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THE ETHICS OF ONLINE LANGUAGE EDUCATION: DIGITAL APPROACHES AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

ЭТИКА ОНЛАЙН-ОБУЧЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКАМ: ЦИФРОВЫЕ ПОДХОДЫ И ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

Abstract:

This paper reflects on coordinated, systematic, and coherent academic approaches to language education in online environments through digital technologies. This comprehensive research investigates the evolutionary trajectory of digital methodologies in educational sciences from the late 1990s to the contemporary era. By examining the structural integration of digital environments, the work establishes a foundational framework for analyzing the rapid transformation of online academic communication.

The research critically evaluates the necessity of utilizing web-based systems in foreign language teaching while addressing the systemic integration of online academic networks. It scrutinizes the structural dynamics of information exchange systems and explores whether online foreign language pedagogy requires a distinct ethical framework. Through this analytical lens, the paper identifies the specific philosophical parameters that govern interactive communication in digitized educational spaces.

To clarify these inquiries, the work focuses on specifying the practical essence and characteristics of several pedagogical strategies. The paper introduces a methodical investigation into

the core components of digital language acquisition. Ultimately, this research provides an analytical model designed to enhance the ethical and structural efficiency of contemporary online language education.

Keywords: Online language learning, digital approaches, language education, Computer Ethics, internet practice, Digital Ethics

Аннотация:

В данной работе рассматриваются скоординированные, систематизированные и последовательные академические подходы к языковому образованию в онлайн-среде с использованием цифровых технологий. Это комплексное исследование прослеживает траекторию эволюции цифровых методологий в педагогических науках с конца 1990-х годов до современной эпохи. Анализируя структурную интеграцию цифровой среды, работа создает основополагающую базу для изучения трансформации онлайн-коммуникации.

В исследовании критически оценивается необходимость использования веб-систем в преподавании иностранных языков, и рассматриваются вопросы системной интеграции онлайн-сетей. Анализируется структурная динамика систем обмена информацией, а также исследуется потребность цифровой педагогики в отдельной этической базе. Через эту аналитическую призму работа определяет философские параметры, регулирующие интерактивную коммуникацию в цифровом образовательном пространстве.

Для прояснения данных вопросов работа сосредоточена на конкретизации практической сути и характеристик нескольких педагогических стратегий. Данный труд предлагает методологический анализ ключевых компонентов цифрового освоения языка. В конечном итоге это исследование представляет аналитическую модель, направленную на повышение этической и структурной эффективности современной системы онлайн-обучения языкам.

Ключевые слова: Онлайн-обучение языкам, цифровые подходы, языковое образование, компьютерная этика, интернет-практика, цифровая этика

1. Introduction

It is generally known that scientific research on online language learning serves broader purposes than providing pedagogical guidance. The large amount of second language interaction occurring online, and the ease with which it can be electronically archived and analyzed, makes online communication a potentially important source for investigating second language acquisition and use. In due time, the power of computers and the Internet may help us unlock broader mysteries of the language learning process.

Research that investigates the linguistic features of on-line communication might ask questions such as these: Is e-mail communication more similar to speaking or to writing? What are the lexical, syntactic and functional features common to on-line communication? A growing body of first language research has begun to address these questions. For example, from the point of view of a professor in educational learning theories of the Public Research University of California Mark Warschauer “computer-mediated communication is neither speech-like nor written language-like but has its own distinct features; research on these questions in second language environments is more limited” [13, pp. 174-175].

