

Digital methods of foreign business language teaching

Ufimtseva O.V.

Advertising and PR department
Ural state pedagogical university
Yekaterinburg, Russia
uf.olga@gmail.com

Abstract — the article under the title “Digital methods of foreign business language teaching” is devoted to the problem of using modern technologies in the process of foreign language teaching. The author proves that digital technologies and techniques can assist foreign language students to improve their learning and language skills. Application of digital technologies in educational process makes it possible to join communities of people well beyond their immediate environment, analyze, contribute, criticize and organize issues logically and contextually having professionalism and transformations of the entire society. The Internet has become a part of English teaching process either in contact teaching or distant-teaching (e-learning).

Distant-teaching is being developed together with development of digital technologies. Distant education is now “going through another layer of information.

Digital teaching enables teachers to use aids of visualization, animation, simulations and to make their classes more interactive, vivid, and communicative.

Digital systems of assessment are considered to be effective as they allow teachers to get students’ responses at once, to view and measure students’ progress faster if it is integrated in the course.

Keywords — foreign language teaching, digital technologies, educational process, distant education, customer oriented technologies.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to have a general idea about the place of the English language in the world. It is the “the language of news and information... It is the language of business and government... It is the language of maritime communication and international air traffic control” [2]. The world culture primarily movies, music, literary works is carried through the world in the English language.

Business English courses address the language and communication needs of employees at all levels of an organization who need to use English at work. It is recognizable that that the business world is really international and many people working in modern global environment

spend much of their time doing everyday tasks in English – communicating with colleagues and work contacts by phone, via emails, and a range of face to face situations such as formal and informal meetings and discussions, and various planned and unplanned social encounters.

Well-designed business English course will help students communicate in English in real-life situations; enable them to do so more effectively and with confidence. It is important to select target language carefully to ensure that students will be equipped with genuinely useful, transferable language that they can take out of the classroom and use immediately in the workplace.

The main emphasis of any business course is on the students speaking and trying out the target language in meaningful and authentic ways.

These requirements to foreign language education demand updating teaching styles, methods, techniques and technology. It is not only new technical means, but also new forms of teaching and a new approach to learning.

New information and communication technologies (ICT) have the aim to improve the quality teaching process, to develop communicative culture of students, to increase their motivation to foreign language learning, to stimulate their practical mastery and creativity.

II. EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Educational purpose of the Internet recourse is to develop abilities and proficiency of cross-cultural communication in addition to language learning.

The term “digital technologies” is used to refer to the ever-evolving suite of digital software, hardware and architecture used in learning and teaching processes [4].

Different digital technologies and techniques can assist foreign language students to improve their learning and language skills. Among these techniques are on-line language learning web-sites, computer assisted language learning programs, presentation software, electronic dictionaries, chatting and e-mail messaging programmes, listening CD-players and learning via incorporating video.

Such video includes movies or movie clips, documentaries, music videos, TV programmes, on-line business-conferences. The task of a teacher is to adapt these resources to the needs of classes. By incorporating video and foreign language learning classes it is possible to expand learners' language acquisition through the following aspects:

- Digital video-viewing and production;
- Digital audio-listening and production;
- Internet-based resources like theme relevant websites and online videos (YouTube, Google);
- Excel spreadsheet viewing, manipulation and production;
- Production and viewing Power Point presentations;
- Word processor-produced documents including PDF format files;
- Podcast listening and production;
- Webcam recordings;
- Digital images, charts and graphics;
- E-mail communications;
- Instant Messenger communications;
- Online synchronous and asynchronous chat rooms;
- Distance educational features and benefits (mind maps);
- Simulation software.

All these resources are available through the use of portable laptop computer, viable connections, internet availability and a cable-ready TV [2].

Application of digital technologies in educational process makes it possible to join communities of people well beyond their immediate environment, analyze, contribute, criticize and organize issues logically and contextually having professionalism and transformations of the entire society [3].

What changes caused by digital technologies have had the most important effect on teaching foreign languages?

