

The results of the survey and the testing of students confirm that a teacher must skilfully master digital learning technologies, which have higher pedagogical characteristics compared to traditional ones, for effective foreign language training. Replacing ineffective teaching methods and techniques with more productive ones and creating comfortable conditions for learning promote the possibility of learning an individual learning trajectory that fully takes into account the cognitive abilities, motives, inclinations and other personal qualities of the student (Dmitrenko, 2021). At the same time, there is an improvement in the practical mastery of a foreign language by students and the development of a creative personality by the means of learning a foreign language.

Improving the professional training for a future specialist in the field of intercultural contacts involves intensifying the educational and independent activities of students through the use of advanced teaching technologies, in close connection with the professional and educational objectives of training. Digital educational technologies are considered as an innovative way to organise the educational process, ensuring visibility and effectiveness of learning.

One of the key trends in the language education system is that nowadays priority is given to the authenticity of communication and the co-study of language and culture with an emphasis on culture in the process of teaching a foreign language. Authenticity of communication plays a significant role in the process of students mastering a foreign language. The high educational significance of authentic communication, in turn, determines communicativeness, interactivity, and the development of educational materials that contribute to the development of students' ability to adequately respond to certain challenges in professional and non-professional foreign language communication, and also help free orientation in a foreign language and digital environment. Improving the quality of foreign language training meets the requirements for the development of professional communicative competence, flexibility, and creative thinking of future specialists in the context of digitalisation of education.

Another important modern trend in the system of higher language education at the present stage is that foreign language training begins to be conducted in the context of personal orientation and dialogue of cultures. Its main goal is the foreign language training for a competitive specialist in his field, ready for professional and business communication within the framework of international cooperation. Training competitive specialists involves not only modelling situations typical for the professional activities of future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, but also requires communication in a foreign language in view of the sociocultural context, implying the creation of a cultural space using digital technologies (simulations, virtual classes) (Freeman, 2016).

Digital technologies in this way allow one to gain experience in intercultural communication in the process of mastering speech activity in foreign language lessons. The didactic potential of digital learning technologies is unusually wide. It involves adaptability and personalisation of the educational process, high speed of information processing, across-the-board transparency of activities and a comfortable learning environment that considers aspects such as pace, content, psychological comfort, etc.

The formation of foreign language communicative competence using digital learning technologies allows one to recreate the sociocultural context that manifests in different visions of the world, different mindsets, customs, and lifestyles of representatives of foreign language cultures. Digital technologies, practised by the teacher in the classroom, facilitate the modelling of situations of intercultural interaction in which speech behaviour is not identical for representatives of different cultures that helps students develop intercultural sensitivity, which is so necessary for mutual understanding and the establishment of fruitful relationships between communicants (Bennet, 1998).

Today, the focus is on the sociocultural orientation of learning that reflects in the formation and development of students' cultural communication with the help of more advanced educational materials using electronic means that contribute to the practical mastery of a foreign language at the world standards. The learning of educational material occurs in a creative way, significantly increasing the effectiveness of the formation of communicative and professional competence of students.

Currently, new generation digital technologies are becoming widespread. Web 3.0 is a new generation Internet technology that relies heavily on machine learning, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology allowing the saving and transfer of data in the form of a sequence of linked blocks. Each block contains information and a link to the previous one forming together a chain. This way, the data in the blockchain is protected from changes and falsification.

Web 4.0, also known as the 'Intelligent Web', is the next evolutionary stage in the development of the Internet. It is characterised by a shift from traditional static web pages to more intelligent, dynamic and interactive web applications. Web 4.0 represents a significant step forward in the evolution of the Internet and the way we interact with it (Sysoev & Filatov, 2023).

Not only stationary and portable personal computers, tablets, smartphones, but also 3D glasses for learning in augmented reality have been used from 2015 to the present. The leading methodological approach for teaching a foreign language is becoming a communicative and activity-based approach. A digital device as a tool for communication and interaction is used in real and virtual digital environments. In addition to digital technologies, smart technologies, artificial intelligence technologies, blockchain technologies, VR and AR have begun to be used in teaching a foreign language. The teacher is considered as an advisor and facilitator in the process of teaching a foreign language.

