A METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING CULTURAL TOLERANCE IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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Abstract

The development of cultural tolerance from an early age is becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization and the growing cultural diversity of modern societies. Preschool education provides significant opportunities for developing children's positive attitudes towards people from different cultural backgrounds. Foreign language learning, in particular, can serve not only as a means of developing basic communicative skills but also as an effective pedagogical tool for introducing children to cultural diversity. The use of digital educational resources can further enhance this process by providing preschool learners with visual, auditory, interactive, and age-appropriate cultural content. The purpose of this study is to develop a methodological approach to fostering cultural tolerance in preschool children through foreign language learning with the use of digital educational resources. The study considers the pedagogical potential of digital games, animated materials, songs, stories, interactive exercises, and visual resources in introducing children to elements of other cultures. Particular attention is paid to age-appropriate content, positive intercultural interaction, and the integration of cultural elements into foreign language activities. The proposed methodology is based on the systematic and gradual development of children's knowledge, emotional attitudes, and behavioral skills related to cultural diversity. The study suggests that appropriately selected digital educational resources can contribute to creating an engaging learning environment in which preschool children learn to recognize, accept, and respect cultural differences.

Keywords: preschool education, foreign language learning, cultural tolerance, digital educational resources, intercultural education, young learners, teaching methodology.

Introduction

Contemporary educational systems increasingly emphasize the importance of preparing children for interaction in culturally diverse environments. Globalization, international communication, migration, and the rapid development of digital technologies have created new educational requirements for the formation of children's attitudes towards cultural diversity. In this context, the development of cultural tolerance should begin at an early age, when children are actively developing their social attitudes, values, communication skills, and understanding of the world.

Preschool education is an important stage for developing children's first ideas about similarities and differences between people. At this age, children acquire knowledge primarily through communication, play, imitation, visual materials, stories, music, and emotional experiences. Therefore, educational activities aimed at introducing cultural diversity should be engaging, understandable, and appropriate to the psychological and cognitive characteristics of preschool children.

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Foreign language learning has considerable potential in this regard. A foreign language provides children with an opportunity to encounter new words, names, traditions, characters, songs, stories, celebrations, and everyday situations associated with another culture. Thus, foreign language education can go beyond the development of linguistic competence and contribute to the formation of positive attitudes towards cultural diversity.

At the same time, the rapid development of digital technologies has expanded the methodological possibilities of foreign language education. Digital educational resources can provide children with interactive and multimedia experiences that combine sound, images, animation, text, and play. This makes them particularly relevant to preschool education.

Theoretical and Methodological Background

Cultural tolerance can be understood as an individual's ability to recognize and respect cultural differences and to demonstrate a positive and non-discriminatory attitude towards people representing other cultural backgrounds. In preschool education, this concept should be interpreted in accordance with children's age and developmental characteristics.

For preschool learners, cultural tolerance does not require a complex theoretical understanding of culture. Rather, it can be developed through elementary knowledge, emotional acceptance, and appropriate patterns of behavior. Consequently, the formation of cultural tolerance may include three interconnected components: cognitive, emotional-value, and behavioral.

The cognitive component involves children's basic knowledge about different cultures, traditions, lifestyles, languages, food, music, clothing, and celebrations. The emotional-value component reflects children's positive emotional attitudes towards cultural differences and their willingness to accept people who may have different customs or ways of life. The behavioral component is manifested through respectful communication, cooperation, sharing, helping others, and avoiding negative attitudes towards cultural differences.

From the perspective of the theory and methodology of teaching and upbringing, these components should be developed systematically through specially designed educational activities rather than through occasional cultural information.

Foreign Language Learning as a Means of Developing Cultural Tolerance

Foreign language learning can create natural opportunities for intercultural education. Even at the preschool level, language activities can introduce children to simple cultural contexts.

For example, during an English lesson, children can learn about traditional greetings, children's games, songs, food, family traditions, or celebrations in English-speaking countries. Such materials should not be presented as a simple collection of facts. Instead, they should be integrated into communicative and play-based activities.

