



IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This article touches the problem of the use of digital educational technologies in foreign language teaching and presents the educational possibilities of using these technologies in the process of learning and teaching various aspects of foreign language.

KEY WORDS: *digital information technologies, foreign language, foreign language teaching.*

Digital learning technologies are a way of organising a modern learning environment based on digital technology.

Technology should support the 4 key components of the learning process: active participation, group work, interaction and expert feedback.

The choice of technology that can be used unfortunately often depends on the resources available to the teacher and the institution. A common situation is an interactive whiteboard, or a computer with a projector. If you are lucky, you may have a classroom equipped with laptops, netbooks or tablets. In both cases, you are likely to be using technology in every session. You may also have access to a computer lab, which needs to be booked in advance, or the use of which is on a first-come, first-served basis.

In the case of learners who are bored with traditional ways of learning a language, using computers during classes will increase their motivation. Students usually have smartphones or other mobile devices that they can use. And they will certainly appreciate their teacher's efforts if he or she shows them how to practice the language better using the device.

One way of integrating the use of technology into an English course is to use a blended learning approach.

Blended learning here refers to a language course that combines face-to-face communication in the classroom with the use of technology, and this definition implies that learners use technology at home. Although many teachers believe that blended learning training consists of face-to-face communication in the classroom with the addition of an online course (i.e. 90% online; 10% face-to-face), this term should be understood differently: the online component is added to the face-to-face training.

One of the best ways in which teachers can implement this type of blended learning is the creation and use of information and communication subject environment, which is a set of conditions contributing to the emergence and development of processes of information interaction between the learner(s), teacher and means of information and communication technology, as well as the formation of cognitive activity of the learner provided the content of the environment components. At that the following is provided: activity with information resource of some subject field by means of interactive means of information and communication technologies; information interaction with means of interactive information and communication technologies, interacting with a user as a subject of information communication and personality; interactive information interaction between a user and objects of subject field,



reflecting regularities and features of appropriate subject field (or field); information interaction between a teacher and a pupil. The functioning of information and communication subject environment is determined by the following factors: implementation of information interaction between a user (users) both among themselves (within educational interactions) and with screen representations of studied objects, influence on the processes or phenomena under consideration, learning plots occurring and developing on the basis of the use of information and educational resource of a particular subject area; possibility to work under the conditions of implementation of embedded technologies.

A common obstacle to integrating technology into a foreign language course can be the question of what the teacher should do if something goes wrong. A teacher using technology should always have a plan B, i.e. be prepared for the possibility that the technology might not work as planned. But this article is not about that, but about the actual process of integrating information technology into the curriculum.

1. Vocabulary training with digital information technology

As you know, learning vocabulary can be quite difficult. Not only do the students have to learn a large number of words, but they also have to meet them in context several times before they can memorise and use them in practice. In addition to individual words, students have to learn a large number of word combinations. In most language courses, there is simply not enough time to learn all the vocabulary the learners need, so much of it has to be learned outside the classroom.

With all these factors in mind, the teacher should not only focus on teaching pre-selected words and phrases, but also introduce students to strategies for effective vocabulary learning, developing students' self-study skills.

Information technology can help learners to learn words because it has been proven that words are remembered better if they are presented in an interesting way and if words and phrases affect learners emotionally. Thus, technology can help the teacher find different and sometimes fun ways to introduce vocabulary into the classroom. An example of such a task could be "Word puzzles".

2. Teaching grammar with digital information technology

Consider how information technology grammar instruction.

Many of the technologies are used by people in everyday life to test their knowledge of grammar and to help them write texts.

For example: sites that automatically translate texts and tools embedded in word processing programmes (spell and grammar checkers), comparing results in Google, using a web page called Googleflight, etc.

These techniques are useful both in language learning and in everyday life.

3. Teaching listening with digital information technology

Technology has helped with language learning since ancient times, from the wax cylinders produced in Linguaphone 1 and gramophone records to digital recordings on CDs.

But it's safe to say that learning foreign languages has become much more interesting with the advent of the Internet, through podcasts and other online audio sources. Technology, when used properly, can help teachers and learners with real-life oral comprehension. Listening is an active process in which listeners select and interpret information that comes from audio and visual sources in order to determine what is happening and what the speaker is trying to convey. However, teaching listening is not an easy task, and the results are not easy to demonstrate.