'Smart technologies in teaching a foreign language involve integration into an authentic natural environment of communication, the opportunity to communicate with native speakers. The methodological guideline for using these technologies is a personality-oriented approach to learning, the creation of an individual learning path. At the same time, prompt feedback from the teacher and other students is provided. The formation of communicative competence takes place in an online environment that promotes the socialisation of students in a digital society'

Due to the fact that the distinctive features of modern higher education are flexibility, efficiency and practice-oriented learning, the transition to smart technologies is natural. Smart technologies based on multimedia are adaptive and flexible, they facilitate the organisation of personalised learning in accordance with the personal characteristics of students. Such technologies, according to Spector (2018), also take into account the context, respond to the interests and characteristics of individual students. These technologies have all the characteristics necessary to solve new problems.

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The key element in using smart technology is the smart environment. It is an educational environment supported by various technologies that enable students to use digital resources and interact with learning systems in any place and at any time, as well as actively provide them with the necessary learning guidance, supportive tools and learning suggestions to them in the right place, at the right time and in the right form (Zhu, 2016).

As for artificial intelligence technology, 'artificial intelligence implies a number of modern technologies that allow, based on the collection and analysis of large amounts of data and algorithms for building patterns of speech behaviour, to develop and implement language teaching methods for an individual path, simulate foreign language speech activity to solve communicative tasks, to carry out automated control of foreign language skills of students, provide them with feedback and carry out analytical work' (Sysoev, 2023).

Based on artificial intelligence, various types of chatbots, websites and applications with support for artificial intelligence technologies (AI), smart tutors, translation systems, written text

assessment systems, nonlinear neuro-linguistic testing systems, etc. are used today in teaching a foreign language. The most popular among chatbots is ChatGPT, which is capable of accurately modelling natural language and generating high-quality informative responses and can also be used for data analysis. ChatGPT is a natural language generation system developed and released by OpenAI. It is based on a deep learning model for real-time text processing and generation.

Today, the field of artificial intelligence has begun to actively develop, and in this regard, the demand for qualified AI specialists is also growing. There is great potential for the application of AI in education. The most famous of AI tool libraries are Futurepedia, Featured GPTs, GPT-4 Demo, GPT-3 Demo, and Aicyclopedia.

4. DISCUSSION

The ways of transmitting educational information have primarily changed due to the teacher's design of a digital learning environment using electronic means of communication. In the digital educational space, the creation of a visual and sound environment affects the real space, because of the possibility to make a record and control it, reproduce images and sound, while having access to them. It is also of professional interest to foreign language teachers that when designing a learning space through digital educational resources, one should not only focus on immersing students in a virtual environment as close as possible to an authentic language environment, but also pay special attention to the very presentation of educational material, which becomes fascinating and dynamic in the eyes of students that contributes to the formation of voluminous and vivid representations, creating the illusion of co-presence in a foreign language environment. In this regard, in the digital environment, such a phenomenon as education and entertainment has gained popularity and has become completely different. Teaching using gaming technologies, as well as using short instructional videos, is becoming a modern trend in the educational process.

Designing a digital learning environment by a teacher in the process of teaching a foreign language significantly increased the motivation of students, as well as providing students with large amounts of information. The learning process using digital educational resources and Internet capabilities, so-called e-learning, focuses primarily on the technological component, expanding opportunities for self-learning. Today, huge arrays of educational materials are publicly available on various educational platforms, which are available on a single click. In this regard, the teaching process has become much easier and more accessible than it was before.

The digitalisation of education, including foreign language education, has led to the use of all kinds of digital technologies for teaching students of different ages. Currently, among the main types of digital technologies are mobile learning, cloud technology, online courses, gamification and webquest. These innovative tools not only enhance language learning experiences but also cater to diverse learning styles.

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Currently, mobile learning technology is most in demand in the field of education. Thanks to its application, there is an opportunity for the most 'convenient' and productive collaboration of students, that is, knowledge exchange. Participants in the educational process can exchange educational material within the student group remotely via mobile devices.

Cloud technologies have convenient network access, allowing the storage of a large amount of information making it possible to use it with minimal managerial effort, i.e. the cloud allows the distribution, process and storage of data.

