

Application of the Integrative Approach in Foreign Language Teaching Under Modern Educational Environment

Svetlana A. Deryabina

*Department of Russian Language
and Teaching Methods*

*Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
(RUDN University)*

Moscow, Russia

ORCID: 0000-0002-5415-5433

Oksana I. Aleksandrova

*Department of General and
Russian Linguistics*

*Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
(RUDN University)*

Moscow, Russia

ORCID: 0000-0002-7246-4109

Tatiana A. Dyakova

*Department of Russian as a
Foreign Language*

*Tambov State University named
after G.R. Dergavin*

Tambov, Russia

ORCID: 0000-0003-1032-5573

Abstract—The article is devoted to the use of the integrative approach in teaching which is aimed at improving the quality of education. In the research the authors applied the descriptive method (collection, analysis, presentation of the results the authors obtained applying the integrative approach in foreign language teaching) and the method of theoretical analysis (the analysis of the internal structure of the concept of the integrative approach; the detailed analysis of the development and functioning of the integrative approach in foreign language teaching). Based on these methods, the researchers considered the application of the integrative approach in foreign language teaching in the modern educational environment. The authors considered the general concept of the integrative approach and analyzed the way it can be employed in teaching Russian as a foreign language. The analysis of integration which is considered as a series of sequential processes made it possible to identify and describe the stages of development of this approach in relation to foreign language teaching in the modern educational environment.

Keywords—system, integration, systematic approach, integrative approach, principle of integration, teaching Russian as a foreign language

I. INTRODUCTION

The knowledge accumulation and generalization leads to scientific development which is characterized by the formation of new branches of sciences and interdisciplinary scientific fields. This process is reflected in the sphere of education. Linguodidactics touches upon the problem of implementation of the integrative approach in teaching.

The concept of the integrative approach, which is one of the modern directions of the modernization of education, is

Corresponding Author: Svetlana A. Deryabina, Department of Russian Language and Teaching Methods, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia.

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closely connected with the concept of the systematic approach in teaching. This approach became widespread in the world science in the 70-80s of the XX century thanks to the development of technical and humanitarian knowledge and the study of interdisciplinary scientific fields. Today, researchers are actively using the concept of "international integration", covering the internal connections of various areas of knowledge that ensure the integrity of the world education and the integration of digital technologies in the educational process. Such integration is becoming a way to intensify the teaching process.

Professor T.M. Balykhina noted that "over a billion people (20% of citizens of the planet) are now involved in the educational process, which is becoming a truly global integration process that is widespread and is related to the needs of people and their aspiration to learn the cultural, scientific and historical values of their country and of the global culture" [2]. According to the researcher, the principle of integration is associated with the creation of a single educational space corresponding to the standards, specific training programs, the synthesis of the knowledge obtained at different stages of education. It implies that basic structured postgraduate training should be provided [2].

Philosophers consider integration as "part of the development process associated with the integration of the elements that used to be disassociated. These processes can take place both in the well-established system (in this case, they lead to an increase in the level of its integrity and organization) and in formation of a new system that consists of the elements that used to be unrelated" [23]; it contributes to the "integration, the integrity of elements, the unity" [10]. In the Dictionary of Philosophy, the positive influence of integration on the state of the system is noted: "In the process of integration, there is an increasing interaction between the elements of the system. This interaction becomes more frequent and intense, which makes the system more integrated, steady and efficient" [4]. This concept implies harmonic balance and coordination of the parts of the system [20].

Thus, integration is defined as “the process and the result of the interaction between separate structural elements, leading to optimization of their interconnections, to their integration, which results in the formation of a new unified system having different features and potential opportunities” [17].

The article is aimed at analyzing the use of the integrative approach in relation to teaching a foreign language in the modern educational environment.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRATION PROCESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

The integration process is characteristic of various areas of knowledge. Thus, in the theory of systems, integration implies the state of interconnection between the components of the system. In biology, integration implies the orderliness, consistency and unification of functions and structures inherent in a living system. In the world economy developing productive forces ensure integration which is considered as the process of objective internationalization of economic life and intertwined interests of different countries [10]. In physiology integration means that individual physiological biological and biochemical processes and mechanisms provide the coordinated activity of the whole organism [22]. In the field of linguistics, integration is the interconnection and interdependence of separate parts of the language system (subsystems).

Researchers tend to focus on one of the most significant aspects of integration. However, in any case, the integration process is considered from the point of view of language teaching.

Integration is looked upon as a process of finding interrelationships between the elements that used to be disassociated, and as a process leading to integrity [10]; in foreign language teaching, the knowledge of linguistics, methodology, physiology, psychology, pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and ethnopsycholinguistics provides integrated ideas of the educational process.

Integration as a state of close relationship and interdependence between the parts of a comprehensive system [1] may be associated with the use of the foreign language in the digital environment, on the one hand, and improvement of these elements, on the other hand.