Here it needs to be noticed, that the types of educational research fall along the following main continua, among others: experimental versus natural, quantitative versus qualitative, etic versus emic

and product versus process. Experimental research is based on the goal of trying to find generalized answers to specific questions. To achieve that, as many variables as possible are held constant so that one or two specific questions can be addressed in tightly controlled experimental situations. According to the American professor in Linguist and educational learning theories Steve Gaer, “true experiments” must involve two groups, an experiment and control group, into which subjects have been randomly assigned. A “quasi-experiment” may involve one group that takes a pretest, has some kind of “treatment” and then takes a posttest. In contrast, naturalistic research seeks to understand phenomena in their natural, holistic context. In conducting naturalistic theoretical research, instead of controlling outside variables, the researcher attempts to observe how a wide range of contextual factors may be affecting a situation” [8, p. 92]; In quantitative theoretical research, the data take a numerical form. Quantitative theoretical research often makes use of inferential statistics to attempt to demonstrate a statistically significant correlation between two variables. Quantitative research relies on descriptive data that may not be quantified. Some researchers stress the conceptual-axiological distinctions between quantitative and qualitative approaches, with quantitative approaches being more positivistic, for example, trying to prove specific causation based on tightly controlled research and qualitative theoretical research being more holistic, e.g. focusing on understanding events in cultural context.

2. Discussion

2.1. The Terms “Emic” & “Etic”: Ethical Concepts[1] and Digital Practice

As we know from the history of education, “Emic” and “Etic” are terms used by philosopher anthropologists to refer to two kinds of data concerning human behavior. In particular, they are used in cultural anthropology to refer to kinds of fieldwork done and viewpoints obtained. ”An "Emic" account is a description of behavior or a belief in terms meaningful (consciously or unconsciously) to the actor; that is, an emic account comes from a person within the culture. Almost anything from within a culture can provide an emic account. An "Etic" account is a description of a behavior or belief by an observer, in terms that can be applied to other cultures; that is, “an etic account attempts to be culturally neutral” [9, p. 2].

The terms were coined in 1954 by linguist Kenneth Lee Pike who argued that ”the tools developed for describing linguistic behaviors could be adapted to the description of any human social behavior” [11, p. 27]. As Kenneth Pike notes “social scientists have long debated whether their knowledge is objective or subjective” [11, p. 34] Pike's innovation in ethical-moral theory of language education was to turn away from an epistemological debate, and turn instead to a cognitive methodological solution.

Emic and Etic are derived from the linguistic terms phonemic and phonetic respectively, which are in turn derived from Greek roots. The possibility of a truly objective description was discounted by Pike himself in his original work; he proposed the emic/ etic dichotomy in anthrop-

[1] *The ethical dimension of online language education demands a fundamental reconceptualization of "emic" (insider) and "etic" (outsider) approaches within the digital realm. Traditional ethical concepts often fail to account for the virtual asymmetries that arise when local cultural norms are interpreted across global platforms. This research focuses on how digital practice delineates the boundaries of moral responsibility between educators and learners who carry distinct cultural codes. It is essential to adapt ethical principles in a way that preserves emic authenticity amidst the dominance of etic, universalist educational standards. The present analysis aims to develop an ethical framework for digital pedagogy where linguistic diversity and personal identity are equally safeguarded.*

ology as a way around conceptual issues about the very nature of objectivity. In etic research the researcher defines the categories ahead of time and sees whether people's behavior falls into those categories – "also as a thought that provides impulses for philosophical and anthropological inquiries" [16, pp. 585-586]. It should be noted, that "the etic and emic distinction is seen in the words phonetics, with the former based on general categories on sounds and the latter based on the meanings of sounds for a particular community" according to Thomas Headland's famous scientific practical research-work "Emics and Etics: the Insider & Outsider Debate" [9, p. 342].

