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## THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON THE ACQUISITION OF FOREIGN CULTURES AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, the usage of the internet has taken place in every corner of our country. According to many studies, the excessive use of the Internet can show some changes in the human personality, where these changes in young people are more unpredictable and more rapid.

The main goal of this study is to investigate the use of the Internet and social networks by young people and children and their impact on health, behavior, and especially on the acquisition of foreign habits from other cultures.

From experience with children and students, we see that every day more and more habits are acquired that do not belong to our culture, all this as a consequence of the access they have to the Internet to get to know other non-Albanian cultures. The possibilities offered by the internet and social networks nowadays make foreign culture as popular and as close as possible, thereby endangering our culture as Albanian people.

An awareness of this has been introduced to me much earlier since we started enrolling children who were stuck in naming colors and numbers, not those who didn't know them, but these children only knew the name in English.

In this topic we will particularly see the impact of the Internet on: The way of feeding, speaking and writing, celebrating holidays, expressing emotions as well as socialization, on children and young people.

Counseling work with groups of students, parents, and teachers will help to achieve a degree of awareness of this current phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Internet, culture, children, young people.

### INTRODUCTION

The impact of the Internet on the acquisition of foreign cultures in children and young people is complex and multidimensional. It provides quick and easy access to information, helping them learn about different traditions, languages, and customs.

Through different platforms, social networks, and educational applications, children can interactively explore different cultures. This helps increase intercultural tolerance and understanding. However, parents and educators must guide children to make informed and critical decisions about the resources they consume.

Another very important element is the way of interaction, through social networks and other platforms children and young people can connect with peers from different countries. These interactions not only increase cultural knowledge but can also arouse the interest of acquiring them.

From experience with children and students, we see that every day more and more habits are acquired that do not belong to our culture, all this as a consequence of the access they have to the Internet to get to know other non-Albanian cultures. The possibilities offered by the internet and social networks nowadays make foreign culture as popular and as close as possible, thereby endangering our culture as Albanian people.

A potential challenge is the influence of dominant cultures, which can lead to a loss of

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local cultural identity. This can create a sense of loss of cultural identity. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage a balance between the acquisition of foreign cultures and the preservation of local traditions.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ways in which the Internet helps children and young people to acquire different cultures, focusing on some more specific elements such as language (speech), way of eating, celebration of holidays, games, and lifestyle.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of young children using digital media. Children are regularly using the internet to play, communicate, and explore. Educators and researchers are beginning to examine the social and cognitive implications of children's use of interactive media and the internet. Socio-cultural and ecological systems theories offer a perspective that can support our understanding of internet use and young children's cognitive development.

### **The importance of forming cultural habits for children and young people**

*Using the Internet opportunities for the adoption of foreign cultures*

Culture exerts a powerful influence on our attitudes and behavior. As such, culture is a key form of social influence. [11]

Some of the aspects of everyday living that stem from culture are:

- Language and speech,
- The way of eating (the culture specifies what you eat and what a people do not eat, as well as the way you eat food),
- Holiday manifestation,
- Lifestyle (culture dictates how you dress).

In this paper, we will present how the internet affects these aspects of culture in children and young people.

We live in an age of big data. With hundreds of millions of people spending countless hours on social media to share, communicate, connect, interact, and create user-generated data at an unprecedented rate, social media has become one unique source of big data. This novel source of rich data provides unparalleled opportunities and great potential for research and development.

It is true that the technological revolutions that happened in the 21st century have completely

changed the way that people exchange ideas and share information. People have also grown up to be aware of social networks and apps. [15]

The connected and corresponding groupings of social media are:

- Social Networking Websites, for instance, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Instant Messengers that contain WhatsApp, Google Meet, Facebook, Messenger, Skype, Zoom, Tango, and IMO.
- Social News that contains Flipboard, Play Newsstand, BBC News, etc.
- Microblogging, for instance, Twitter and Telegram.
- Media Sharing, for instance, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Flickr, and Intranet
- Wikis with Wikipedia, Emojipedia, and online dictionaries
- Emailing for Gmail, Outlook, Hotmail, and Yahoo
- Blogging such as Google Blogger and Wo14rdPress

"Social networking tools such as these and others also provide opportunities for language learners to enhance digital and multiliteracy skills, interact in and through the target language, work collaboratively and enhance their linguistic and pragmatic proficiency". [4]

Moreover, social media sites and apps can be classified into two groups:

1. Synchronous Communication tools  
"...include messaging tools and audio- and videoconferencing tools" [8], for enabling people to instantly message or to cooperate regularly through Messengers or Social Networking Sites which are used to make phone calls or to do audio-video conferencing.
2. Asynchronous Communication tools for allowing users to collaborate over time.

