

LEARNING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE WITH INTERNET AND MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

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Abstract

Rapid social, economic and technological development of our society creates new challenges for the system of higher education in Ukraine. It's not sufficient to give a student certain knowledge, which can be put into standards, books, textbooks and etc. It is necessary to develop independent, flexible, critical thinking of students.

Examining the system of higher education in such a way, the role of information technologies becomes obvious. New innovative technologies are the most powerful source of cognitive activity of students, development of their creative abilities, interests and skills and other intellectual factors.

Innovative technologies in education are information and communication technologies inseparably connected with application of computer-assisted learning.

N.Basova, S.Vetrov, M.Klarin, I.Pidlasiy, Zh.Poplavska, D.Stetchenko, V.Tinniy, V.Shukshunov are engaged in the development of problems of innovative technologies application.

These problems were also examined in the works of V.Bezpal'ko, A.Nisimchuk, I.Pidlasiy, O.Shiyan N.Rotmistrov who think that new computer technologies brought us to the point where **the** computer can become a strong tool of education, in which all aspects of learning are modeled, – from methodical to presentation aspects [6, c.89]. However, not enough attention is paid to the application of computers in the learning of a foreign language with the aim of communicative competence development.

The purpose of this article is to consider possibilities of learning foreign language and culture with the help of Internet and multimedia technologies.

In higher schools of Ukraine computer educational multimedia is widely used in the learning of foreign languages, especially English.

The methods of computer application in the learning of foreign languages appeared to be a perspective direction [1, 4, 7]. To traditional forms of language assessment belong writing control assignments, oral assessment, dictation, essay, rendering and examination, but they are not objective, exact and efficient enough. The computer-assisted language learning allows to control educational activity of students with high exactness and objectivity, and has a constant feed-back.

New audio-visual multimedia technologies give such possibilities, that traditional textbooks cannot provide. Such technologies enable teachers to plan such types of activities, which bring in the element of personal interest in the educational process. They allow to create the active guided communicative environment in which training is carried out. Co-operation of a student with a computer, thus, from simple exchanging of information or carrying out commands transforms into interactive activity in this environment, which opens unlimited possibilities to a student [7].

Computer-assisted learning language has many advantages [3] such as:

- possibility of application at the different stages of learning;
- possibility of application at any stage of practical classes;
- educational material is better perceived and easier memorized by students;

And such computer-assisted learning also:

- saves time of learning;
- individualizes learning;
- helps to keep records of student's progress;
- reduces boring and tiring activities;
- enriches and motivates learning with visual and dynamic presentation of learning material;
- analyses student's errors ;
- adapts traditional educational materials to the computer-assisted conditions of learning;
- creates pleasant and productive environment for learning;
- introduces experimental researches;
- activates student's educational activity;
- intensifies learning and increases motivation;
- develops students' self-assessment skills and creates opportunities for independent work.

All the above-mentioned advantages of computer-assisted language learning help to solve the basic task of language learning as to form students' language competence.

Modern learning language courses can be widely used to introduce new language material and patterns both at stages of practice and application of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. With the help of computers students are able to:

- practice spelling;
- learn lexical material;
- perfect listening skills;
- develop reading skills;
- learn grammar;
- develop writing skills;
- practice pronunciation.

The computer allows to artificially create natural communicative environment through successive training exercises based on real-life situations. [1].

M.Warshauer determines three phases in computer-assisted language learning: behavioral, communicative and integrative learning [9, c.1-14].

Behavioral learning represents the behavioral theories of learning and is based on drill and practice, and the computer simply serves as a vehicle for delivering instructional materials to the student. Behavioral learning is mainly aimed at learning of grammar and lexis. The disadvantage of this method is that the computer cannot provide authentic communication.

Communicative learning is related to the development of communicative method of learning and aimed to create real-life environment for the usage of language, allows and encourages students to generate original utterances and is flexible to a variety of student responses. Speaking about software for learning a foreign language, it is possible to mention language games, stage-by-stage reading, and text reconstruction. In these activities the computer is still a source of information; however, students have more control compared to behavioral programs.

