

MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The purpose of the study is to find out the role of multimedia in teaching English as a second language in the universities. The development of information technologies causes changes in studying approaches, which in turn affects the language teaching methods. A number of new tasks has been assigned to the teachers, requiring the implementation of multimedia in the educational process. This study emphasizes on the ways of using information, namely, multimedia technologies in teaching English in the universities, and overviews briefly some programs and Internet resources for creating multimedia presentations and tests.

Key words: multimedia technologies, educational process, teaching methods, multimedia program.

General Problem: The global social process of informatization engulfs the sphere of education, in particular the educational practice in the universities. It affects the information exchange between professors and students. It is reasoned that new professional requirements for professors have been appearing. The influence of information (multimedia) technologies on the educational process has become the object of researches for some scientists.

Analysis of recent researches and publications: The use of multimedia technologies in educational process has been researched by Zelinska O.I., Kapinus O.L., Shklikova O.V., Kazachiner O.S., Butkovskaya N.O., Beigich O.B., American scholars Fletcher, McNeil and Nelson.

The need to adapt the English teaching methods to international standards and modern requirements has been emphasized by Zelinskaya O.I. She has supported this idea by the results of sociological research, which have been pointed to the

popularity of information technologies as the main mean of obtaining and assimilating new information by students. O.I. Zelinskaya emphasizes the use of modern technologies which are considered to be the way of transforming the educational process into more effective one. In accordance to the scientist's researches the improvement of the educational process helps to transform it into more lively and creative one [1,2,3].

Some computerized educational programs that can be used in the educational process to improve the efficiency and accelerate the learning of information by students, have been reviewed by O.L. Kapinus. In particular, the scientist has investigated the use of IT technologies as a mean to enhance the foreign language communicative competence [4, 5].

The need of adapting multimedia to student's requirements, to simplify the process of learning information, has been pointed out by Shlikova O.V. In addition, the scientist has proved the connection between the

method of perceiving information and the ability to memorize it [6].

The Kazachiner O.S. has considered the innovative teaching methods and multimedia tools as instruments that can be used in the educational process, namely, in the learning of English. The scientist also explored the use of multimedia programs in such teaching methods as coaching, case studying, working in groups etc. [7].

A detailed description of how the presentation of the lecture material should be made has been offered by Bigych O.B. He has emphasized on the use of multimedia learning tools – animated text in combination with animated illustrations and implemented sound and he has shown it through the description of working with Microsoft PowerPoint [8].

The investigation of Butkovskaya N.O. has shown the role of Smart Board and related programs in the educational process, considered multimedia technologies as a system of maintenance of the educational process [9].

Scientists Fletcher, McNeil, Nelson have focused on comparative analysis of traditional educational forms and multimedia forms of learning. The results pointed to a number of advantages of multimedia educational programs in comparison with traditional ones, which determine the prospects of their further use [6].

The researches of scientists confirm the opinion that the educational process is closely connected with the information technologies, basically, with multimedia. However, such interaction imposes new requirements on professors. In addition

to possessing professional knowledge, they have to form and raise the level of qualification in the field of IT. Great importance have skills of using multimedia technologies. As far as it is necessary to intensify the mental and creative abilities of students, to help them to facilitate the process of remembering and to make them involved as much as possible in the educational process, multimedia technologies should be used for these tasks.

The purpose of this study is to find out the possibility of using multimedia technologies by professors in English teaching process, the conditions of their use and the number of multimedia tools that can be used by professors during the educational process.

Main body: New skills of high quality and abilities of foreign language professors are related to work with IT technologies. The positive experience of technologies' application in the educational process is one of the main indicators of professors' professional competence, namely, its component - information competence. In turn, the information competence requires from the professors owning the ability to model the informational and educational environment. Therefore, a foreign language professor, in particular, English professor, should develop the ability to adapt the learning process to the requirements of the information society. This can be achieved through the implementation of multimedia technologies in traditional methods of English teaching.

To form a general idea of what multimedia technologies are, let's turn to the definition proposed by Helikova O.V. Sci-

entist defines the multimedia technologies as a specific kind of computer technologies, which combines both traditional static visual information (text, graphics) and dynamic one - speech, music, video fragments, animation [5].

Such a variety of means of information expressing enables the professor, in particular the English professor, to expand his influence on students in the context of their perception of material on English. This opinion is supported in the studies of J.E. Glushchenko, which have identified seven types of people in accordance to their mental abilities. J.E. Glushenko suggests using different teaching tools to each type. Thus, it is worthwhile to use such forms of communication as speaking and free writing in education of students with verbal intelligence, and students with musical (rhythmic) perceptions are more likely to learn the material by listening to it, especially if it is presented in form of song or provided with musical accompaniment [10].

