Multicultural Informational and the Educational Environment of the University

Anzhelina A. Koriakina

Anzhelina Koriakina, North-Eastern Federal University, Russian Federation. (e-mail: koryakina1@gmail.com)

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Abstract

The development of a multicultural society as a new stage of human development suggests the importance of modern multicultural educational environment. In this regard, the questions related to the problem of multicultural virtual educational environments are very real. This study deals with the problem of multicultural informational and educational environment as a new class of multicultural educational environments in the age of global informatization and virtualization of modern society and education. The research concludes that modern multicultural informational and educational environment is characterized by tolerance, regionalization, and tendency towards stable functioning and development. In summary, it is noted that multicultural informational and educational environment contribute to the formation of the national identity of a person and provides training for the better understanding of other cultures, recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Introduction

Contemporary Russian society is characterized by polyethnicity. In connection with this, the problem of multiculturalism in modern Russian society and education still remains quite urgent and requires thorough study. The development of a multicultural society as a new stage of human development suggests the importance of a modern multicultural educational environment.

The strategic direction of the development of educational systems in modern society is providing intellectual and moral development of a person based on his/her involvement in independent, purposive activity in various fields of knowledge on the base of information and communication technologies. That's why the problem of multicultural informational and educational environment is so important nowadays.

Multicultural educational environment

In this regard, the questions related to the problem of multicultural, communicative and virtual educational environments are very real. They ensure the successful integration of a student in a modern, multicultural environment of common cultural and educational space of a country in the age of global informatization of modern society. Logic examination of the genesis of the concepts "multicultural informational and educational environment" necessitates consideration of interrelated concepts "environment", "educational environment", and "multicultural educational environment".

In terms of sociology, environment is the social, material and spiritual conditions of existence surrounding a person. Educational process is realized in a specific environment, known as the educational environment. Educational environment as a rule is understood as a set of material, subject and social environments, including interpersonal relationships.

The concept "educational environment" was investigated by Vilensky and Meshcheryakova (2002); a term they understood to be a "structured integrative unit of socium and the world educational environment with its system of coordinates, which contributes to the effective training of a teacher" (p. 10).

In the works of Bondyreva, Vulfov, and Pidkasisty (2003, 2000, 2006) the concept of "educational environment of the university" is regarded as a set of interrelated components - subjects of the educational process, informational and educational environments and educational processes (as cited by Gusinsky, 2004). Due to this approach, it is possible to identify specific educational environments of different types of institutes (teaching, technical, medical, etc.).

Here we note the special importance of the concept "multicultural educational environment". Following the works of Kolokolova (2001), multicultural educational environment is characterized by openness – the ability to respond rapidly to emerging educational needs of society and man. It takes into account the peculiarities of students in their cultural identity and helps them to adapt to the different environment through education.

Multicultural informational and educational environment

Thus, multicultural educational environment, on the one hand, promotes the formation of national identity of a person, and on the other, provides training for good understanding of other cultures, recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity. Information and

communication technologies are of particular importance in the development of modern educational environment as they create such informational environment that becomes a new class of multicultural educational environment in the age of global informatization and virtualization of modern society and education. As for the term "informational environment", Ivanova and others point out that this environment is created with the help of digital telecommunication technologies (Ivanova, 2009).

The penetration of information technologies in the educational environment led to the emergence of the term "informational and educational environment", described as a systematically organized set of means of communication, information resources, communication protocols, hardware and software, that focus on meeting the needs of users of educational information services and resources. The main objective of such educational environments is information support of the educational process and management of an institute, informing all participants of the educational process about its progress and results.

Thus, we can consider the "informational and educational environment" as a complex system of interactions between students, teachers, educational content, educational resources, and software and hardware tools.

New information technologies in the educational process exercise significant influence on the formation of a modern information picture of the world, and the development of general academic, cultural and professional skills to work with information. Pedagogical objectives of the use of information technologies are: development of student's personality; his/her preparation for life in a modern information society in this age of mass communication and globalization; training of professional experts; intensification of the educational process at all levels of the system of lifelong education; improving the efficiency and quality of the educational process through the implementation of opportunities of information technologies; activation of cognitive activity; deepening interdisciplinary connections; and the implementation of ideas for open education.

