ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

An indispensable condition for ensuring a modern high-quality educational process in higher education is the use of innovative technologies. The application of electronic textbooks in foreign languages teaching is of particular importance, since traditional methods of education give way to more advanced methods that can facilitate the perception and consolidation of educational material by students.

In the article on the example of the author's developments of electronic textbooks on English and German languages, the main advantages and disadvantages of these educational resources are compared with print publications. Among the advantages of electronic textbooks are the following: interactivity, visibility, high quality of methodological tools, consistency of presentation, hierarchical structure, individualization of the educational process.

The individual training program provided by the structure of the electronic textbook guarantees a deeper understanding and consolidation of the studied material. The possibility of self-selection of the sequence of studying the material and the pace of work, self-monitoring, evaluation of the effectiveness of training increases the effectiveness of training sessions, enhances the motivation of students to learn foreign languages.

When describing the shortcomings of electronic textbooks, such factors are indicated: the need for special equipment for working with an electronic textbook – a computer with software and a quality monitor; non-traditional nature of information presentation (electronic form); increased fatigue when working with the monitor. Nevertheless, the above disadvantages do not reduce the merits of electronic textbooks.

Keywords: university, student, electronic textbook, advantages, disadvantages, foreign language teaching, independent work.

1 INTRODUCTION

An indispensable condition for ensuring a modern high-quality educational process in higher education is the use of innovative, including telecommunication technologies, which cover electronic textbooks. The use of electronic textbooks in foreign languages teaching is of particular importance, since traditional methods of education give way to more advanced methods that can facilitate the perception and consolidation of educational material by students.

Electronic textbooks or electronic educational resources are electronic publications containing a well-ordered body of knowledge on the relevant discipline that can ensure the acquisition of skills and experience in this field by students [1]. According to the definition of L.Kh. Zaynutdinova, an electronic textbook is a comprehensive program that ensures the completeness of the didactic process, training activities and knowledge level control [2].

In the context of the humanization of education, the need for studying and knowledge of foreign languages is conditioned by the fact that foreign languages are the main means of intercultural communication. The use of the foreign language electronic textbook in the educational process is aimed at the formation of a communicative competence in foreign languages.

Increased activity of students in practical classes with the use of electronic publication is due to the following factors: high degree of informative value of the presented material and its professional orientation; communicative nature of the electronic textbook; facility and simplicity of navigation, quick transition from one topic to another, getting help, commentaries, viewing presentations, video films, lexical-grammatical testing, feedback (evaluation of each step of the training: exercises, electronic tests, etc.); use of audio and video materials; colorfulness and visibility of the presentation of teaching information (presentations, photographs, drawings, etc.) [3,4].
M.P. Yavich rightly notes that an electronic textbook should have as many graphic images as possible. When reading illustrative textbooks, the assimilation and perception of information is much higher [5].

A foreign language electronic textbook is based on the communicative-activity approach and the principles of the students' consciousness and activity in education, scientific character, the connection of learning and practice, systematicity and sequence, visibility and interactivity, integration and differentiation, and linguistic and cultural studies [6].

2 METHODOLOGY

Let us consider the advantages of a foreign language electronic textbook on the example of the description of textbooks "English in the service sector" and "German for economists":

1 Visibility and interactivity.

The main advantage of the electronic textbook in comparison with traditional textbooks is its interactivity. The textbook is equipped with thematic illustrations, tables, diagrams, presentations. Within the framework of the comprehensive electronic textbook "English in the service sector", it is supposed to work with computer language programs "Talk to me" and "Professor Higgins", to watch educational video courses ("Follow me", "Business English", "Great Cities of Europe" and others). Audio and video material of the electronic textbook "German for economists", included in each section of the textbook, allows students to listen, view and study foreign language texts, dialogues and relevant vocabulary. In each chapter there are records of dialogues on such topics as "Trip to Germany", "At the Hotel", "At the Exhibition", "At the Company", "Contracts" and others, voiced by native speakers. The video is presented by authentic video courses: "Alles Gute", "Impressionen aus Deutschland", as well as commercials of German companies.

2 Active independent work of students.

A criterion of the conscious assimilation of educational material is the degree of the independent work; the higher it is, the more consciously the knowledge is assimilated. The work of the educational and reference system of the electronic textbook "German for economists" is organized so that the students can, if necessary, use a dictionary when working with texts on a particular topic or a "Grammar Reference Book" in case they face grammar questions within the same topic. In the electronic textbook "English in the service sector," the unit «English for Hospitality Professionals" is a thematic English-Russian and Russian-English phrasebook with a large number of dialogues with translation and background information on selected aspects of the activities of hotel and restaurant workers. In addition, this unit presents a minimum vocabulary, characterized by a thematic selection of lexical units.

3 Feedback.

The possibility of feedback is one of the most important advantages of an electronic textbook. Students can interact with the teaching system. When performing educational activities, solving language problems, a student receives the reaction of the training system, which assesses the quality of his or her actions. Working with the electronic textbook, a student has the opportunity to get a quick access to the grammar directory and to test his or her knowledge independently through doing electronic testing, and immediately the assessment of knowledge on a particular grammatical subject is given.

4 Convenient search engine.

The electronic textbook uses a system of hyperlinks that helps a student go to the dictionary, grammar guide, and presentation. This system allows to navigate not only the text of the textbook, but also to follow a website on the Internet with the necessary information.

5 Individualization of training.

A student can study the teaching material at a convenient individual pace, in a relaxed atmosphere. When working with an electronic textbook, a student can make mistakes and return to the same questions. At the same time, well-performing students have the opportunity to learn the material faster than others.
6 Systematic and sequence character of presentation of the material.