TABLE I. INNOVATIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING PROCESS

№	Innovations of foreign language teaching process	
	innovation	opportunities
1.	Digital platforms (Facebook, Google Docs, Digital Video)	Create a safe online environment for teachers and students to connect; Collaborate teachers' and students' writing activities; Help teachers navigate digital resources, enable teachers to create activities, lessons and courses from a range of digital tools
2.	Online corpora (text collections for studying linguistic structures, frequencies, etc.)	Gives teachers access to information about the what language is used in authentic.
3.	Global staffroom (Twitter and English language teaching (ELT) blogging	Allows teachers all over the world to form professional online communities for exchanging ideas, experience, getting support and advice
4.	Mobile learning	Has enabled students and teachers to access the Internet and a huge variety of apps on the go
5.	Communicating with people online (via Skype)	Creates the opportunity for students to interact with anyone in English online, Has opened a whole market for Skype lessons and online classes.
6.	Online authentic materials	Give access to daily news, watch

		trending videos on YouTube, etc. Make it possible for teachers to use online documentaries to create effective lessons.
7.	The interactive white board (IWB)	Allows to save and print notes written on the board, to control the classroom computer from the whiteboard, to play listening activities on the sound system, to use the screen as a slide for presentations, to get access to the Internet and so on.
8.	Dogme (material-light teaching)	Gives the chance to break free from self-contained language points and gives more time to student-generated language
9.	Students steering their own learning	Has changed the teacher's role from that of knowledge-transmitter to consultant, guide, coach or facilitator; Involves students in the design of their e-textbooks ⁴ Allows students to make decisions on page layout and the clarity of task instructions.
10.	Teaching soft skills (problem-solving, presentation skills, time-management, decision-making) and critical thinking skills	Helps to communicate effectively in international setting

But it's necessary to take into consideration that English language teaching is evolving all the time, particularly alongside advances in technology that will give more advances and more opportunities to differentiate and improve the process of teaching. But it requires teachers' awareness in new digital methods and techniques [3, 13].

The Internet is not only an information resource but also a social environment where everyone can create his personal home-page, net-community or web-blog. Social net-works are increasingly used as they are interesting for those who prefer has got used to direct information [3].

Social services in combination with information-and-reference resources, online dictionaries, online translators, computer texts make the Internet irreplaceable educational resource [3, 13].

On the positive side, courses are available to a larger student body, resources are abundant and available in different formats, and various platforms allow the students and teachers to interact effectively. On the challenging side, virtual classrooms lack the real world interaction between students and teachers. Courses that require teamwork can suffer from the lack of effective virtual collaborative platforms. Educators need to develop curriculum that recognizes such challenges for such classes [5, 6, 1]

A traditional teaching a foreign language is also based on classroom activities, which are "experiencing a shift in teaching style due to the emergence of digital technologies" [1]. To satisfy requirements of modern society all universities have access to the Internet and special equipment to connect to multiple platforms. Teachers can have all kinds of gadgets at their disposal: "from a desktop computer to palm-size devices that students use instead of dictionary, calculator or projector" [7]

TABLE II. TEACHING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES, REALIZED ON DIGITAL BASIS

Teaching methods and techniques, realized on digital basis		
Technology	Technique	Function
e-dictionary	searching lexical meanings	expanding vocabulary
e-translator	translation redaction	teaching translation
computer patterns (business letter, fax, e-mail, etc.)	writing business letters, filling in forms, etc.	dealing with documents, teaching business and personal correspondence
computer word-processor	teaching writing patterns	skills of keeping to designed format and volume, checking spelling, editing style
graphics editing	creating graphics educational objects and learning with the help of created images	stimulating creativity, cognitive and speech activity
presentation processor	public speech on the basis of created images (presentation)	developing communicative skill of public speech
video- and audio-files	audio comprehension and watching films	developing skills of listening, comprehension a content and a culture
Internet search systems	searching information for educational projects	developing cognitive and educational skills, broadening horizons of the familiar world
Internet pages templates	Internet-projects, creating personal sites	developing material selective skills, publishing texts in the Internet, developing self-determination and self-esteem of students
podcasts and online broadcasting	Listening of actual thematic texts	developing skills of listening authentic texts of actual thematic content, expanding cultural knowledge and awareness.
e-mail	business and personal correspondence in the Internet	developing skills of communication in e-mail.
sms in a mobile phone	personal informal correspondence	developing communicative skills of exchanging information via sms
chat technologies	informal communication in a virtual group	developing communicative skills in oral speech and in writing
social services	informal communication in a virtual society	developing communicative skills of interpersonal and cross-cultural interaction, leadership in creating virtual recourses
language corpuses	studying language phenomena	improving living English language skills

