

Textbook: Focus on Students' National Identity

Educational Potential of English Textbooks for High School

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Abstract

The article deals with the actualization of the educational (upbringing) potential of English textbooks used in senior grades of high school. In the process of teaching a foreign language, a teacher can also influence the development of the material, spiritual, professional, and life values of children through the correct setting of learning goals as well as through the selection of the content of educational materials. They should be informative, rely on the knowledge and experience of students and cause certain emotional experiences. This means that the upbringing concept, which is enshrined in the federal law "On Education in the Russian Federation" and the Federal State Educational Standard and is implemented through various subjects, including the subject "Foreign language", comes to the fore. In view of this fact the author of the article considers various approaches to education while teaching a foreign language and analyses the way the concept is realized in one of the textbooks used for teaching English in Russian high schools.

Keywords: educational potential, upbringing, personal development and education

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Introduction

During the last decades the primary role of education (upbringing) in the learning process has been finally established, new Federal state educational standards were developed, as well as the concept of spiritual and moral development and education of students. As a result of the adoption of these normative documents, the role of the school teacher has changed: now he or she organizes both the teaching process and extracurricular activities

and is responsible for the education of students and their socialization. Besides, the idea of the possibility to educate students through the content of various subjects and the use of the value approach was established (Vyazemskiy & Sinelnikov, 2014).

The relevance of the research topic can be explained by the fact that today the modernization of general-education schools in Russia is aimed both at improving the quality of teaching and knowledge acquisition, and at creating all the necessary conditions for the all-round development of students' personality, their identity formation, as well as for the formation of their values.

As a general-education subject, foreign language has a great developmental and educational potential for several reasons. First, it allows students to acquire knowledge in different areas and thereby broaden their horizons and acts as a tool for social interaction and professional activity. Secondly, it promotes memory development, critical and creative thinking, and the emotional sphere in children. Thirdly, correctly selected teaching materials can contribute to the formation of students' worldview, their beliefs, moral and cultural values. Fourthly, it makes students acquainted with the history and culture of different countries, instills tolerance and respect for representatives of other cultures and religions.

To implement the educational function of teaching, a teacher needs to know and skillfully use not only certain methods and techniques of teaching, but also various tools that contribute to children's education and development, and to mind some education-relevant aspects:

- the content aspect (the content of speech activity in class): the student receives knowledge and information in class, compares it and develops his or her attitude towards it;
- the subject aspect (linguistic material presented in class in the form of exercises): this aspect allows the student to form a positive attitude towards a foreign language as a means of communication and a source of obtaining the necessary information; besides, knowledge of the patterns of the target language functioning contributes to the development of the student's speech culture;
- the labor aspect (participation in the learning process as work): in the learning process, students memorize certain material, develop skills and abilities, solve specific problems, overcome the difficulties encountered, which contributes to the formation of moral qualities and readiness for work;

- the social aspect: being in a certain social environment in the process of learning a foreign language, learners acquire views, convictions, and ethical norms (which serve as social norms);
- the methodological aspect (learning aids and methodological techniques used in class, as well as organizational forms of learning): different forms of work and techniques form different aspects and qualities: some promote the development of leadership and individualism, while others teach cooperation and mutual assistance;
- the controlling aspect: control is an important part of the learning process, as it allows the teacher to obtain the information necessary for further work and updating his or her course, and also allows students to form a critical attitude towards themselves and others;
- the communicative aspect: students observe the communication methods used by the participants of the learning process, thereby assimilating cultural and ethical norms of behavior and developing interpersonal skills;
- the psychological-emotional aspect: in the learning process, emotions that accompany any activity and the psychological climate in class play an important role; in this regard, the teacher should be in a positive mood to form a positive attitude towards his or her subject, and strive to achieve mutual understanding with students (Vishnevskiy, 1988).

It is also necessary to take into account the age of the students. It seems appropriate to consider the features of high school students since this article focuses on the educational potential of a foreign language lesson in high school. So, according to E.V. Borzova, it is in the 10th and 11th grades that the basis for the formation of personality is created, because:

- 1. high school students have accumulated a lot of experience over the previous years of learning;
- 2. for adolescents in high school, both the social circle and the scope of activity expand;
- 3. they develop a willingness to reflect upon difficult life issues and make serious decisions;
- 4. during this period, they develop self-awareness, the ability to control emotions and desires, self-esteem and the desire for self-determination; at the same time, the role of peers in the process of self-assertion is increasing (Borzova, 2008).

