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Foreign Language Teachers' Competency and Competence in Using Information and Communication Technologies

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of foreign language teachers' ICT competence development. The authors (a) state the importance of the problem; (b) define the terms "ICT competence" and "ICT competency" of foreign language teachers; (c) suggest components and content of ICT competency of foreign language teachers; (d) develop criteria, indicators, and levels of ICT competence of foreign language teachers.

Keywords: ICT competence; ICT competency; informational competence; foreign langauge teachers

1. Introduction

1.1. Importance

Nowadays computerization is one of the dominant trends in the development of the modern society. The rapid development and spread of Internet technologies in Russia has been reflected in state education policy. The informatization of education has become one of the priorities in the modernization of the Russian educational system, and is aimed at developing a methodology, technologies, methods and organizational forms of education to improve the educational system's control mechanisms in today's informational society (Robert, 2010; Robert, Panukova, Kuznetsov, & Kravtsova, 2008; Sysoyev, 2012, 2013). Over the past 5-10 years such Federal programs as

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Electronic Russia, Computerization of rural schools and Computer in every school were implemented in Russia. Their aim was the computerization of general secondary, special and higher education, in particular the creation of an information and education environment where pupils and students could intensively use information and communication technologies (ICT) in the educational process.

However, *the lack of competence of high school teachers in using the entire didactic potential of modern ICT hinders the process of informatization of education in general, and the intensification of teaching specific subjects in particular*. It should be noted that at present in the pedagogical literature the properties and methodological didactic functions of many common Internet technologies are described (blogs, wikis, podcasts, concordances, educational Internet resources, Internet reference resources, etc.) (Khutorskoy, 2002; Evstigneev, 2012; Sysoyev, 2012). Depending on the discipline, the specific set of ICT and the extent of their use in the educational process may vary. It is necessary to consider the use of specific ICT techniques exclusively within specific subjects, as the same tool can be used to develop different skills and competences and in different forms, depending on the learning objectives (within a particular subject).

Foreign language learning is one of the required subjects in all curricula (for a bachelor's degree). One of the main goals of foreign language teaching in higher education is to develop students' foreign language communicative competence in all its manifold components (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, sociocultural, strategic), needed for students to communicate in social and professional areas. That is why the use of ICT in foreign language learning will be focused on the development of verbal skills (reading, speaking, writing, listening), language skills (vocabulary, phonetics, grammar) and the formation of socio-cultural and intercultural competences, and the ICT competence of foreign language teachers is the ability to use the entire arsenal of ICT in learning foreign language aspects and kinds of verbal activity (Evstigneev, 2012; Sysoyev, 2013).

1.2. Definitions

The key concepts in this paper are the terms "competence" and "competency". According to A.V. Khutorskoy (2002) by **competency** we mean "a set of interrelated personality traits (motivation, knowledge, skills, ways of working), defined with respect to a particular range of subjects and processes necessary for high-quality and productive activities in relation to them". **Competence** is "a possession of a certain competency by a qualified person, including his personal attitude to it and to the subject of activity". In other words, competence is the level(s) of formation of competency as a theoretical construct.

By *the ICT competency* of a foreign language teacher we understand *a construct consisting of theoretical knowledge of modern information and communication technologies and practical skills to create and use Web-based educational resources, Web 2.0 social networks and other ICT in the process of the development of students' language and verbal skills in learning language and culture of the target country* (Evstigneev, 2011; Sysoyev & Evstigneev, 2011).

2. Foreign Language Teachers' ICT competency and competence

In recent years there are a number of studies in which scholars revealed the methodological potential of Internet educational resources and social services and online services of the new generation of Web 2.0 in the development of language skills and verbal abilities of students to develop their intercultural and foreign language communicative competences. Taking into account the results of these studies, foreign language teachers' ICT competency includes the knowledge and ability to do the following:

- provide students with the basics of information security during Internet project implementation (Sysoyev, 2011);
- search and select Internet resources in a foreign language for academic purposes (Sysoyev and Evstigneev, 2010);
- evaluate information obtained from the Internet for teaching purposes (Sysoyev and Evstigneev, 2010);
- create five types of author's educational Internet resources (in a foreign language and about L2 culture) (Hotlist, Multimedia Scrapbook, Subject Sampler, Treasure Hunt, WebQuest) and use them in the educational process (Sysoyev and Evstigneev, 2010);