Integration implies the interaction of the unified elements belonging to the system that has completely new “integrative properties” [9]; language learners have to improve their skills on their own by means of network resources (in the processes of communication and watching films).

In some works, integration is considered as a series of sequential processes [9], which can be represented in the diagram (Fig. 1):

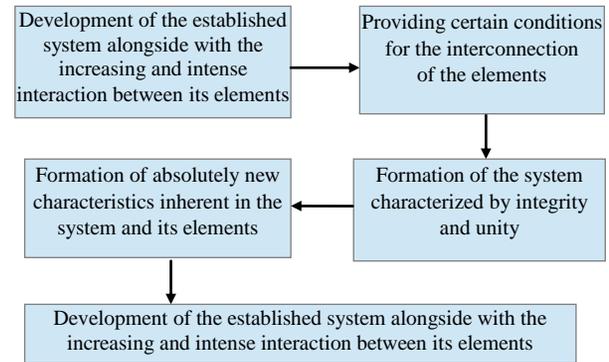


Fig. 1. Main stages of integration

Analyzing the integration stages the authors consider them in relation to teaching a foreign language in the modern educational environment. The use of technical means in teaching foreign languages makes it possible to find interrelationships between disassociated elements. Such interconnections can be found thanks to the development of electronic teaching materials appropriate for the educational environment. For example, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia provides a telecommunication educational information system created on the basis of MOODLE. Language learners who use electronic materials do the tasks and follow the links to go to certain sites. For example, electronic materials developed for linguistic specialties and for the students learning Russian as a foreign language provide links to the information portal Gramota.ru. Some tutorials provide QR codes to quickly find the information online. The system elements are interconnected since electronic teaching materials are related to different types of speech activity (reading, writing, listening and speaking) the electronic resources are based on. The modern digital environment is suitable for various kinds of tasks for language learners. It results in the formation of the integrated and cohesive system (the development of all types of speech activity, the ability to apply language skills in the digital space, the ability to work with the information resources in the target language). In the process of language teaching the formation of absolutely new characteristics inherent in the system and its integrated elements implies the formation of a secondary linguistic personality that is able to apply language skills both in natural and digital environments. The system characterized by the intense interaction of its elements is constantly developing thanks to the fact that students improve their language skills and are able to learn on their own referring to electronic teaching materials and surfing the Internet.

The following diagram includes the stages of integration of the digital technologies into the process of teaching foreign languages (Fig.2):

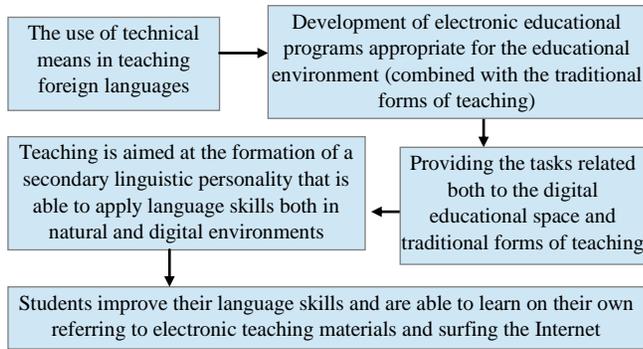


Fig. 2. The stages of integration of the digital technologies into the process of teaching foreign languages

III. APPLICATION OF INTEGRATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING RFL

The active formation and use of the integrative approach in teaching requires the development of appropriate concepts in various fields of knowledge; the teaching material should be theoretically integrated and its interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary connections should be considered. This approach is also used in the field of teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL). At the Preparatory Faculty, RFL is considered as a component of pre-university training, on the one hand, and as a component of a comprehensive university course, on the other hand, as well as an independent system [8]. N.V. Pomortseva said that in the paradigm of the modern methodological knowledge, optimization of RFL teaching was associated with modeling new and mainly integrative educational systems based on fundamentally new linguodidactic principles and ideas; additionally, it offered its own model of linguocultural adaptation of foreign students learning the Russian language [19]. L.S. Kryuchkova and N.V. Moschinskaya claimed that RFL teaching methods should be connected with linguistics, psycholinguistics, regional geography, culture-oriented linguistics, cultural studies and the problems of intercultural communication [11].

The researchers consider integration tendencies in RFL teaching and touch upon not only integrated education, but they also empathize that it is crucial to get certain ideas of a range of subjects. Integration is also provided by specific linguistic material (vocabulary and texts) corresponding to the learning objectives. This material also provides background information on cultural linguistics.

For foreign students learning linguistics, the Russian language is a major subject. In the process of education, they are focused on learning various linguistic aspects. Language is a heterogeneous system consisting of subsystems that cannot function separately and, therefore, they are parts of the whole. Thus, the integrative approach in RFL teaching is related to teaching all aspects of language (phonetic, morphemic, (derivational), lexical and syntactic) treated as elements of the integrated system. Researchers are actively developing and improving this

approach. The integrative approach in teaching Russian as a foreign language helps students to concentrate on learning new linguistic structures. Consequently, learners should be provided with specific language material to be able to understand oral and written speech and to identify functional styles of speech.