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine how the educational potential of the subject

"Foreign language" is realized in English textbooks for high school. To achieve this, the study requires the accomplishment of the following objectives:

- 1. to consider various scientific approaches to the process of education and educational potential of the subject "Foreign language";
- 2. to analyze the normative documents on education and determine the role of upbringing in teaching students;
- 3. To reveal how the educational potential of teaching a foreign language is realized in one of the teaching kits for grade 11.

Literature review

Among modern approaches to education, first of all, the environmental approach should be singled out, since many researchers insist on the creation of an educational environment in an educational institution for managing education and development of children (L.S. Vygotsky, S. T. Shatsky, E.N. Stepanov, Yu.S. Manuilov and others).

The personality-oriented approach in education is of particular importance today (E.V. Bondarevskaya, V.V. Serikova, I.S. Yakimanskaya, etc.) According to this approach, the priority in the education system development is not the introduction of technology into teaching and education or even the development of certain skills in children, but a focus on the unlocking of their potential. Furthermore, researchers emphasize the need to encourage children's creativity and self-expression and to take into account the personality characteristics of each child (Nechayev, 2016).

Third, the axiological approach should be mentioned. Its representatives are O.S. Gazman, D.A. Leontiev, B.P. Bitinas, E.A. Plekhanov etc. According to this approach, the choice of values is the core of education since it is values that form the basis of educational systems in educational institutions (Nechayev, 2016).

As a fourth approach, the anthropological approach can be singled out, because the main task of education is to help the individual become a personality and gain a personal identity. Researchers who study pedagogical anthropology (B.M. Bim-Bad, I.V. Krupina, V.A.Slastenin, etc.) argue that teachers can rely in their activities on knowledge about certain regularities of children's development. For example, they take into account the fact that the depth of knowledge acquired by students depends primarily on the method of acquiring it: independently or not, creatively or by using a pattern already given to them (Nechayev, 2016).

Fifthly, there is a culturological approach, which today serves as a methodological guideline for many researchers and educators because education in modern society is increasingly viewed as a cultural process. In this regard, it is believed that one of the

primary tasks of education is to contribute to the cultural development of children (Nechayev, 2016).

Since the culturological approach is based on various concepts of cultural development, it combines such approaches as the personality-oriented, axiological and anthropological approach and can be considered fundamental, along with the environmental approach, in creating an educational environment in educational institutions, because these two approaches determine the specific features of the functioning of the educational environment (Nechayev, 2016).

Sixth, it is important to mention the competence-based approach, the emergence of which, according to I.A. Zimnyaya, is the result of changes in education. These changes are related to the task of helping everyone to successfully adapt and socialize in the modern world. This problem can be solved only if school education provides a socially integrated and personality-oriented result (Zimnyaya, 2003). This approach seems to be the most popular today. It is aimed at developing children's abilities which are indispensable in terms of modern labor market development, which imposes several universal, interdisciplinary requirements.

The considered approaches are important not only for creating an educational environment within a particular institution but also for realizing the educational potential of academic disciplines, including the subject "Foreign language". So, the environmental approach involves the creation of a favorable psychological atmosphere in the process of teaching a foreign language to encourage self-learning, while for the development of independence in children, you should teach them to use various learning and reference materials and navigate in them, to plan their time and to evaluate the results of their work. Thus, this approach allows the student to master a foreign language together with classmates and with the help of a teacher (Tatarinova, 2013).

According to the personality-oriented, axiological, and anthropological approaches, a teacher of a foreign language must, firstly, take into account the needs of students (the needs for knowledge, self-expression, communication with relatives, peers, the older generation, for creativity, etc.), their abilities and moral potential, secondly, introduce them to human culture, and thirdly, develop in children values and personal qualities necessary for interaction in a foreign language with their compatriots, speakers of a foreign language and representatives of different cultures (Tatarinova, 2013).

The culturological approach to teaching foreign languages, according to L.N. Osikova, contributes to children's socialization by introducing them to universal human values, their moral development, and harmonious life in society (Osikova, 2010).

Besides, the specificity of a foreign language as an academic discipline is that, apart from teaching communication in a foreign language, this subject introduces children to different traditions, lifestyle and thinking, norms of behavior and everyday communication. This leads to the development of the intercultural competence in students and a new perspective on their personalities. Therefore, it is important to correctly select the linguistic and cultural material that should contribute both to the development of communicative competence and to familiarizing children with the cultural values of the target-language country (Osikova, 2010).

It is also necessary to pay attention to sociocultural approach developed by V.V. Safonova, according to which language teaching serves as a tool in educating an individual as a cultural-historical subject, a carrier of individual and collective sociocultural characteristics, who is ready to cooperate with representatives of other cultures, among other things, for solving global problems, and who is using a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication and as a tool for learning about national cultures. The result of sociocultural education is the sociocultural competence, which makes it possible to effectively carry out intercultural communication, to anticipate possible obstacles in the communication process and eliminate them (Safonova, 1992).