Based on our specific goal, it is greatly interesting for us, that product-based research attempts to look at the results of a particular educational situation. Process-based research attempts instead to analyze the processes that take place in the classroom or other learning situations. Often these are combined into process/product research. Action research, another important category, exists not on a continuum but as a type in itself. Action research is research carried out by practitioners in order to improve their own practice. It can involve any of the types of research described above. In action research in digital education, one or more teachers think about a change they would like to bring about in their classroom. We must note here: "it is well known for us that the term "Digital Education" has several meanings: In a general sense, the term "digital education" is understood as "education" in the digital age, referring to all nuances of meaning of the concept of education; In a comprehensive understanding, "digital education" refers to the formation of an individual private person" [6, pp. 4]. They then develop a plan for (a) introducing the change and (b) investigating the effect of introducing the change. Are ethical statements objectively true? Do ethical statements provide information about anything other than human opinions? Following the collection and analysis of the data, the lecturer disseminates information to colleague makes further curriculum decisions based on what has been learned, and plans a new cycle of action research to continue the learning process. Thus, we believe that the processual combination of emic and etic, as a continuous sequence of experimental research in online language education, structurally with extreme immanent difference, addresses a special digital-computer educational need. As we pointed out in our monograph at the time, for two and a half centuries now, the categorical logic of thought, according to Immanuel Kant's doctrinal statement, has been asking itself three main axiological questions: What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for? We consider ethical-value reflection on computer-digital technologies with "the tool it uses – language" [3, pp. 321-322] as an analogy for promoting all three of them!

2.2. Samples of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC):

Creative Algorithms and Computer Ethics

We can apply any of the above approaches to understanding on-line language learning. In many cases, educational research will fall somewhere between the various approaches. It is important, though, to think about which general approach matches your beliefs and is suitable to address the research questions chosen. Research conducted to better understand the role of the Internet in language learning generally involves five overlapping areas: linguistic features, interaction, attitude, context, and language impact. Research that investigates the linguistic features of on-line intercultural communication might ask questions such as these: Is e-mail communication more similar to speaking or to writing? Does a unique electronic language exist? [13, p. 177]

A growing body of first language research has begun to address these questions. For example, Mark Warschauer analyzed samples of computer-mediated communication (CMC) from a British conferencing network with other samples of speech and writing. Measuring type-token ratio (for

example, the number of different words [type] compared to the number of the total words [token]), he found: "computer-mediated communication lies much closer to the high type-token ratio of writing than the low type-token ratio of speech. On another vocabulary measure, lexical density (for example, ratio of lexical to grammatical items), computer-mediated communication also lies much closer to writing's high level of lexical density than to the law lexical density of speech; On a third measure, personal reference (for example, the number of second- and third-person pronouns), computer-mediated communication made much greater use of first- and second-person pronouns than either speech or writing did" [13, p. 179]. Warschauer concluded that computer-mediated communication is neither speech-like nor written language-like but has its own distinct features. A similar conclusion was arrived at by Georgian philosophers in the work "The Issue of Student Distance Communication", in particular: "there are good reasons for sticking with interactive text based systems and supplementing them with visual and other online resources, rather than attempting to duplicate face-to-face education online" [7, p. 24].

Research on these questions in second language environments is more limited. In one oft-cited study of students of foreign language is using Daedalus Inter Change (a component of the software Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment), Warschauer found the type-token ratio of computer-mediated intercultural communication for students using the software to be significantly higher than the type-token ratio of the same students in speech. Similarly, he found syntactic complexity (measured by comparing the number of dependent clauses to the total number of clauses) to be significantly greater in computer-mediated communication than in speech.

Finally, the differences among the interface used in various forms of computer- mediated communication also affect language use. Although work on the linguistic characteristics of second language intercultural communication is just beginning, this area will surely be an important one for research in the future. The fact that on-line language is de facto electronically archived, and thus need not be transcribed or scanned, makes it relatively easy to analyze. A number of analytical tools, such as the Child Language Data Exchange System, can aid moral-conceptual analysis. In addition, "the emergence of a digital translator is an effective and qualitative leap: translation from any to any language is performed instantly and in real time" [7, p. 27].

Another often-noted feature of computer-assisted conversation is that it disrupts what might be considered normal rules of turn taking because a number of people can be writing at once. This feature undoubtedly contributes to the more equal distribution of participation noted above, but it can also result in a series of asocial monologues rather than in interactive discussion. For example, Steve Gaer analyzing English language students' discussion on a MOO (is a text-based online virtual reality system to which multiple users (players) are connected at the same time), found that the majority of conversational turns consisted of initiating moves (e.g. initial statements or questions) rather than responding, reacting, or extending moves [8, p. 45].