Therefore, different approaches should be applied to different students. But this is difficult to do when a professor deals with a group of students who equally have to study the material summarized in the curriculum. The educational material presented with the help of multimedia technologies allows to involve different senses simultaneously, so as can be easily assimilated by different types of thinking.

In the process of using multimedia in teaching English, the professor should consider:

a) the need of preserving basic principles of educational material presentation despite

of the modernization of teaching methods. In the process of learning, students must continue to acquire communication skills such as speaking, listening, reading, writing, and such language skills as grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, orthography;

b) the importance of studying a new type of multimedia culture for the acquisition, possession, processing, transmission, storage, selection, reproduction and integration of information for personal and professional development;

c) the level of cognitive interest in the use of multimedia while representing the educational material. If such an interest is based on the willing of material benefit or has been motivated by self-assertion, the modification of the teaching methods in the course of its computerization may give weaker and totally ineffective results. Conversely, the desire to improve information exchange with students, to improve the level of students' perceptions of learning material can make a significant contribution to the modernization of teaching process.

The effectiveness of pedagogical activity depends on how well the individual peculiarities of students have been taken into account during the planning of teaching process. Therefore, analysis of teaching process comes before the planning of pedagogical activity. In this case, a special attention should be paid to the level of subject (knowledge of English) and informational competence of students. The low (insufficient) level of any of the competences does not allow to realize the whole didactic potential of information technologies. High level of computer skills and the

absence of basic knowledge of a foreign language do not allow the students to spend time at the lesson effectively and to solve the educational tasks. Consequently, the students will try to use information technologies during the lesson of English with another (non-educational) purpose, which will result in the inappropriate use of such technologies in the teaching process. Negative result is observed also in the opposite case, when a student with well-formed communicative and language skills, but a low level of information competence, is offered to perform communicative tasks or exercises with the help of educational software. In this case, the application of information technologies prevents the learning of English material.

The next step is a comprehensive analytical activity. The subject of the analysis is the educational program of foreign language studying, educational standards, the content of educational manuals, methodological materials, didactic capabilities of information technologies in order to intensify the process of forming speech skills and language skills of students, as well as the effectiveness of printed teaching resources; the fund of software tools for teaching a foreign language. In the process of analytical activity, the professor must identify the features of the education materials' content, which is proposed for assimilation by students in the class. After that, it is necessary to find out which part of the selected content is expedient to work with in the traditional way, and which one – with the use of information technologies. To this purpose, the professor should analyze the content of

available software and his electronic teaching materials. The results of analytical activity serve as a content basis for professors' creative and development activities. The object of pedagogical design are: the content of educational material, teaching aids, including multimedia facilities for the teaching of foreign languages, the activities of the professor and students in the class.

In order to determine the sequence of representing the contents of the educational material, it is necessary to construct its structural and logical scheme, singling out the place and role of information technologies in it for increasing the efficiency of the educational process, to determine the interconnection of all educational elements. Special role belongs to the design and construction of multimedia teaching and learning resources and the technologies of their use in education in the practice of English teaching.

When creating the lesson, the professor can choose the following algorithm for creating a studying material in a multimedia space:

- 1) Determination of the overall level of English inside of the group of students. This task is closely linked to the traditional teaching principles already mentioned. Multimedia means considerably facilitate the perception (both visual and auditory) of English, but the factor of differentiation of students in the level of language proficiency is still necessary).

- 2) Creating of educational material in accordance with a certain level of competence of students.

- 3) Selection the curriculum, which is

expedient to be represented with the help of multimedia means.

4) Grouping the selected material on the basis of the structural and logical method.

5) Creating a multimedia material project with clearly defined presentation plan and the way of visualizing the material.

6) Work with a multimedia program for the implementation of the project.

Therefore, in order to achieve a higher level of correspondence of the teaching material to the professor's education plan, for a more complete coverage of the issues submitted to the students, the professor has the opportunity to create the material of the lesson independently and to identify tasks for testing students' knowledge through multimedia technologies. In particular, the multimedia can be useful to the English professors. The best forms of presentation in this case are multimedia presentations and tests. The multimedia presentation allows the professor to demonstrate to the students the educational material displayed in a row by changing each others' slides on the screen of a computer, television, interactive whiteboard, or broadcast with the help of a projector. It is reasonable for the professor to add comments and explanations to the slides. This method of teaching material activates the visual and auditory perception of students, both of which are important in the study of English.