In this regard, this paper considers the problem of the development of multicultural informational and educational environment. Multicultural informational and educational environment is organized on the principles of integrative thinking, cultural conformity, and strategic disclosure of the personal potential of teachers and students as active participants in joint activities. We distinguish the following levels of multicultural informational and educational environment: psycho-pedagogical, informational and electronic, and intellectual. Psycho-pedagogical level is responsible for the implementation of traditional psychological and pedagogical requirements for training in a language institute and the development of all types of foreign language speech activities and thinking. Informational and electronic level characterizes the process of accumulation, maintenance and management of educational content, and the interaction of subjects of the educational process with educational resources based on different software and hardware tools. Intellectual level is responsible for raising the level of general and professional culture, culture of thinking, communication and speech; for facilitating the establishment of cross-cultural communication, skillful presentation of a certain country during cross-cultural interaction; and respect for the values of other cultures.

The main function of multicultural informational and educational environment in a humanitarian institute is providing tolerant attitude and effective interaction between subjects of the educational process under the condition of creating such an environment

that allows for future professionals to understand cultural values, their own and other people's norms and behavior patterns; create positive experiences of interethnic and intercultural interaction.

Regional informational and educational environment

There is one more term close to the concept "informational and educational environment", which is the concept of "regionalization". It is described in the pedagogical literature as consideration of regional differences (socio-economic, ethnographic, historical, cultural, etc.) in the context of educational processes; as comprehensiveness and continuity of the educational process in the given area; as the ability of a regional education system, which is a part of federal educational environment, to create conditions in order to meet the educational interests of a person, ethnic group and multi-ethnic society, taking into account socio-economic, ethnographic, ethno-cultural, historical and other characteristics of a region.

For the current stage of development of Russia, the idea of forming informational and educational environment in each region is extremely important. As Khazova (1998) noted, "it is connected to the protection and promotion of cultural autonomy of regions, with the development of abilities of different subjects of education to cooperate for the benefit of society" (p. 154). In this sense, the creation of informational and educational environment can be seen as effective activity to transfer education in the priority sphere of social development.

Essential for understanding regional informational and educational environment is the investigation of Fraltsova (1999), where she notes that due to the regional system of education people are able to be freely included in the areas of human practices and forms of organization of life traditionally developed in a particular region. Such region is characterized by: lifestyle historically given for some common territory (infrastructure, educational system, etc.); the existence of the programme of development of these historical forms of organization of life; community of people with self-consciousness of subject of historical development living in the area - carriers and distributors of such programmes of development (Fraltsova, 1999).

Thus, a regional informational and educational environment is intended to implement the cultural identity of each person; return of education in the context of culture and its regionalization, communion of a person to culture through education; intercultural communication.

Let's formulate the basic features of modern multicultural informational and educational environment, relevant and adapted to modern conditions of the age of informatization and virtualization of society and education:

- tolerance - integrative quality, which manifests itself in the willingness and ability of a person, community, state to hear and respect the opinions of others, to interact with them on the basis of the consent;
- systematic and complex informational and educational environment, including sometimes mutually exclusive properties, such as: reality and virtuality; objectivity and subjectivity; multi-layering and openness; activity and controllability; dynamism and stability;

- existence of a stable combination of material and information factors and components that affect the processes of development, socialization and individualization of modern personality based on the existing range of services of the Internet;
- regionalization as ability to create the conditions to meet the educational interests of a person, ethnic group and multi-ethnic society;
- tendency towards stable functioning and development of innovative informational and educational environment.

Conclusion

Thus, actualization of the problem of multiculturalism in the Russian educational system promotes formation of national identity of a person, provides training of students for better understanding of other cultures as in traditional interaction and in terms of communication in the information environment.

It contributes to recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity of modern society, once again highlights the need for new models of multicultural humanitarian educational environment conducive to the development of the Russian educational system in the context of multiculturalism of modern society in the age of globalization.

In summary, we note also that multicultural humanitarian informational and educational environment, on the one hand, contributes to the formation of the national identity of a person; and on the other, provides training for the better understanding of other cultures, recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Based on the above consideration, it may be noted that multicultural informational and educational environment contributes to the development of a multicultural informationally educated person due to the inclusion of communication technologies in the educational process.

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