The situation discussed above may be less acute during asynchronous communication, such as e-mail, in which the slower exchange may facilitate more direct response and idea building. Turn taking in one-to-one computer- mediated communication does seem to foster dialogue either in synchronous or in asynchronous mode. What's more, computer-mediated communication has been found to foster substantial negotiation of meaning, resulting in linguistic modifications toward more targets like use of language. This appears to be especially true when challenging tasks require learners to request and obtain information from each other for successful completion. Whether in many-to-many format, computer-mediated intercultural communication appears to give students a rich rep-

ertoire of language chunks to notice, analyze, and incorporate into their own language production, thus heightening their ability to learn from others' language use. According to the philosopher of the University of Michigan Kendall Lewis Walton, a third scientific area of digital-ethical research has investigated students' attitude toward using the Internet in the language classroom: Does use of the Internet increase students' motivation? Does the Internet have a different impact on the attitude of different types of students? [14, pp. 17-18]

It is known, that Mark Warschauer conducted a survey of second language students using the Internet for writing and university courses in three countries. A high degree of motivation was associated with the use of computers and the Internet in all the courses, with little difference between English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language - classrooms [13, p. 187]. An academic factor analysis revealed some cognitive factors affecting students' motivation: their interest in authentic intercultural communication; the amount of personal power and control that they felt mastering computers and the Internet gave them, and the perceived positive impact of computer mastery on their achievement.

In this study, the greatest degree of motivation occurred in classrooms where the teachers had integrated Internet-based activities into the curriculum rather than using computers in a peripheral fashion. Other qualitative studies have shown similar results. An in-depth study in educational learning theories by Joseph Ady indicated that the positive effect on attitude extends to both female and male high school students, with girls drawing in large measure on their interest in writing and interpersonal communication and boys drawing in part on their "general positive attitude toward working with computers and other electronic equipment" [1, p. 115-116]. The studies mentioned above largely focused on the use of e-mail or WWW for long-distance communication. When on-line intercultural communication has principally been used for in class conversation, students' motivation has not been as uniformly high [2, pp. 367-368].

It is interesting for us, that a fourth area of research examines the context of online learning: How does the socio-cultural context of the learning situation, including the teachers' and students' backgrounds and beliefs and the nature of the educational institution and community, affect the processes and results of on-line learning? Do some teaching contexts or approaches seem more congruent with successful incorporation of the Internet than others do?

Case studies have attempted to document students' language improvement resulting from on-line activity, but this is a challenging area of research, as it is often difficult to sort out how much improvement is due to having used the Internet and how much is due to other language learning activities. One particular area of research has looked at the impact of computer-mediated communication on students' subsequent writing. In Robb's study, a group that studied writing using computer-assisted conversation improved more in their writing ability from the beginning to the end of a semester than a control group that used face-to-face conversation [12]. As it seems, the students using Daedalus Inter Change incorporated more of the specific suggestions made by their peers, whereas the group using face-to-face discussion made more global changes. The best academic results were achieved with scholars groups that were allowed to alternate the use of Daedalus Inter Change discussion for peer review.

The processual picture described within the framework of the computerization scheme of language education takes on a more standard panoramic appearance when a new generation of theoretical-axiological concepts enter the arena of digital critical thinking, namely:

- According to an Emeritus Professor of Southern Connecticut State University (New Haven) Terrell Ward Bynum's researches the capabilities of computer technology are determined by its neutrality, and its protection should be considered more in terms of moral rather than immoral. Therefore, computerism already implies the recognition that language education embodies values in the communicative system and operates within a clearly ethical dimension [5, pp. 110-111].
- From an Emeritus Professor of Applied Ethics of University of Bergen and the author of one of the first higher education textbooks on Computer Ethics Deborah G. Johnson's point of view the capabilities of computer technology are determined by its neutrality and its protection should be considered more in terms of moral rather than immoral. Therefore, computerism already implies the recognition that language education embodies values in the communicative system and operates within a clearly ethical dimension [10, pp. 115-117].
- Based on a Professor of Dezhou University Fu Zhihai's worldview digital ethics, with its active potential for applied ethics, is also gaining attention as a vibrant field. And it is no wonder that it is a subject of constant puzzlement as to how the digitalization of ethics has changed the guiding procedures for language learning educational activities [15, pp. 2-3].