Today, gamification has become very popular in the learning process, that involves the integration of game elements and game design into the non-gaming learning process, which contributes to a qualitative change in the way the educational process is organised and leads to an increase of motivation and involvement of students in the educational process, allowing them to maintain the efficiency during the lesson without getting tired. The main goal of application of gamification into the educational process is to involve all students in the learning process, causing excitement and engagement without putting pressure on them.

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Gamification using mobile devices implements following didactic principles: (1) the principle of visibility is implemented through a multimedia form of presentation of the material; (2) the principles of consciousness and activity are realised through instant feedback and evaluation, as well as self-assessment; (3) the principle of accessibility and feasibility is realised through the ability to access via a mobile device and the ability to choose any level of complexity; (4) the principle of consistency is implemented through the gradual complication of the game level; (5) the principle of individualisation is realised through the possibility of choosing the application or site of interest.

As a gamification tool, modern mobile applications provide opportunities to achieve high results in learning a foreign language, because they harmoniously integrate game elements into the learning process. The ability of a teacher to use this content in teaching a foreign language and its accessibility for students to encourage them to be interested in it, seek additional information, develop, and think.

Gamification in foreign language classes helps foreign language teachers cope with solving a number of tasks related to mastering foreign language speech activity and aimed at: (1) developing motivation to learn a foreign language; (2) modelling of speech and non-speech behaviour typical of native speakers; (3) developing cognitive activity of students; (4) stimulating foreign language communication on the subject of the language studied; (5) removing insecurity and feelings of fear of speaking a foreign language; (6) activating students' reserve capabilities; (7) educating a creatively thinking person who is able to make optimal decisions in difficult situations concerning foreign language communication. Digital educational resources used by a teacher in a foreign language lesson optimise the process of mastering foreign language speech activity. Digital educational resources are modern learning tools presented in electronic form, the use of which aims at improving the effectiveness of the educational process. A digital educational resource is an information source containing graph, text, digital, speech, music, video, photo and other types of information. Digital educational resources focus on realising the goals and objectives of modern education. Naturally, serious requirements are imposed today on the formation of competencies for the use of digital educational resources and digital technologies, i.e. the ability to use the tools of the digital environment.

Webquests occupy a special place today in the context of digitalisation of foreign language education. A webquest is a problematic task with game elements that uses Internet information resources to complete. The design of the webquest involves rational planning of students' time, focused not on finding information, but on using it. The webquest helps to effectively master specific didactic goals and objectives, such as: (1) to form the necessary level of competence for the student to solve certain cognitive tasks along the path of his movement which leads from ignorance to knowledge; (2) to independently and systematically replenish their knowledge and skills to navigate the flow of information in solving new cognitive tasks; (3) to develop not only critical thinking, but also creative thinking, which helps to quickly respond to any problem and find non-standard ways out of difficult situations, while creative thinking can be successfully applied to solve a variety of everyday tasks. Students not only collect information, but also transform it, as they perceive the task as necessary and very useful, leading to an increased productivity.

The structure of the webquest includes the following.

1. The Introduction stage involves the formulation of the topic, the scenario of the quest, and the work plan. The goal is to prepare and motivate students.

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2. The task stage includes a clear and interesting description of the problematic task and the form of presentation of the final result, highlighting the problem to be solved, the position to be formulated and defended, the product to be created, for example, a report, creative work, presentation, poster. The main requirements for the task are its problematic character, clear formulation, and cognitive value.

3. The process stage involves an accurate description of the main stages of the work or a guide to action, useful tips for collecting information. From a methodological point of view, the material should differ in relevance, variety and originality of resources, the availability of methodological support, a variety of tasks, and their focus on the development of high-level mental operations.

4. The Evaluation stage assumes the description of the criteria and parameters for evaluating the performance of a webquest. The evaluation criteria depend on the type of learning tasks that are to be solved in the webquest lesson.

5. The Conclusion stage involves a short and accurate description of what students can learn by completing this webquest. Requires a connection with the introduction.

6. The Credits stage implies the links to resources used to create a webquest. This stage is often combined with the Process stage.

7. The Teacher Page stage assumes the methodological recommendations for teachers who will use the webquest, considering its goals and objectives, the age category of students, planned results based on learning standards (personal, regulatory, communicative, cognitive), the process of organising work on a webquest, necessary resources, and the value and dignity of the webquest.

