INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN PROJECT WORK IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING OF NON-LINGUISTIC STUDENTS

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Abstract
This paper deals with the problem of efficiency increase in foreign language teaching of non-linguistic students by information-communication technologies aids. The paper reviews application of different information-communication technologies aids in the project work in foreign languages teaching, the influence of this activity on motivation increase to learning and mastering the performance of students at the Institute of Radioelectronics and Information Technologies at Ural Federal University, Russia. The project work influences students’ motivation to learn a foreign language and improves professional skills. The authors of the article share the experience of the project work in educational process, let into the methodology of project work with ICT aids. Projects are realized in terms of international festival of ads in foreign languages and video conference "How it works", which involves the description of technological processes in the area of professional training. Project development consists of the following steps: introduction of project requirements; research into the topic; screenwriting; selection of software for video and sound recording; image acquisition; post-synchronization; benchmark of project requirements and the project; debugging and project presentation. This procedure provides an opportunity for students to perform projects accurately and exactly, to avoid a lot of questions and cut the time of the project realization. Project development enriches students’ competences in foreign languages and professional sphere. An important element of the project work is team working and cooperation of students in different areas of professional training. However, this work can be implemented individually or in a group of not more than three students.

Keywords: Foreign language teaching, information technology, project work, extra-curricular activity.

1 INTRODUCTION
A present-day graduate of a higher educational establishment should possess specific competences for effective professional career. These are cultural, vocationally-orientated and professional competences of a graduate. They are defined by federal state educational standards of the fourth generation [1]. Competences in foreign languages (FL) and information-communication technologies (ICT) appear in the standards for all fields of education. These form the basis of the competence approach to the organization of educational process. Competences in ICT turn out to be in the lists of cultural, vocationally-orientated and professional competences of the graduates of the institute of Radioelectronics and information technologies in Ural federal university. Therefore ICT have been specified as the main aid for the foreign language (FL) teaching for the motivation improvement. On the one hand, ICT contribute to the formation of vocationally-oriented and professional competences, on the other hand, they provide action-oriented approach to FL teaching. Students use ICT for class and extra-curricular activities. Different methods with ICT use (case-studies, problem-solving, surveys with result analytics, research/project work in the professional field) are practiced in the class. In addition, it's important to organise extra-curricular activities as well. Consequently, the International festival of ads in foreign languages and video conference "How it works" are held annually. This extra-curricular activity is based on the competence and action-oriented approaches. In the terms of these events students realize project works on the basis of the particular algorithm. This algorithm provides efficiency of the students’ project activity in a foreign language with ICT use.

2 PROJECT WORK
Project work is an important part of foreign language (FL) teaching nowadays. Teachers use this method to improve FL skills, to enrich the process of teaching, to broaden students' outlook, to develop skills in other disciplines making multidisciplinary links. Multidisciplinary links help to prepare students for future challenges in their professional career.
Project work is one of the key points in research works of methodologists in different countries [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Most of them are united in the opinion that project work is an effective aid for FL teaching as it expands the educational environment around students especially under the conditions of information-communication development of the society.

*A project* is a piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular purpose [6]. *Project work* is a learning experience which aims to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize knowledge from various areas of learning, critically and creatively apply it to real life situations. This process enhances students’ knowledge and enables them to acquire skills like collaboration, communication and independent learning, and prepares them for lifelong learning and the challenges ahead [7]. Consequently, any project or project work is student-centered, leads students to study something new, and needs the end-product.

It is important to emphasize some advantages of the project work in a FL with the use of ICT. While students are personally involved in the project work, motivation increases not only in FL but in the field of the project. An important aspect of the project work is that four skills of language activities are developed. Those are skills (Figure 1) in reception (listening and reading), production (speaking and writing), interaction (speaking and writing), and mediation (translating and interpreting).

Another advantage is connected with the increase of autonomous learning as students become more responsible for their learning and activity. Any project work has an end-product that means there are learning outcomes and aims to be achieved and competences to be formed. An important point of a project work is applying to authentic resources to reach the outcomes. It gives extra opportunity for authentic language input on different topics including intercultural aspects. Since most of the projects are team work, it focuses on interpersonal relations even on an international level as more and more projects are realized by students from different countries. These forms of project work develop intercultural communication. Taking into account all mentioned above, project work is an example of the effective organization of the extra-curriculum activity of students on the basis of the competence and action-oriented approaches.