"Asynchronous communication can happen over any kind of messaging system, such as Rabbit MQ, Kafka, Active MQ, or even Amazon Simple Queue Service (SQS)" [13] Many ways that people can communicate with one another allow them to do things that are not connected in real-time. Some people find these kinds of tools useful, such as the message boards you can find on Google Classroom or even instant messenger apps. It is also possible to learn foreign languages by interacting with other people via email.

With this special section on children, adolescents, and the Internet, we survey the

state of a new field of inquiry in developmental psychology. This field is important because developmentalists need to understand how children and adolescents live in a new, massive, and complex virtual universe, even as they carry on their lives in the real world. [3]

### **Language as a means of speech**

*Language development, language culture, learning foreign languages.*

One of the main features or characteristics of a people, the nation, is the language, the importance of which is extraordinary and irreplaceable, and it represents a guide in defining and profiling every human being. Language represents the first shield against assimilation in all possible forms and ways that can be presented to any nation or people.

If we manage to preserve the language, then we have managed to preserve the culture, tradition, customs, and other elements that characterize a people.

The development of the language has its own specifics, it is not only a means of communication, but through it, other features can be preserved, developed, and acquired which characterize or distinguish the peoples among themselves. It is natural to assume that language is the same experience and has the same meaning for all human beings, regardless of what language they speak, where they live, or how they interact with their language patterns. [9]

Various scientists have done numerous studies and for years have tried to reveal the secrets of children's linguistic sophistication, an issue that has caused numerous researches and analyses as Pinker has said: [12]

The three-year-old is a grammar genius in most constructions, obeying the rules much more than ignoring them, respecting linguistic universals, similar to adults, and avoiding many types of mistakes at the same time.

We are all aware that the child's language development does not begin after birth, but when he is in the mother's womb. Not later than the 20th week of pregnancy, say the latest studies. Several factors influence language development and acquisition. We must also keep in mind that each child is a special individual, unique in his abilities.

For the child's mental and moral development, how his speech develops is of great importance.

If speech is developed correctly, it will progress according to its intellectual abilities and acquire proper knowledge for life. The child rightly begins his "cultural development" with the acquisition of the language system, which first serves for communication with the social circle, while during the initial development, it also serves for the organization of individual behavior. [6]

The linguistic culture of the environment directly affects the rate of development and the level of the child's verbal skills.

The development of children's speech, to a large extent, is determined by the quantity and quality of communication between parents and children. Children with amazing powers acquire the speech of the environment - their mother tongue. [9]

The fact that children from an early age spend a long time in front of television screens or various technological tools has enabled them to get to know other languages.

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### **The way of feeding**

*The influence of the internet on the way of eating and its consequences, information, distraction, express negative, social influences, etc.*

Diet is also a major element in a people's culture. The influence of the Internet on the way children and young people eat is very visible. Nowadays, children and young people while eating food want to watch social networks, especially animated films on technological devices such as tablets, phones, TVs, or laptops. Watching the Internet while eating food in children and young people has several important impacts such as:

- Information - children and young people have easy access to information about food, recipes, and healthy and unhealthy practices. This can influence the increase in awareness of healthy or unhealthy eating.
- Distraction: children or young adults who watch videos or use apps while eating often focus less on their food, making it more difficult to control the amount of food they eat and understand the signals of satiety.

- Express negative: this can influence the formation of negative unhealthy habits, such as eating uncontrollably or consuming unhealthy foods.

- Social influences: different platforms help shape food preferences through threads. A large number of children follow influencers who try certain foods and promote different ways of eating, which can influence their choices. For example, the way of eating with chopsticks is the culture of some countries in Asia, and under the influence of the Internet, this culture has been brought to our country.