The competency-based approach implies a focus on the acquisition of useful knowledge and the development of valuable skills in students, which are important for setting and achieving goals in real life. In this regard, within the framework of teaching a foreign language, it is necessary to use various techniques depending on the level of language proficiency and learning environment, to resort to translation methods less often, to encourage the interaction between students, and to stimulate their speech activity (Tatarinova, 2013).

Thus, the considered approaches constitute the methodological basis of creating an educational environment in educational institutions and are actively used in teaching a foreign language for implementing the personal, intellectual and cultural development of students, taking into account their individual characteristics.

Methodology

The relevance of the problem of education system development in the Russian Federation and the implementation of the educational potential of school subjects are recognized at the state level, which can be seen in the content of several normative documents that regulate the learning process, determine the priorities of educational policy and establish the standards of educational programs.

Thus, the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" considers teaching and education as two interconnected processes that contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and experience, moral and spiritual development of students, as well as the development of their abilities, skills and competences (including professional competences) and personal qualities necessary for a full and safe life in modern society (On Education in the Russian Federation, 2016).

The Federal State Educational Standard for Secondary General Education (hereinafter referred to as Standard) establishes the requirements for personal, interdisciplinary results and results of mastering certain subjects of the basic educational program.

Among the personal results, it is necessary to highlight:

- 1. education of patriotism, Russian civic identity, and respect for the history of the native country and state symbols, as well as the willingness to serve and defend their homeland;
- 2. formation of the civic position "as an active and responsible member of the Russian society, aware of their constitutional rights and obligations, respecting the law and the rule of law" [Standard, II. Requirements for the results of mastering the basic educational program];
- 3. a holistic worldview, which corresponds to the "modern level of development of science and social practice" [Standard, II. Requirements for the results of mastering the basic educational program];
- 4. the fully formed ability to work both in a group and independently and an understanding of the importance of self-development;
- 5. tolerant attitude towards other people, their culture, religion, and individual characteristics:
- 6. careful attitude to the own health and the health of other people, awareness of the need to practice sports, for discarding unhealthy habits;
 - 7. willingness to consciously choose the future profession;
- 8. understanding of the importance of family and family values (On Approval and Implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard of Secondary General Education, 2009).

The Strategy for the development of education in the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 (hereinafter referred to as Strategy) stipulates that the educational process includes civil, patriotic, spiritual and moral, physical, labor, and environmental education, as well as "familiarizing children with the cultural heritage" [Strategy, III. The

main directions in the development of education], popularization of scientific knowledge among students, and professional self-determination.

Among the components of civic education, the following should be mentioned:

- fostering in children civic responsibility, the principles of collectivity, and the ability to respectfully treat other peoples and representatives of other cultures and religions;
- developing moral mindsets that would allow children to resist negative phenomena in society (extremism, nationalism, xenophobia, corruption, etc.).

Patriotic education lies in fostering "patriotism, a sense of pride in the homeland, readiness to protect the interests of the homeland, responsibility for the future of Russia" [Strategy, III. The main directions in the development of education], as well as respect for the state symbols and historical monuments of the country.

The aims of spiritual and moral education are:

- to develop such moral feelings as honor, duty, justice, mercy, friendliness, empathy;
- to form a moral position, based on which children will be able to consciously choose good;
- to contribute to the development of children's ability to keep a positive outlook on life and their future;
- to help children develop models of behavior in problematic and stressful situations.

Physical education implies the prevention of bad habits and the formation of children's understanding of the need to take care of their health and to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Labor education, including professional self-determination, presupposes, firstly, the creating a respectful attitude towards labor, an understanding of the need to carry out any task responsibly, conscientiously, and creatively, the ability to work independently and in a team, and secondly, introducing children to activities that are important for society, so that in the future they will be able to consciously choose their future profession.

Environmental education is implemented through the development of a caring attitude towards nature and awareness of responsibility for the country's natural resources.

Introducing children to the cultural heritage means to ensure equal access for children to the cultural values of Russia, museums, and theaters, as well as the dissemination of knowledge about the literary, musical, artistic, theatrical, and cinematic heritage of the country.

The popularization of scientific knowledge involves promoting an increasing interest in science and providing children with access to reliable information about scientific achievements and discoveries both in Russia and abroad (Strategy for the Development of Education in the Russian Federation for the Period until 2025, 2015).

