Recent Trends in ELearning and Digital Pedagogy in Linguistics and Translation Studies at HE in Russia

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Abstract

The article outlines some general trends and important achievements in the field of eLearning and appropriate software usage in Linguistics and Translation Studies teaching at Higher Education in Russia. The educators from RUDN University summarize and share their experience, assumptions and advice on the innovative or digital pedagogical methods of Foreign languages teaching.

The article also contains the original research essay. Such recent educational practices as applying digital, mobile, CALL, online or Blended approaches, integrating any international or local, corporate or individual software in linguistic education (in English Language and Translation Studies) in the Russian Federation - are selected as target research topic and considered within limited time period.

Besides, some new shifts in scientific research of digital software application for language education are identified through collecting and analyzing the big number of Russian academic papers on the official institution's open database available in Russia online.

The random is followed by statistical and content analysis accordingly. Data search and selection criteria, research procedure and steps, findings on the topic and trends, as well as analytical and quantitative methods peculiarities are also briefly exposed.

As a whole, the article could be interesting to international researchers of similar matters in the field of eLearning and any Higher Education teachers in other countries, practicing digital or Blended education in Linguistics and Translation Studies.

Keywords: e-learning, linguistics, Translation Studies, HE, Russia.

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the article is to give an idea about digital technology application for linguistics and translation studies teaching in the RF and mark some big names and main trends in the field. This information could be useful for international researchers in the field of global eLearning development. It is new as all materials are published in Russian Language on a special official online website and its database or corpus of the defended dissertations was not used for any researchers before.

The first part of the article outlines current situation in the development of new educational methods in Foreign languages and translation studies teaching with any ICT and Internet software application in Russia from 2012 till 2017. We do not pretend to have compete or exact data in this overview, but to show some real tendencies in the sphere, and to name some important scientists and Universities, contributing to the development of digital education in Linguistics in Russia.

Second part of the article describes aim, method, criteria of random and contains some results of the original statistical or quantitative research in the below Table and Charts. Further content analysis of the selected materials is a subject of a different article to be published. Anyway, we try to explain main trends of technology usage in Linguistic education based on PhD and Doctor of Science dissertations defended in the Russian Universities for more than 5 years period.

2 UNIVERSITIES, SCIENTISTS AND DISSERTATIONS

In Russia, in our opinion, one of the most reliable online sources of information on recent authors’ publication activity and citation index (called RINTS or РИНЦ) is the free portal http://eLibrary.ru/, though it is not complete. So if need to search the author in Russia, better to use the site and its publication metrix, which is more or less accurate When we name persons or Universities in this article, we do not suppose to provide full information, we come from our research and personal experience, and ask for apology of those not mentioned. Besides, the topic requires further studies.
2.1 Scientists and Universities applying any ICT for Languages and Translation Studies teaching. Brief overview.

Firstly, we should mention the early works on Distance education at the Laboratory founded by Evgeniya Polat at the Russian Academy of Education (RAO) [1],[2]. At Universities, there are some departments and scientist having vast experience in the field, like Svetlana Titova [3] at Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), Faculty of Foreign Languages and Regional Studies, and Alla Nazarenko, [4], Head of Department of Distance Learning there. Translator's education with ICT is not very developed, so V.Shevtchuk only is to be mentioned [5]. Another educator in Translation Studies, Nikolay Gorbovsky, leads Higher School of Translation Studies at MSU which provides yearly online courses on translation didactics for language teachers' professional development. It is also important to name Saint Petersburg State University, Philological Department, where the School for Translation disposes special Labs with ICT technology for written translations teaching (e.g. Trados) and operates another Multimedia Lab for simultaneous interpreting training.

Many national and regional universities in Russia have departments where scientists and teachers collaborate on research in Linguistics and Translation Studies teaching. Only some of them use ICT and or Internet possibilities for learning as it mainly depends on Institution policy and technical possibilities. Many teachers and students use their own devices and mobile smartphones and tabs with wifi for learning and teaching. The concept and practice of digital education is becoming popular and spreads very fast in Russia. But we are limited only with University in our article.