How can digital technology help? There is a perception that the main aim should be to keep learners motivated, facilitate practice and listen outside the classroom. Teachers can use technology, especially the Internet, to show learners the benefits of real-world sources of information by engaging them in tasks that are of personal interest to them.

There are many authentic videos and podcasts on YouTube aimed at improving listening skills.

In addition to the Internet, sound recording devices (mobile phones and MP3 players) can be used to record people known to the teacher and learners. Telephony tools (such as Skype) can also be used.



4. Learning to read using digital information technology

Reading is a complex and multi-faceted skill. Perceptions of how best to learn to read have been constantly changing, especially with the rise in popularity of the internet. The International Reading Association has stated that in order to be fully literate in today's world, new competences in information and communication are needed. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers should help students develop reading skills, Different reading strategies are needed when it comes to electronic texts (e.g. how to deal with hyperlinked texts), and with the advent of new text genres (email, chat, microblogging, etc.) as well as new combinations of text and image, the nature of text itself has changed. All these new texts require a new set of skills, which are usually grouped under the general term "digital literacy".

5. Teaching writing with digital information technology

The skill of writing is probably among the most problematic due to the growth of internet users. Recently, there has been an increased interest in important new tools such as blogs, "Wikipedia" or social media platforms that help learners get used to writing. In many cases, you will find that your students regularly write online. One of the challenges for a foreign language teacher is to help the learner to extending their "internet world beyond the mother tongue". And the way to do this is to use the internet as an opportunity for language learning.

Blogs are another means for learning a foreign language. Collective work can also be celebrated through the use of technology. Perhaps the best tool for this is Wikipedia (a simple website, with content that can be easily edited). Whereas emails, chat rooms and blogs mostly focus on informal and personal exchanges, writing a wiki page is more formal and focuses on a specific topic. Apart from "Wikipedia", teachers can also experiment with other projects, such as Simple English Wikipedia (<http://simple.wikipedia.org>), which targets English language learners. Collaboration in a project of this kind can be very motivating for some students.

Writing on social media, is another area that cannot be overlooked. Social networks such as Facebook or Twitter have become an integral part of many learners' lives, and teachers may find that some of their students are already using a foreign language to communicate with others on these sites. In that case, using social media in the classroom would be an excellent option that would be very popular.

Collecting learners' written work in electronic portfolios is another area for the teacher to consider. This can become an integral part of the learner's personal environment.

In addition to conventional writing skills, your students may need digital literacy skills, which is another reason to use digital tools. There are many things to explore with learners: the multimodality of digital texts (e.g. combining text and pictures), writing in different digital contexts (e.g. use of mobile text messages or SMS as well as use of fonts and other design features, etc.

6. Learning to speak using digital information technology

For many years, the computer tended to be more associated with written rather than spoken language applications, but with new developments in Web 2.0, the increased access of teachers and learners to the Internet for teaching and learning, the focus has shifted. Web 2.0 tools are some of the best technologies that can help learners improve their speaking skills. These days it's easy to record the speaker as most mobile phones have a voice recorder, and there are many free web-based tools that also allow you to make such recordings. Such tools include audio-editing technology from mobile phones, webcams, VCRs and audio Internet sites, interview websites, computer games and virtual words, which can be used to show that there are now many tools available and many ways whose use enhances speech.

7. Pronunciation training with digital information technology

Pronunciation is an aspect of language teaching that often lacks time and is sometimes forgotten. Recently, many tools and websites have been developed to help teachers and learners with pronunciation.

Special Internet resources, websites, talking dictionaries, phonemic charts and other online tools can be used



to teach pronunciation, including general phonetic knowledge, common pronunciation errors, and to deal with specific points such as accentuation, features of coherent speech, use of phonetic transcription, etc.

Educators around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of the proficient use of modern ICTs in education. ICTs help solve the following problems: improving learning processes, increasing educational outcomes and motivation, networking and collaborative projects, improving organization and management of the educational process. This is not surprising, since the opportunities that ICTs offer for the development of an innovative economy and modern society have become available for education as well.

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