The phonetic system of the Russian language can be more understandable to the learners, if they have elementary ideas of the theory of phonetics (sounds and their characteristics, phonological processes (reduction, voicing, devoicing, etc.), syllables (stressed / unstressed), words (their rhythmic models), a syntagma, tones, types of intonation constructions, etc.). Additionally, students should also have an idea of the other aspects of language (vocabulary, morphology, syntax). The integrative approach is also applied when students learn to analyze the sounds of the words using specific language material. The sounds of the words are treated as separate language elements and students learn to analyze how the sounds change when they are used in different phrases. In other words, it is important to analyze the sounds of the words within a phrase.

The practical course in Russian phonetics provides:

- work on pronunciation and proper articulation of separate sounds,
- work on pronunciation of the whole word. Special attention is paid to word stress,
- analysis of the sounds of the words within a phrase (the last sound of the word depends on the first sound of the next word),
- work on the intonation of the phrase.

All these aspects are closely related to each other, and learners should study them as a coherent system to pronounce the words properly. In her works, I.M. Loginova noted that at every phonology lesson, students should work on each aspect listed above. Moreover, teaching phonetics should be combined with teaching theory: for example, in her tutorial on improving the skills of pronunciation of Russian words, Professor I.M. Loginova, provided material for students to be able to compare Russian consonant articulations related to Russian phonological system (unvoiced and voiced consonants, hard and soft consonants, positions of the sounds, the way of pronunciation, non-sonorous and sonorous consonants, nasal consonants and non-nasal consonants, unicentral consonants and bicentral consonants) and the phenomena of phonetic interference. I.M. Loginova claimed that it was important for students to improve their Russian pronunciation and phonetic skills by means of phonetic dictations and transcribing words. Consolidation lessons should be devoted to listening to the records: students have to repeat the phrases they hear. Additionally, learners should focus on improving their reading speed [12]. Doing these tasks students get a full idea of Russian phonology and intonation. In her work, M.N. Shutova claimed that intonation made vocabulary,

syntax and semantic structure function as parts of the system. Moreover, if students are able to perceive intonation, it is easier for them to be involved in communication in Russian [21]. E.A. Bryzgunova provided a series of expressions related to questions, statements, negative sentences, commands, addressing, etc [5].

Researchers studying the use of the integrative approach in RFL teaching consider not only the problems of integrated education, but they also empathize that it is crucial to get certain ideas of a range of subjects. Integration is also provided by specific linguistic material (vocabulary and texts) corresponding to the learning objectives. This material provides the background information on cultural linguistics.

The modern educational space cannot exist without the rapid digitalization of people's life, connected with the use of digital resources aimed at improving various spheres of human activity [6]. In addition, the traditional aspects of implementation of the integrative approach in the modern educational space are looked upon from the point of view of integration of the electronic educational environment into the process of teaching foreign languages. Moreover, the changes in thinking of the younger generation are taken into account (clip thinking). The modern student belongs to the digital space [18]. Under the influence of these realities, traditional linguodidactics is combined with the electronic environment that provides students with the material in digital format. Therefore, students are able to learn and review the material and improve their language skills in the conditions of the electronic educational environment.

In this situation, teachers should not only be able to confidently use the Internet for educational purposes, but also to be able to organize their own teaching activities by means of the modern computer and Internet technologies [16]. It is necessary to create a natural learning environment in the conditions of digitalization, which provides for productive activities, the development of a student's personality, and cognitive processes [7].

For example, in China, teachers give material in the form of a "micro-lesson" (video streaming) which provides a detailed plan for students' independent work. The teacher divides one lesson into several aspects, prepares a video for each aspect and uploads it to the training platform. The duration of each video is about 10 minutes. Video materials include a teaching presentation or a recorded lesson [24]. Many Chinese teachers of the Russian language hope that the micro-lesson will provide a new opportunity to improve the methods of teaching Russian and its grammar [14].

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the integrative approach relies on a proper application of teaching methods (that are also employed in the digital educational environment) aimed at improving students' skills. The integrative method implies that teaching should be based on integration of theoretical knowledge. Finally, the integrative approach applied in

foreign language teaching implies that interconnection, interdependence, mutual penetration and complementarity play an important role in the process of mastering a language.

The traditional aspects of implementation of the integrative approach in the modern educational space are looked upon from the point of view of integration of the electronic educational environment into the process of teaching foreign languages. Moreover, the changes in thinking of the younger generation are taken into account.

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In the conditions of digitalization of the educational space there are more possibilities to implement the integrative approach in the process of teaching foreign languages. Technical means are used in foreign language teaching which is aimed at the formation of a secondary linguistic personality that is able to apply language skills in the digital environment. Additionally, students improve their skills and are able to learn on their own referring to electronic teaching materials and surfing the Internet.

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