Nevertheless, this structure can be changed as it is used only as a basis. For example, some stages can be omitted at the discretion of the teacher.

An equally significant trend in the language education system is that currently creative and productive tasks take a leading role in the educational process at all stages of learning. This is reflected in the teaching of a foreign language as well. An important condition for improving the quality of foreign language training is the use of innovative learning technologies involving the use of variability of methods that engage students in the activities, including methods such as problematic issues, trainings, business games, performance of project tasks,

conducting a dialogue of cultures, analysis of business situations, conducting discussions and debates, etc. The strategy of innovative learning involves the mobilisation of all social, communicative reserves of the organisation and the self-organisation of learning.

An important innovative trend in the system of higher language education is the knowledge that serves as the basis for the formation and development of value orientations and the practical and personality skills of the student which acquires special importance in the process of teaching a foreign language (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). In terms of teaching a foreign language of business communication, this is, first of all, knowledge about the values of the culture of business communication, which always presuppose a certain attitude of the student towards the values. This essential moment affects the development of the axiological potential of the student's personality as a whole. The fusion of knowledge with emotions and feelings forms value orientations that require an appropriate lifestyle, as well as a social behaviour.

As evidenced in international educational practice, the behaviour of people belonging to other cultures is not something unpredictable, it can be studied and predicted, but this requires special training in intercultural communication. It involves familiarising students with intercultural differences in relationships through exploring situations that occur in different cultures, as well as the transfer of acquired knowledge to other communication situations.

Thus, students become aware of the differences in mindset, customs, and national traditions inherent in different peoples and develop the ability to see what is common and different between diverse cultures and look at the culture of their own society through the eyes of other communities. In the process of foreign language communication between cultures, as a rule, two aspects are affected: differences in culture in terms of the value system and differences in the national character of communicants.

Designing a digital learning space in foreign language classes allows students to immerse themselves in virtual reality by providing students with an authentic educational environment in which they can acquire foreign language communication skills inherent in native speakers. Virtual reality being a set of ordered and hierarchically structured components of the educational process is focused on creating conditions for expanding the communicative experience of foreign language learners. It provides students with an artificially foreign-language and an educationally developing environment through the use of digital learning technologies, which are also a source of undisclosed reserves of the educational process organisation, i.e. high-speed learning.

Currently, the learning process provides for the introduction of small portions of information for better assimilation of educational material using digital technologies, creating such an important emotional environment and communicative comfort in foreign language classes.

5. CONCLUSION

Educational practices demonstrate that instructing foreign language communication through digital resources offers more effective avenues for students to process and comprehend information. The involvement of each student in the educational process allows them to pass the information through their own consciousness, screening out only what is necessary and significant for them, leading to readiness to apply the acquired knowledge and skills.

Stimulating communicative activity in a foreign language by immersing students in a virtual interactive foreign language environment creates the illusion of staying in the country of the language being studied. This helps foreign language teachers to prepare competitive specialists with the help of simulations, virtual classes, i.e. models of the cultural space in foreign language classes. Digital technologies thus help students to gain experience in intercultural communication in the process of mastering foreign language speech activity in foreign language lessons.

The didactic potential of digital technologies seems to be quite wide, considering their adaptability and personalisation of the educational process, as well as the high speed of information processing, transparency of activities, and a comfortable learning environment. In this regard, teachers should be ready for the skilful use of a new didactic means of organising the educational process through digital technologies that provides unlimited opportunities for human self-realisation.

It should be especially noted that with the help of digital learning technologies, it is possible to recreate the socio-cultural context. The design of a digital learning environment in a foreign language lesson has an emotional impact on students, increasing their motivation, and affects the quality of acquisition of knowledge, significant skills and abilities that help to remedy the absence of a foreign language environment in the classroom.

In summarising the analytical review of the most significant contemporary trends in foreign language education within the digital era, we emphasise that acknowledging these trends not only enhances students' ability to communicate effectively with native speakers but also contributes to the cultivation of competitive professionals proficient in both their field and language. This proficiency aligns with global standards, implying a well-developed capacity and readiness to engage in a digital environment, participate in constructive conversations, and establish meaningful relationships with diverse cultures. By embracing the current trends in the professional training of foreign language teachers, there is an assurance of training highly qualified specialists endowed with a heightened level of intercultural competence.

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