- Increasing interest in certain foods: The Internet enables children and young people to see special foods, which in most cases are not available in the market of our country, they may become more inclined to try them. Those foods can sometimes be healthy but are often unhealthy foods. These products are often promoted through advertising, creating cravings for foods with little nutritional value, such as snacks and sodas.

- Cooking practice - however a positive side of the internet may be that some children and young people can learn about healthy food through educational videos and recipes, encouraging them to get involved in cooking and develop a better relationship with food. Cooking video tutorials encourage children and young people to try new and healthy dishes, making them more involved in the feeding process.

- Family communication - in the Albanian tradition, eating food together with family members represents a very important moment of the family meeting, where we have communication between family members. Looking through screens enables the interruption of this family communication.

To minimize negative impacts, it is important that parents encourage screen-free eating and create healthy mealtime environments.

### **Festive celebration**

*The importance of national and religious holidays and familiarity with foreign holidays*

People can preserve and express their culture through various cultural-artistic activities, such as national manifestations to mark important historical dates. By marking the holidays, a part of the history, traditions, and customs of a people is revealed and sublimated, and their children and young people get to know their culture.

The Internet has enabled children and young people to get to know the holidays of foreign cultures, of course, this can be taken as a positive side because it affects the expansion of cultural diversity. But this can present a concern, because children and young people, being introduced to foreign holidays through the Internet, begin to lose the feeling for national holidays and feel closer to foreign holidays, and with this, they express more interest and show a desire to celebrate the same holidays.

The negative impact of celebrating foreign holidays on the part of children and young people can be:

- Loss of cultural traditions: this can lead to a disconnection from local traditions and cultures, making it more difficult to preserve Albanian cultural identity.

- Social pressure: where there is a tendency among children and young people to feel peer pressure to participate in these parties, which can create feelings of inferiority in those who cannot afford the costs of the parties.

- Impact on family values: foreign holidays often give priority to fun and individualism, reducing the meaning and importance of family values and cooperation that characterize Albanian culture.

- Lack of knowledge about local history and traditions: many children and young people may not have knowledge about traditional Albanian holidays, thus losing the opportunity to learn and appreciate their cultural heritage.

For this, a more detailed and balanced approach is needed, where foreign and local holidays can coexist at the same time with the aim of preserving the cultural identity.

### **The influence of the Internet on the games of children and young people**

*Game function, electronic games have replaced playing traditional games, and the negative impact of electronic devices on physical, mental, emotional, and social development*

Play is a fun and inevitable activity in a child's life. The child almost never hesitates to play, even when he is sick or tired. It is rightly said that the game enables the child to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Despite the fact that play is difficult to define, more precisely it is a happy behavior.

The game can mainly be just entertainment, but also an opportunity to expand knowledge about

the circumstances of social divisions - the way of processing social problems. [2]

In the phenomenon of play, one encounters the child's tendency to affirm his own self, but in a spontaneous and unrestricted manner by the rules of a serious behavior, by the eventual difficulties of lack of skills as well as the different roles assigned to him by adults. [9]

Children's games change and take different forms in the child's development. Typically, they manifest the child's level of psychic and physical development, cultural level, feelings, desires, and needs, as well as the level of social development. Therefore, in some cases, contemporary psychology uses the child's play as an important diagnostic tool.

#### Game function

Through play, the child develops and prepares for the future and the obligations that life brings. Play and child development are in a relationship of mutual dependence. The game advances the development of the child, but on the other hand, the development also opens up new opportunities for the game. If we analyze the phenomenon of play from the aspect of orthogenetic and phylogenetic development, we will see that it appeared due to the immaturity of the child (physical, psychic, and social), to be included in the world of adult activity, on the one hand, as and the need felt by the child to live the life of adults, on the other hand. In the past, the tendency of children was to join the world of adults, to behave or work like them, to play their role. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the children's favorite games were those where the role of father or mother, teacher or doctor, policeman or salesman, or famous people such as the king, queen, or any movie character was played. [6]

Internet nowadays children have access to various electronic games, which in fact present a virtual and imaginary world, while children's curiosity and imagination arise that it represents the real world and in this way, they lose the feeling and the sense of the real world.