Since our paper is built around the idea that technology, by its very existence, unambiguously determines a certain ethics, the vector of identifying the ethical in computer content must be outlined. That is, we must assume that there is something valuable in computerization, but unresolved, although presumably through the practice of choice. We can assume that in the online language education version, the ethical syndrome appears with a kind of police tint, as it automatically checks who is behaving correctly and who is not, thus avoiding the prediction of authentic moralization. In this sense, Digital Ethics becomes machine-readable and recognizable.

3. Methods of Research

The study provides researchers in online language education technologies with a conceptual under-standing of different methods of intercultural communication. Among them, the most prominent is the methodology of emic and etic approaches that explores the intercultural phenomenon of online foreign language learning through the internal existential transformations of the native language, using its receptive logic.

At the same time, we note that our previous researches in this direction offer a kind of dynamical methodology foundation for the experience of axiological evaluation of Internet communication in the language education sector, more specifically:
- To support a formal worldview understanding of the online processes, our work "for the Issues of the World-View Online Foreign Language Learning" focuses more on the value of Computer Ethics in online language learning, such as the responsibility to respectfully and generously adhere to the cultural norms of Netiquette. It is precisely the latter that implies a morality that sets a good tone for digital communication filled with goodwill and respect in the online space [4].
- Accounting for digital practices, our study frames remote "Student Communication and Collaboration for Foreign Language Teaching" as an object of critical judgment, directly addressing ethical standards linked to computer technology. Furthermore, it specifies the preventive activation of ethical dilemmas, emphasizing the need to recognize and appreciate the personal boundaries, time, and interests of the human presence behind the screen [7].

4. Summary of Findings

Summarizing our findings, we have connected digital practices and Computer Ethics based on theoretical-conceptual analysis, in more detail:

We think, the flexible and interdisciplinary potential of Emics and Ethics allows us to programmatically manage and systematically balance relativistic relations in the pragmatic algorithm of online language education; and we can contextualize the affirmative template concepts using the tabula rasa principle. The matter is, that in the context of computerization, adherence to a particular ethical norm is not always limited to the classic "yes" and "no" position. Accordingly, a conceptual review and evaluation of various non-classical logics, multi-criteria classification mechanisms, and probabilistic approaches becomes relevant, as shown in Table_1. More specifically, for the sake of clarity, we present conceptually accepted information data on computer ethics intended for online foreign language teaching - in order to reveal the transformative-evolutionary nature of ethical challenges.

Accordingly, the contents of the table should provide a kind of answer to the naturally arising question: what is changing evolutionarily in the ethical panorama of computer-based foreign language learning from the late 1990s to the perspective of the new century?