After completing the teaching methodology by demonstration of multimedia presentations, the professor should attentively select the sort of information that corresponds to the subject, goals and ob-

jectives of the particular study, and to visualize it properly using computer programs. The base and most commonly used program for this purpose is Microsoft Power Point, part of the Microsoft Office Word application suite. However, there are a number of programs that have wider opportunities and, therefore, allow the professor to represent material more fully and informatively. One of these is Macromedia Flash MX, which greatly expands the range of multimedia activities if comparing to Power Point. Macromedia Flash is a toolkit that incorporates technologies for creating graphic images, animations and interactivity. Under the term "interactivity" we mean the creation of animation that changes under the influence of actions performed by the user. These can be "reagents buttons", clicking on which causes the appearance of appropriate information on the monitor; an image, clicking on parts of which changes its properties (color, shape, size); arrows, pressing on which causes the appearance of additional images etc. The program allows you to use sound effects that will accompany the presentation, add videos, movies and combine them with animated transitions [15].

Taking into consideration more traditional method of teaching, such as conducting of test control, we have concluded that this method of teaching has been modernized in the result of the development of information technologies. The advantage of testing in comparison with other types of students' knowledge control is the high level of objectivity of the test, and the complete lack of a teacher's

subjective assessment. According to L.A. Kulikova and T.I. Kharchenko, the professors of the Melitopol State Pedagogical University named after B. Khmelnytsky, there are three main steps in increasing the validity of the test: 1) to give concrete and unambiguous theoretical determination of the skills that are needed to be measured; 2) to establish the condition and operations, which should be observed during the test and supervision of its implementation; 3) to quantify the results of the tests in order to ensure that the measuring scales have all the necessary qualities [11].

The results of the tests make it possible to determine the level of assimilation of the material by the students, a number of difficulties that is found out during its assimilation and the personal skills of students acquired during the preliminary studying of the material. While creating tests, the teacher must see the detailed overview of the amount of knowledge acquired by students. This goal can be achieved by simulating tests on special platforms that are freely available on the Internet such as:

a) Quizlet [12] is an easy-to-use site for creating training modules and sharing materials. It allows you to create tests with the tasks of choosing the right answers, matching images with the text, and gives you space for typing your own answer options. It may also be useful for teachers' co-operation.

b) My Test is a program that allows you to create both local and network testing. It includes the following types of tasks: selecting one or more correct answers, set-

ting matches, choosing a place on the image, manual text or number input.

c) CLASSMARKER [13] is a site that provides the opportunity to develop surveys with both suggested answers and typing your own ones. For using this resource, the professor should create a virtual class with an organized distribution of test code among the students. There is a function of saving results and maintaining the statistics of success.

d) Easy Test Maker [14] is an online resource offering a task where you can choose correct and false statements based on texts that can be downloaded in pdf or doc format. The service has a built-in function of mixing the answers to prevent the cheating among students.

Research findings and prospects for further development: The use of multimedia learning tools helps to implement an individually oriented way of teaching, provides individualization and differentiation of learning, in accordance to the characteristics of students, their educational level and abilities. The newest technologies in teaching English increase student self-sufficiency and promote the collaboration between the professor and the student during the classes at the same time. It helps students to gain substantial knowledge and develop communicative competence, as well as keep up with innovations and keep pace with progress. The need of use information technologies by professors of foreign languages in the educational process is determined by:

a) the need for knowledge about objects and phenomena of a changing information environment;

b) the need for correlation between the features of the global information space and the essence of information interactions inside of it;

c) the need for understanding of own level of information cultural development, the degree of efficiency of personal pedagogical activity in the conditions of information education;

d) the need for understanding of personal experience and position in relation to certain aspects of education in the conditions of informatization;

e) the need to use the knowledge in the field of IT in terms of their application both in personal practice and in the educational activities of students.

With the help of multimedia technologies professors can:

a) increase the amount of presentation of information with the stable amount of academic hours;

b) improve the process of the information assimilation by students;

c) apply both mental and creative activities of the student;

d) solve the problem of attending classes;

e) increase the level of interest of the students in learning the material;

f) increase the level of students' participation in the educational process.

While using multimedia technologies a foreign language professor should pay attention to the results of such teaching methods modernization. In particular, he should analyze the effectiveness of the multimedia use in classes. During the assessing of students' activities, it is necessary to take into account the degree of

cognitive activity, creativity and self-sufficiency of students in a group, the ability to work in a group, the degree of organization and the interest of students during the work with multimedia data as well as the level of formation of foreign language skills. While assessing his own activity, the professor should pay attention to:

a) the rationality of spending the time on learning the language with the help of multimedia means;

b) the best rate of teaching; alternation and change of activities with the use of multimedia;

c) expediency and effectiveness of the use of pedagogical software tools and electronic teaching resources,

d) methods, organizational forms of work;

e) level of feedback from students;

f) observance of rules and sanitary standards when working with multimedia tools.

Comprehensive assessment of teaching activities with the use of multimedia technologies allows you to identify the flaws and mistakes that have been made by the professor and eliminate them.

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