Results

According to the parameters mentioned above the following textbook is analyzed in this article as an example of the implementation of education - English (Spotlight) Grade 11: a textbook for educational institutions: basic level: O.V. Afanasyeva, J. Dooley, I.V. Mikheeva, B. Obee, V. Evans. 4th edition. Moscow: Express Publishing "Prosveshcheniye", 2016.

1. civic education

In the third module, in the *Reading* section, students get acquainted with the vocabulary related to crimes and their types, determine what punishment is imposed for each of them, and comment on the English proverb *Crime doesn't pay* (for any crime there is a punishment). Besides, students read a text about people who have become crime victims, and in each story, the police have either already found violators of the law, or are investigating. Thus, in this module, students learn to be responsible citizens who know and obey the law.

In the *Listening & Speaking* section, high school students match human rights with their responsibilities: for example, everyone has the right to be treated with respect, but at the same time is obliged to treat other people with respect, regardless of their gender, age, or nationality. They also read a poem by E.E. Hale (who writes that people cannot do everything, but must do what they can) and share their thoughts on the idea expressed by the author. In addition, while learning new lexical units, students fill in the gaps in the following sentences: "Your employer cannot force you to work for so many hours. You should learn to defend your rights", "All people have the right to freedom of speech", "Many people in the world are deprived of basic human rights", etc.

In the *Expanding horizons* section, students read an article about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the history of its adoption, and then in groups gather information about a human rights organization and share it with the whole class.

So, in the considered sections, high school students learn about the importance of knowing their rights and responsibilities, respecting the rights of other people, as well as not remaining silent in the face of violations and seeking help from the concerned

authorities and organizations.

In the fifth module, in the *Reading* section, students develop a respectful attitude towards such a social group as homeless people: students listen to an audio text and read an article about a girl who has been living on the street for several years. The purpose of these texts is to tell that each homeless person has their own story (not necessarily all of them have lost their homes or jobs due to alcohol or drug addiction), and how difficult it is for homeless people to change their lifestyle on their own and become fully integrated members of society again.

The seventh module (section *Expanding horizons*) encourages children to become active citizens, ready to change the society in which they live for the better. Students first read the comment of a young man who volunteers at a nursing home and enjoys helping those who need it. Then the students discuss how each person, by their actions, can positively influence the world around them and decide what they would like to do (learn how to provide first aid, engage in volunteer activities, donate to charity, etc.). Besides, students work in groups and come up with a project in which many people could participate and that would change the school, school grounds, or their district.

The same topic is touched upon in the fourth module in the *Culture* section: there is an article about Florence Nightingale, who was born into a wealthy family and received a decent education but decided to become a sister of mercy and help people. As a result, thanks to her efforts, it was possible to improve many hospitals in Turkey and the Crimea during the Crimean War and reduce the death rate. After reading the text, students write an essay about the role of F. Nightingale's work and collect information for the school newspaper about a similar figure in Russia. These assignments allow learners to reflect on the fact that people's calling is not only to fulfill their dreams but also to contribute to social change and development.

Respect for representatives of other cultures is formed through the study of articles on the cultural characteristics of different nations. Thus, students learn about family values and traditions in China, Italy, England, Jordan, Japan, about the ethnic composition of Great Britain, about the history of the Statue of Liberty, and the significance of this monument in American culture.

2. patriotic education

Patriotism is inculcated by completing assignments aimed at studying Russian culture: students collect and submit, in writing or orally, information about the ethnic composition of Russia, about a famous monument that is of particular importance for Russians, about the languages in Russia and the most prestigious universities.

In the section *All about Russia*, students read texts about the history of Tsaritsyno Park, about F.M. Dostoevsky, about the tradition of celebrating the Old New Year, about the Mir orbital station, about the ballet dancer I.V. Kolesnikova and the Trans-Siberian Railway.

3. spiritual and moral education

Spiritual and moral education is implemented by discussing such topics as:

- family (in the first module in the *Reading* section, students read about the role of the family and family values in different cultures);
- friendship (in the first module, in the *Literature* section, students read a passage from O. Wilde's fairy tale "The devoted friend", and write what they think about the phrase: "Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they're always there");
- stressful situations (in the second module in the *Reading* section, students read a poem and an article and learn that stress is a natural reaction of the body to changes, and to cope with it, it is important to set achievable goals, not to complain and not to dramatize the situation; it is notable that special attention in the text is paid to rest, healthy nutrition, good sleep, and sports);
- peer pressure (in the second module in the *Listening & Speaking* section, students read about the negative effects of peer pressure and, by creating own dialogues, learn to say "no" when friends ask them to do something that they are not interested in or that can harm them);
- difficult decisions (in the fourth module, in the *Reading* section, students read the story of a climber who, on the descent from a mountain, faced a choice to save himself or his friend and decided not to sacrifice his life, but as a result, both climbers survived; after reading this article, students discuss whether the climber did the right thing and how they would act in such a difficult situation);
- dreams (in the seventh module in the *Reading* section, there is a text that provides examples of famous people who achieved their goals, despite the difficulties, and gives advice on fulfilling a dream (it is important to believe in yourself, keep acting, and not give up));
- difficulties (in the seventh module, in the *Literature* section, high school students read the poem "If" by R. Kipling, which tells about the value of inner strength and the ability not to succumb to outside influence when overcoming difficulties).