Table_1. Digital Studies and Computer Ethics: Historical-Comparative Analytics

Author and Conceptual Research	Essential Content of the Conception	Theoretical and Value Assessment
Conception → Description → Comment		
Joseph Ady's "Survey across the World"	*The most effective online activity for virtual connections is the alternative design of networked work freely recognized by foreign language learners*	*Transformative ethics purposefully leverages the potential of computer-based learning*
Chris Andrews' "Project-Oriented Use of the WWW for Learning Culture"	*The project-oriented educational culture of the World Wide Web is directly related to the individual-personal technology of learning English with the help of computers*	*The digital world of learning culture and unlimited possibilities meet in the computerization of education*
Mark Warschauer's "Electronic Literacies: Language, Culture and Power in Online Education"	*Certain dangers are observed with the culture of online language lexical-structural education, including in the form of marginalize and the expectation of informational power*	*Ensuring the quality of language teaching on an online platform without norms lacks validity*
Terrell Ward Bynum's "Computer Ethics: It's Birth and its Future"	*Computer Ethics, on the one hand, is an argument in the context of the historical background of the 1990s, and, on the other hand, is a hypothesis with two alternatives: Computer Ethics will either turn into global ethics or it may one day "disappear"*	*Both the argumentation and the hypothetical aspects recognize the status of Computer Ethics as an epochal value for the benefit of a multifaceted spectrum of online education*
Deborah G. Johnson's "Computer Culture and Morality" in the Book: "Computer Ethics"	*The leading approaches in the online foreign language learning classroom are normative in nature, however, the student is also given the opportunity to become familiar with alternative ethical positions*	*Introducing a new online learning space with ethical technologies is a priority for the listening audience*
Fu Zhihai's	*The computer can make the learning process technically dynamic and rich,*	*The learning context of the communication-based process*

"Computer as a Tool in the Teaching of Foreign Language"	*and morally - contextualize access to a foreign language with the resources of the virtual environment.*	*is the emergence of the regulatory potential of Computer Ethics*

The table shows the impact of the intersection of information practices and ethical-conceptual research results on the computer potential of online foreign language learning. More specifically, it reflects, based on digital-theoretical diagnostics, the extent to which the filtering and fixation of the preconditions provoking challenges of computer ethics with the factor of language education is expected. And, as a summary conclusion: while the scholarly thinking on online language education in the 1990s only considered the ethical spirit in computerization as a priority, and limited its phenomenon to the status of a desirable template, the theoretical worldview of the 21st century reinforces Computer Ethics with disciplinary names and establishes it as a specialized regulation of virtual communication.

5. Research Results

In our study, by adapting to the principal research interests, the digital practice implemented in the online foreign language education sector is specified and clarified with reliable qualifications as a package of basic approaches that are methodologically sound, computer-software assured, supported by theoretical knowledge and tested by test experience, more specifically:

- One of the most prioritized approaches is analyzed to examine practical issues in a relevant simulated learning environment & provide an explanation of the mechanism of their operation.
- The second approach is traditionally called conducting scientific-theoretical research in a kind of pilot or experimental conditions and reflecting the results obtained through digital sharing.
- And the third position hypothetically considers discursive-analytical conversations with colleagues and specialists in the field, assuming normative standards of Computer Ethics.
- And most importantly, the study demonstrates the acceptance of the use of online computer tools not simply as a requirement for obtaining valid and quality results in the field of language education, but as a necessary mediating mechanism for academic communication.

Although the online learning and education resource is publicly available and accessible through the personal user space of the populist Internet community, the digital interpretation and operational control of its academic information algorithm is within a rather limited potential and represents a specific computer-holistic system with its unambiguously defined basic approaches. Accordingly, the competence for its relevant acquisition and evaluation can only be entrusted to the qualified recommendations of specialists in the field who possess the best practices.

The information exchange system in online foreign language teaching actively requires functioning with some regulatory mechanism and this need is fully satisfied and fulfilled by the implementation of the digital regulatory principles of Digital Ethics.

6. Conclusion

Research studies in this area will likely yield not general conclusions but rather specific insights into the impact of using particular on-line activities in particular circumstances. An accumulation of such specific insights over time, however, may allow us as lecturer to continually improve our understanding of the cognitive role and responsibility of the Internet in foreign language education. Research on on-line language learning may eventually serve broader purposes than providing pedagogical guidance. The large amount of second language interaction occurring on-line and the ease with which

this interaction can be electronically archived, makes on-line communication a potentially important source for investigating a wide range of issues related to second language acquisition. In due time, the power of computers and the Internet may help us not only increase our understanding of the on-line classroom but also unlock broader mysteries of the Computer Ethics of language learning process.

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