Interactive possibilities of the Internet enable students to realize their preferences, satisfy their cognitive requirements. Its educational function is to form and develop cognitive aims, skills to use the Internet for personal aims, skills to regulate information and ensure information security.

III. DISTANT EDUCATION

The Internet has become a part of English teaching process either in contact teaching or distant-teaching (e-learning).

Distant-teaching is being developed together with development of digital technologies. Distant education is now “going through another layer of information [8, 9]

First, it was extra-mural education which supposed three terms of classes and examinations and carrying out tasks. Then we had interactive teaching when students carried out tasks of Modules and communicated with teachers via e-mails [3] Now we have e-learning, the use of new multimedia technologies of the Internet to improve the quality of learning by “facilitating on the one hand access to resources and services, and on the other hand, exchanges and collaboration at a distance [10]. This type of learning is gaining knowledge in virtual society that requires participation in group video-conferences, chats, blogs, Internet-projects.

Nowadays higher schools put forward virtual courses that can be taken online.”These classes overcome the barriers location and time. ... these classes are significantly better than correspondence study because of the improvement ... in digital communication medium [1]

Specific feature of distant education is an aim and tasks of educational process are determined by customers of educational services in dependence on their social environment, informational flows which form their values in virtual society.

In this respect the role of an educator is changing greatly. The teacher plays the role of a tutor who is able to organize learning via mutual work with students. He not only presents the information but also “organizes the activity of the students to obtain information. He doesn’t only explain and present the material, but also answers questions. He mustn’t only give out prepared instructions for the task but also provides help in discussing possible solutions with the students” [7].

Here is the model of distant teaching foreign languages.

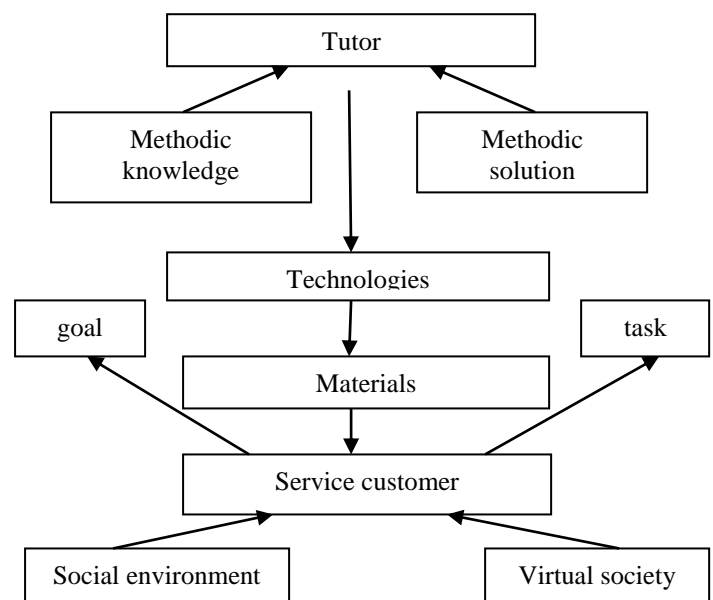


Fig.1 Model of distant foreign language teaching [7]

This model of organizing distant learning shows that a distinctive feature of this education is “a customer’s order” that determines used teaching methods and techniques as well as choice of the content.

This model of organizing distant learning shows that a distinctive feature of this education is “a customer’s order” that determines used teaching methods and techniques as well as choice of the content.