3 METHODOLOGY OF PROJECT WORK

Usually three main stages of project work are mentioned in methodology [8]. The first stage is planning. Students discuss the scope and the content of their project work; they discuss and predict their specific needs and the end-product. The second stage, implementation stage, is a busy one. Students carry out the tasks and follow the instructions to achieve the purposes of the project work. The third stage includes the creation of the end-product and the feedback on it in different forms. Our experience gives us an opportunity to specify the three stages into more steps (Table 1).
Table 1. Stages and Steps of Project Work.

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The detailed steps are important when the project is in the foreign language and with the use of ICT, as these aspects make the project work more sophisticated, and require more monitoring.

1 Introduction of project requirements.
   Students get the information about the type of the project they are going to take part in. They define what kind of a process they are going to describe or the topic of the ad they going to create. All requirements to the project implementation are discussed with the students and sent in a special informational letter. Students set themselves into teams for the project work realisation.

2 Research into the topic.
   Students find the information connected with the technological process for the video conference project or study the problem of their ad project.

3 Screenwriting.
   This step implies writing in details all that will be included into students’ project: the video plot, the cast, music, voice-over and the part of all the participants.
   It is necessary to mention that students whose level of a FL is A0-A2 need to give a script to their teacher to check it up.

4 Selection of software for the video and sound recording.
   Students search for programmes that let them create a video and record a voice-over. They choose programmes which are more convenient for their project implementation or those which enrich the idea of the project.

5 Image acquisition.
   This step unites the process of video recording itself and film editing.

6 Post-synchronization.
   During this step students make post-synchronization and check whether the voice recording is of the appropriate quality. This means that the words of characters correspond to their activities, the voice-over is well and so on.

7 Benchmark of project requirements and the project.
   During this step the finished video is analysed in accordance with the requirements. Students have to pay attention to the topic, timing, computer programmes and applications, final format of the end-product and personal details listed in the registration form.

8 Debugging.
   All end-products are pre-viewed by other teams and the tutor. Students have to take into account comments they receive and make changes or corrections in the project, including linguistic, software and technical aspects.

9 Project presentation.
Project presentation takes place when students and tutors get together and watch the finished videos. All the participants have the right to ask any questions and give feedback to the projects. Finally, the best projects are chosen. All the best projects are united into one film and it is demonstrated over the Institute TV.

It is necessary to mention that the team approach to project work organization unites students with different skills in one team [9]. For example, one group consists of a student whose level of a FL is rather high, a student with good computer skills (he/she can work with different computer programmes) and a student with artistic skills. It leads to exchange of knowledge, transfer of the best practices and development of communicative skills. Forums and Chats may be used for students’ and tutor’s cooperation and communication in the project work realization. There are different possibilities to organize on-line cooperation, one of them is on the basis of an electronic educational platform [10]. Therefore, it is necessary to underline that this type of project work demands special tutors’ training in the sphere of ICT for effective organization of students’ project work [11].

4 HOW IT WORKS

In order to increase motivation towards foreign language learning and professional skills perfection, we have put into practice several extra-curricular activities involving project work. This project work has been applied to teaching students in the sphere of IT at Ural Federal University, Russia. One of the activities is the video conference “How it works”. The topic of the conference is the description of a technological process with comments in a foreign language in the field of the students’ future career. Students make video presentations about the processes in the unique manner, sometimes with humour and sometimes with critical viewpoint. However, they make their research work using original resources, analyse the information, arrange it and produce their own product. This work gives students an opportunity to express new knowledge in the way they want to.

Another extra-curricular activity is the international festival of ads in foreign languages. The end-product of the project work in the terms of the Festival is video on one of the topics. Social problems are always in the agenda. Among other popular topics are “My university/school”, “The best city in the world”, “My future profession”, “Visit my country”. These projects give students an opportunity to learn more on the topic problems, form their own attitude to different social drawbacks, customs and traditions in different countries, cities, universities, etc. It is evident that this project work is more educative, intercultural and artistic.

We hold very different extra-curricular activities for project work presentation in order to give students a chance to choose in which way to express themselves. They try themselves in different activities through years and receive different experience.

5 CONCLUSION

Project work not only develops students’ foreign language and vocationally-orientated skills in the sphere of information communication technologies, but also upgrades the process of FL teaching, because of information communication technology (ICT) use. According to the surveys the foreign language has gained in the ranking, test results have improved [9], [12] and students’ participation in different events in a foreign language has increased. Extra-curricular activities play an important part in the educational and educative processes even in the establishments of higher education.

REFERENCES