4. physical education

Leading a healthy and active lifestyle is not touched upon in any text of this textbook. Only in the second module in the *Reading* section, sports are mentioned as one of the ways to deal with stress, and in the fourth module in the *Listening & Speaking* section, students learn vocabulary related to diseases and act out dialogues in the roles of doctor and patient.

5. labor education

In the textbook, little attention is also paid to labor education. In the seventh module, in the *Reading* section, there is a text about dreams and achieving them. In the *Listening & Speaking* section, high school students learn to talk about their plans for the future and in the *Culture* section, they read about the peculiarities of student life in the UK.

6. ecological education

A caring attitude towards the environment is formed in each module of the *Environment* section. For example, in the second module, students read that today manufacturers are trying to pack their products nicely to sell them, while such packaging cannot be reused or recycled. The author of the article advises buying goods with a minimum of packaging material and not using plastic bags. After reading the text, students choose a product and design its packaging according to the recommendation.

In the third module, students take a test to determine how carefully they treat the resources of the Earth and their city. Their task is to talk about whether they save water, buy organic food, use energy-saving bulbs, etc. Then they compare their answers to the answers of their peers and discuss what else can be done to make the city cleaner and to save more water and electricity.

Students also read texts about water pollution, green areas around cities where construction is prohibited, noise pollution, actions to combat poaching, and eco-tourism.

7. introducing children to the cultural heritage

Students gain knowledge about the literary heritage of other countries in the *Literature* section. The textbook contains passages from the works of O. Wilde, C. Brontë, C. Dickens, M. Twain, T. Hardy, J. London, and J. Swift. In the section *All about Russia*, students read in English a passage from the novel "Crime and Punishment" by F.M. Dostoevsky.

Students learn about the theatrical heritage of Russia from an article about I. Kolesnikova, a ballet dancer at the St. Petersburg Ballet Theater of Konstantin Tachkin.

The analysis of this textbook from the point of view of the Federal Law "On Education"

has shown that it develops in students:

- diligence (students perform tasks of varying complexity for a certain period);
- independence (many tasks involve independent work based on teaching materials or Internet resources):
- cognitive activity (students read texts that broaden their general horizons, and prepare presentations on various topics).

Thus, in the textbook Spotlight for grade 11 1) special importance is paid to civic, spiritual, moral, and environmental education; patriotic education and introduction of children to the cultural heritage of different countries is also carried out; however, less attention is paid to physical and labor education; in educational modules, we can find material that is aimed exclusively at the formation of language and speech skills and abilities, and not at the education of students and their development. 2) some texts and tasks contribute to the achievement of personal, interdisciplinary, and subject-related results established by the Federal State Educational Standard.

Discussions

As the analysis of one of the English language textbooks for grade 11 has shown, through a foreign language lesson personal, subject-related, and interdisciplinary results are achieved. In the process of teaching a foreign language, a teacher can also influence the development of the material, spiritual, professional, and life values of children through 1) the correct setting of learning goals; 2) selection of the content of educational materials (they should be informative, rely on the knowledge and experience of students and cause certain emotional experiences); 3) using both individual and differentiated approaches.

Conclusion

At the present stage of the development of Russian society, spiritual and moral education and all-round development of students are a priority task of school education. One of the ways to fulfill this task is the implementation of the educational function of the general-education discipline "Foreign language", which contributes to the social adaptation of children and the formation of their communicative and intercultural competencies, basic personality traits, values, and certain convictions.

The analysis of one of the English language textbooks for grade 11 has shown that through a foreign language lesson the tasks of educational activities prescribed in the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" are carried out. Taking into account the education-relevant aspects, age characteristics of students, the specifics of the subject "Foreign language", and the use of various tools, through a foreign language a teacher can develop in students not only communicative competence but also new types

of communication and thinking, an active social position, as well as some personal qualities and competencies, such as the ability to work in a team, planning one's activities to achieve the required result, leadership, etc.

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