IV. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR

Digital technologies are changing educational resources. They demand to supplement or change traditional text-books into their electronic versions. E-textbooks not only contain educational information but interactive animation, integrated assessments, Internet references. E-textbooks assist teachers in presenting the theme during the lesson or explaining a grammar rule. These textbooks give teachers an opportunity to view every student’s activity during the class and “allow educators better evaluate their progress and achievements” [11]. However, many of the e-books lack a robust assessment system. “Activities or exercises require exact answer to be considered as a correct response. An extra space or a comma can make a response mark as incorrect” [12]. It arouses students’ dissatisfaction and frustrations and their desire to use conventional paper text-books.

Digital teaching enables teachers to use aids of visualization, animation, simulations and to make their classes more interactive, vivid, and communicative.

Digital systems of assessment are considered to be effective as they allow teachers to get students’ responses at once, to view and measure students’ progress faster if it is integrated in the course.

These ways of assessment are rather effective to measure the results in listening, reading, language use (grammar and vocabulary). But letters, essays and compositions are difficult or even impossible to be graded automatically.

It is hard to overestimate the role of a teacher in digital educational process. The teacher should identify the initial level of students’ knowledge, determine the main educational strategy, set goals, monitor fulfillment of tasks, manage self-control of students, feedback and at last evaluate the results [7].

The teacher should not only have good command of the language he teaches, teaching methods and techniques, be able to apply them in organization learning activities, but also should possess information competency to interact with students in frames of digital course.

V. CONCLUSION

Educational technology is an ever-growing academic field which recognizes the centrality of technology of education. In contemporary life it is especially important. Digital technologies have revolutionized the ways of teaching and

learning languages. These technologies give participants of educational process an opportunity with each other, with people and resources in the target language. The use of modern technologies provides educational process with authentic material and tasks, supplies teachers with great number of published books, articles tests, exercises that helps to vary teaching methods, facilitate educational process. Digital technologies help students to enhance their communicative skills, increase motivation to language learning, and reduce anxiety.

It can’t but mention that using digital technologies in educational process require thorough adaptation of digital material to the needs of didactic purposes. This process can be complicated and time consuming.

References

- [1] M. Akbar, (2016). “Digital technology shaping teaching practices in higher education”, *Frontiers in ICT*, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fict.2016.00001>
- [2] H. Seddiki “Technology integration in teaching English as a foreign language”, inst.at/trans...technologyenglishforeign-language/ (unpublished)
- [3] R. Milrud “Using information technologies in teaching foreign languages and culture”//*Vestnik Tambov state university after G. Derzhavin* № 5, 2012, P. 211-217
- [4] M. Thomas “Digital education: opportunities for social collaboration”, London & New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- [5] J. Grudin “Computer-supported cooperative work: history and focus”. *Computer* 27, 19-26, doi: 10.1109/2.291294 (published)
- [6] J. Sandholz, C. Ringstaff, D. Dwyer “Teaching with Technology: Creating student –centered classrooms”, New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1997.
- [7] Y. Makarova “Blending pedagogy and digital technology to transform educational environment”, *IJCRSEE. International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education*. Vol.6No.2, 2018. www.ijcrsee.com (published)
- [8] D. Valentine “Distant learning: promises, problems, and possibilities”, *Online J. Distance Learn. Adm.* 5. Available at: <http://www.westga.edu?distance/ojdla/fall53.html> 2002 (published)
- [9] K. Harper, K. Chen, D. Yen “Distance learning , virtual classrooms, and teaching pedagogy in the internet environment”. *Technol. Soc.*26, 585-598. doi: 101016/ S0160-791X(04)00054-5 (published)
- [10] H. Brecht, M. Igilbi “Enabling a comprehensive teaching strategy: video lectures”. *J. Inf. Educ. Innov. Prac.* 7, 71-86. 2008
- [11] C. Shaffer, V. Karavirta, A. Korhonen, T. Naps “OpenDSA: beginning a community active – eBook project”, in *Proceedings of the 11th KoliCalling International Conference on Computing Education Research (Koli, Finland: ACM)*, 112-17, 2011
- [12] S. Pulman and J. Sukkarieh “Automatic short answer marking”, in *Proceeding of the Second Workshop on Building Educational Applications Using NLP (EdAppsNLP05)*, 9-16. 2005
- [13] Chia Suang Chong “Ten innovations that have changed English language teaching” <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazines/ten-innovations-have-changed-english-language-teaching>