In the structure of the electronic textbook, for example, when submitting text and grammatical material, continuity in the learning process is taken into account. In the textbook there are information, training and controlling blocks.

7 Objectivity of knowledge control.

Test tasks allow a teacher to evaluate the knowledge of students quickly and impartially. Thanks to the random layout of questions, the test options are individual. In addition, a student can choose the level of complexity of the tests, focusing on their own knowledge of a language.

8 Conditions for research activities of students.

To solve cognitive tasks independently students must consistently go through all stages of research. Such stages of work within the framework of the comprehensive electronic textbook "English in the service sector" are envisaged during the organization of the project activity. The electronic textbook contains presentations on various topics, performed in the "Power Point" program, which can be used as a sample. When working with the block "English for professionals in the field of public catering" students can demonstrate dish recipes in the form of presentations. In the electronic textbook "German for economists" all units are supplied with colorful presentations using information from German sites. For example, in the subject "Legal forms of entrepreneurial activity" presentations were prepared on actual factual material submitted by German companies on the Internet. Students are encouraged to make reports with presentations of successful German companies.

9 Relationships of knowledge and practice.

The teaching process should stimulate students to use the knowledge gained in solving practical problems. Thus, the units of the electronic textbook "English in the service sector" contain a large number of tasks for practicing the skills of excursion service, guests' accommodation in the hotel, and service in the restaurant.

10 Communicative orientation.

Communicative competence, which is focused on the learning process of a foreign language, assumes a solid language base. The structure of the comprehensive electronic textbook "English in the service sector" provides for the use of various organizational forms for communication, including a variety of games. A number of role-playing games are presented in the block "English for professionals in the field of catering", in the electronic dictionary-directory for professionals in the hospitality sector, in the electronic guide.

11 Linguistic and cultural studies orientation.

Linguistic and cultural studies aspect provides students with an opportunity to get acquainted with the culture of the country of the studied language and mentality. For example, in the electronic textbook "German for Economists", the units "Texts for additional reading", "Video materials", "Aphorisms", "Proverbs and sayings", "Phraseological units" and presentations to them serve the realization of the linguistic-cultural aspect, which is given great attention in the textbook. Knowledge of linguistic and cultural aspects contributes to an adequate perception of the speech of an interlocutor and original texts intended for native speakers, assimilation of elements of foreign culture, increase of cognitive activity of students and the formation of their positive motivation to learn a foreign language.

Of particular interest for students are German realities and phraseological units, since they reflect the national identity of the culture, traditions and customs of native speakers. Aphorisms were selected by the authors taking into account the presented topic. Thus, the textbook reflects the statements of famous people about Germany, the European Union, the euro, etc. Aphorisms on the topic "Germany" are represented by statements of famous people (philosophers, scientists, writers and poets).

Proverbs and sayings included in the textbook reflect the wisdom of the people. The comparative aspect is widely represented in this unit. German proverbs and sayings and their Russian equivalents (in some cases in the absence of an equivalent descriptive translation) allow students to compare Russian and German linguocultures, see the national characteristics that the phraseology of the language demonstrates. The use of popular proverbs and sayings in German is aimed at improving the pronunciation skills, assimilation and activation of grammatical constructions, lexical material, memory development and emotional expressiveness of speech. The profound content of proverbs and sayings also has an educational function.
In the section “Phraseological units” there are links to author presentations on axiological phraseology, the relevance of which is conditioned by the spiritual needs of modern society. Linguocultural analysis of axiological phraseological units allows students to determine the values and antivalues [7]. Presentations introduce values and antivalues in the phraseology of the language (“Life”, “Work”, “Truth”, “Mind”, “Motherland”, “Wealth”, “Poverty”, “Foreign land”, “Stupidity”).

Studying this language aspect contributes to the solution of not only teaching, but educational functions. Axiological phraseology can become the basis for the formation of a system of values for future specialists [8]. It is commonly known, moral education is one of the most important functions of the educational process at the university [9].

3 RESULTS

Thus, the structure of a foreign language electronic textbook differs from the structure of a traditional print textbook in the sense that the role of extra-textual components is significantly strengthened. In addition, in the electronic textbook there is a special system for managing the procedure for the presentation of educational information. It is impossible not to mention the economic effectiveness of the electronic publication, which is determined by the following factors: long service life, the possibility of modernization in the process of operation, low cost and price, reasonable configuration of necessary technical and system-wide software.

The electronic textbooks described above correspond to the didactic principles of the pedagogical process: consistency, connection of theory and practice, activity, visibility, accessibility, and the strength of mastering knowledge. The content of textbooks takes into account the age characteristics of students. The textbooks are based on the principles of humanization and humanitarization of education, relevant in the context of intercultural communication and contributing to the creation of conditions for the formation of the value system of a future specialist: upbringing, development and improvement of the personality of a student, disclosure of students’ creative abilities.

Describing the advantages of an electronic textbook in comparison with a printed publication, it is worth mentioning about its shortcomings:

1. The availability of special equipment for working with an electronic textbook – a computer with the necessary software and a quality monitor.
2. The non-traditional nature of the presentation of information (electronic form).
3. Increased fatigue when working with a monitor.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Nevertheless, the above disadvantages do not reduce the merits of an electronic textbook. The use of electronic textbooks makes it possible to increase the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language, to make this process creative and entertaining.

The improvement of the education system in the conditions of globalization is impossible without the use of the advanced educational technologies [10] that are foreign language electronic textbooks.

REFERENCES