Electronic games have replaced playing traditional games with the physical presence of children and young people.

The negative impact of electronic devices on physical, mental, emotional and social development

Electronic games are mainly played through technological means such as: Tablets, phones, laptops or computers, PlayStation, etc. This allows children to sit for a long time in front of them to continue in the chair, this represents a passivation in the physical aspect as well as affects the physical passivity of the body, where various body deviations are presented, such as skeletal deformation (spinal axis), obesity, insomnia, damage to the senses of sight and hearing, speech delay, etc.

The nature of electronic games in most cases manifests or shows violence, and aggressiveness, as well as different games do not show these properties, children naturally get nervous, and aggressive because their goal is to pass as many steps or levels as possible in the game. In most cases, children experience feelings of inferiority, insecurity, demoralization, and loss of self-confidence.

Online games and applications allow children and young people to play in the same group with children and young people from all over the world, and this enables them to get to know cultures from different countries of the world more easily.

The role of parents should be more attentive and careful in checking what games their child plays and what age group they are included in, on the one hand, and the other hand, schools and educational centers should apply traditional games, with fun and educational character to awaken curiosity in children to play games with their peers. School professional services should talk about this topic with the aim of self-awareness, sensitizing on the negative sides of electronic games and thus presenting a kind of prevention to children, in fact avoiding access to these games and encouraging the motive and curiosity to replace them. With games in an open environment with a physical presence. [6]

#### Life style

*The influence of the Internet on the clothing style of children and young people.*

Psychologists who have done a complete analysis of positive habits impose on us the question of how we will achieve it, and what are the best ways and ways to form lasting positive habits in children. The work methodology in terms of the formation of habits in children is quite developed and in it, we can find different guidelines. No instructions should be taken blindly. If we read any guidance advice, we

should not understand that it will be suitable for every specific case. Also, we dare not stick to only one way of influencing the child, but in addition to that, use many ways, so that the child will achieve desirable results.

It is also important to know that with each child we cannot act in the same way nor get the same results. It depends on the individual characteristics that the child has, on her temperament, or on the bright influences to which she has been exposed.

Children and young people the formation of positive habits can be influenced by the various exposures that the Internet offers.

Online activities help shape identity. Young people often do not fully understand the importance of online etiquette, resulting in inappropriate behavior such as bullying. Social networks often encourage comparisons that can negatively affect self-confidence and self-esteem. Constant exposure to data and social influences can cause stress, anxiety, and depression.

The influence of the Internet on the clothing style of children and young people.

The use of the Internet has enabled children and young people to have more access to following world fashion and trends. Different platforms offer a wealth of fashion examples, encouraging children and young people to explore new styles and experiment with clothing. Another characteristic is fast trends – the internet allows for the rapid dissemination of new trends, causing many young people to feel pressured to refine their style to fit current norms. This can affect the acquisition of different cultures, because it allows children and young people to have access to bright cultures and different styles of clothing, helping them to create a unique identity.

- Online shopping has made it possible for children and young people to access more clothing options, but it can also create a problem with budget management. Thus, the Internet has transformed the way children and young people see and experience fashion, offering opportunities but also inherent challenges. To help them face these challenges, it is important that parents and educators guide young people safely and responsibly to use the Internet.

## CONCLUSION

The uncontrolled use of the internet from an early age affects the acquisition of foreign cultures in children and young people, especially in their language, the manifestation of holidays, games, and lifestyle.

For children to speak their language, they need to be constantly spoken to by their parents and their close social circle, and as much as possible to keep their children away from using the Internet, so that in this way they can also preserve the language as an element of the culture of people.

To minimize negative impacts, it is important that parents encourage screen-free eating and create healthy mealtime environments. For this, a more detailed and balanced approach is needed, where foreign and local holidays can coexist at the same time with the aim of preserving the cultural identity.

The role of parents should be more attentive and careful in checking what games their child plays and what age group they are included in, and the schools and educational centers should apply traditional games, with fun and educational character to awaken curiosity in children to play games with their peers.

The Internet has transformed the way children and young people see and experience fashion, offering opportunities but also inherent challenges. To help them face these challenges, it is important that parents and educators guide young people safely and responsibly to use the Internet.

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