Integrated learning programs are based on two important technological developments: multimedia computers and the Internet. Multimedia computer programs allow the user to have immediate access to audio-visual information (text, graphics, sound, animation, and video) on

a single machine. Multimedia also includes hypermedia which links multimedia resources together and allows learners to choose their own path by pointing and clicking a mouse.

Multimedia programs allow involving almost all of senses, combining a printed text, graphics, video, static pictures, and audio record, creating “virtual reality” of real communication. It is well-proven that application of multimedia programs and computer networks make time of learning three times shorter, and the ability to memorize with the simultaneous use of image, sound and text grows by 30-40 percent. However, M. Warshauer [9, c. 1-14] states that in spite of all advantages, hypermedia programs did not make considerable influence on language learning. In fact, most multimedia programs are created by commercial developers, who do not always create the programs according to the traditional theory of second language learning. A good program should be able to diagnose the learner’s “problems” with pronunciation, syntax, or usage and then intelligently decide among a range of options (e.g., repeating, paraphrasing, slowing down, correcting, or directing the student to background explanations). Unfortunately, computer programs with that degree of intelligence do not exist, and are not expected to exist for quite a long time.

Other integrated source of learning is the Internet which gives students access to information, including listening, reading and writing. There is a wide range of on-line applications which are already available for use in the foreign language class. These include dictionaries and encyclopedias, links for teachers, chat-rooms, pronunciation tutors, grammar and vocabulary quizzes, games and puzzles, literary extracts. Students can work in real-time communicative environment or choose means which can help them to create and check messages; communicate with one or several people from a newsgroup. E-mail allows students to maintain written communication with native speakers.

Lately, quite a lot of multimedia programs, dictionaries and encyclopedias have appeared in the distribution network along with textbooks, manuals and exercise-books. Software for learning the English language is being developed intensively, too. There are a lot of various language learning programs which support the computer-assisted learning of English. All existent software can be divided into:

1. Computer dictionaries.
2. Electronic encyclopedias.
3. Programs of computer-assisted translation.
4. Automated educational courses for learning English.
5. Computer language games.
6. Automated testing systems.

The reasons for using this software include: (a) experiential learning, (b) motivation, (c) enhance student achievement, (d) authentic materials for study, (e) greater interaction, (f) individualization, (g) independence from a single source of information, and (h) global understanding.

There are problems in application of language learning programs, which are common for many educational establishments of Ukraine. Firstly, there is no sufficient material and technical basis which does not allow to use a personal computer for language learning (one PC – one learner) throughout Ukraine. Secondly, lack of necessary and adaptable to the curriculum software. Most multimedia computer programs tend to be strong on presentation but weak as far as pedagogy and even interaction. Thirdly, computers are available mostly in the faculties of the universities where there are fee-paying students who provide additional financial recourses. Furthermore, a lack of technical and theoretical knowledge is another barrier to the use of Computer-assisted Language Learning technology. Not only is there a shortage of knowledge about developing software to promote learning but many instructors

do not understand how to use the new technologies. Most modern language learning theories stress the importance of teacher guidance rather than control, giving students control over what they do, how fast they do it and even the ability to find and correct their own mistakes. One of the main promises of CALL is the ability to individualize learning, but like with past language laboratories, use of the facilities in many cases have devolved into rows of students all doing the same drills. The only advantage to the multimedia in these cases has been better sound and color images. Managing a multimedia language center properly requires not only knowledge of foreign languages and language teaching methodology, it also requires a certain amount of technical know-how and budget management ability as well as the ability to combine all these into creative ways of taking advantage of what the technology can offer. Often a center manager needs assistants for technical problems, for managing resources and even the tutoring of students. Multimedia centers lend themselves to self-study, and potentially self-directed learning, but such is often misunderstood. The simple existence of computers in a laboratory does not automatically lead to students learning independently. Significant investment of time is essential for materials development and creating an atmosphere conducive to such. Finally, limited Internet access does not allow to fully use its potential thus it is still predominantly a text-based medium.

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