Stories and fairy tales are particularly useful because they allow children to encounter characters from different cultural contexts while developing language skills. Songs and rhymes can introduce children to different forms of cultural expression. Role-playing activities can help children practice respectful communication and cooperation.

The methodological principle of comparison is also important. Children can be encouraged to identify both similarities and differences between their own culture and another culture. For example, a teacher may discuss how children celebrate birthdays, what foods they eat, how they greet one another, or what games they play. Such activities can help children understand that cultural differences are natural and do not imply that one culture is better or worse than another.

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The Role of Digital Educational Resources

Digital educational resources provide additional opportunities for implementing culturally oriented foreign language activities. Their main advantage is the possibility of presenting information through several sensory channels simultaneously

Age-appropriate digital resources may include:

interactive educational games;
animated stories and cartoons;
digital picture books;
songs and musical materials;
virtual cultural tours;
interactive pictures and flashcards;
short video materials;
digital matching and classification activities;
multimedia storytelling activities.

For preschool children, digital resources should be carefully selected according to their developmental characteristics. The content should be short, visually attractive, understandable, and free from stereotypes or culturally inappropriate representations.

An important methodological principle is that technology should not replace teacher-child interaction. Digital resources should function as a pedagogical tool that supports communication, discussion, play, and reflection. After watching a short video or completing an interactive activity, the teacher can ask children simple questions, encourage them to compare cultural practices, and organize pair or group activities.

Proposed Methodological Approach

The proposed methodology for developing cultural tolerance through foreign language learning and digital educational resources can be organized into three interconnected stages.

The first stage is the cognitive-motivational stage**. Its purpose is to introduce children to basic cultural diversity and stimulate their interest. Digital pictures, short videos, songs, stories, and animated characters can be used to present simple information about different cultures.

The second stage is the emotional-interactive stage**. At this stage, children participate in games, role plays, storytelling, and interactive activities that encourage positive emotional responses to cultural differences. For example, children can participate in virtual celebrations, learn songs from different cultures, or act out simple situations involving communication between children from different cultural backgrounds.

The third stage is the behavioral-practical stage**. Children are encouraged to demonstrate respectful behavior through cooperative games, group projects, dialogues, and problem-solving activities. Digital resources can be used as a starting point, while the main educational effect is achieved through real interaction between children and the teacher.

The methodology should be based on several pedagogical principles: age appropriateness, systematic development, cultural inclusiveness, interactivity, positive emotional engagement, and integration of language and cultural content.

Expected Educational Outcomes

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The systematic implementation of the proposed methodology is expected to contribute to several positive educational outcomes. Preschool children may develop a broader understanding of cultural diversity, demonstrate greater interest in other cultures, and become more comfortable interacting with people who have different cultural characteristics.

The methodology is also expected to contribute to the development of basic foreign language communication skills. When cultural content is integrated into meaningful games, stories, songs, and interactive tasks, children can acquire foreign language vocabulary in an emotionally engaging context.

The effectiveness of the methodology can be evaluated through cognitive, emotional-value, and behavioral criteria. Cognitive indicators may include children's ability to recognize basic cultural differences and similarities. Emotional-value indicators may include interest in other cultures and positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. Behavioral indicators may include respectful communication, cooperation, willingness to participate in intercultural activities, and absence of negative reactions to cultural differences.

Conclusion

The formation of cultural tolerance should become an important component of contemporary preschool education. Foreign language learning provides favorable conditions for introducing children to cultural diversity, while digital educational resources expand the methodological possibilities of this process.

The proposed methodology combines foreign language learning, cultural content, interactive activities, and digital educational resources. Its main objective is not only to provide preschool children with basic knowledge about other cultures but also to develop positive emotional attitudes and respectful patterns of behavior.

The effective use of digital educational resources requires careful pedagogical selection of content and the active participation of the teacher. Digital technologies should serve as a means of supporting communication, play, interaction, and cultural learning rather than functioning as an independent educational environment.

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