Anyway, all examined research papers show that many regional Universities provide necessary PCs, video and audio equipment for educators, use electronic textbooks, various IT applications, particular online programs and even introducing different corporate LMS based mainly on Moodle, for teaching Foreign languages. Between such centers, after our research, we should mention Nizhniy Novgorod Institute of Foreign Languages, Tambov State University, Uralsky State University in Ekaterinburg, Moscow State Pedagogical University. We have mentioned most frequently named Universities in the dissertations Database random list. As for RUDN University, it is famous for numerous research in teaching Russian language to foreigners and providing quality post graduate education to foreign students in Russian language. Our research confirms this fact for PhD dissertants, and many of them are using different ICT in Linguistics teaching. Institute of Foreign Languages at RUDN is planning to promote and integrate new corporate LMS (Moodle-based) into pedagogical process as well as to develop and encourage individual teachers' wiki-based collaborative technologies, preparing online, blended and distance courses in Linguistics and Translation Studies. The approach of integrating ICT into Linguistics and Translation Studies at higher education was outlined in the works of Natalya Sokolova, Director of the Institute[6],[7], also Natalya Mikheeva [8],[9] and Irina Vasilyeva [10],[11].

3 TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION FOR LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION STUDIES TEACHING ( RUSSIA, 2012-2017)

3.1 Aim, source, methodology, selection criteria

The aim is to count frequency and analyse trends of any dissertations on Pedagogy in Linguistics, where any ICT or Internet tools were applied or mentioned. This is only a small part of the general research on the matter, followed by detailed dissertations topics and methods classifications and content analysis. Our goal is to share some general statistics on the research matter.

The source of date is the official website of VAK (BAK) or Higher Attestation Committee under the Ministry of Science and Education of the Russian Federation. It is the National Governmental Higher Academic Degrees Awarding Committee, obligatory for approving all dissertations written and defended at authorised Universities in the Russian Federation. The site is in Russian language - http://vak.ed.gov.ru/. We chose it for the research as it is the only free and complete national database (or could be national corpus) of all academic dissertations’ summaries (called autoreferats) in all subjects from 2004-2017 in RF and contains necessary search engine with filters providing more or less accurate statistics and search results. Full texts of the selected dissertations summaries are also available online for further content analysis.

Methodology is quantitative analysis of lists found by onsite search engine and contextual search for any ICT mentioned teaching tools both in the titles and body texts of the selected dissertation summaries. The figures are summarized in Tables and visualized in Charts.
Sources are the defended dissertations for PhD in Pedagogy in Linguistics (called Kandidat Nauk), and higher degree of Doctor of Science (called Doktor Nauk) in Pedagogy in Linguistics. In the West there are similar degrees of PhD in Education, or higher degree of DS in Education in Foreign Languages. But they do not completely correspond in value to Russian ones.

Selection criteria: Besides considering all types of dissertations (PhD and DS), we looked through the list to select scientists working only at Universities (not at secondary or high schools, or vocational education). We selected only local dissertations’ specialty 13.00.02 for Pedagogy in Linguistics (Foreign Languages, TS), completed with some relevant dissertations appeared on the list of 13.00.08 code for professional education. Mainly, we selected proper dissertations form the random manually by title (any mentioning of ICT used for teaching) or looking through the full text for the same. Then counted the number, classified by year, by degree and analysing the trends.

Overall, we researched the archived and current dissertations’ summaries in Russia for the period of 2012-2017, total list comprising 1338 entries or pieces (dissertations) found.

### 3.2 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (as selected on VAK online Database)</th>
<th>Total dissertations random of the codes 13.00.02,13.00.08 - Pedagogy - from VAK online database (ps)</th>
<th>Total dissertations random of the codes 13.00.02, 13.00.08, Pedagogy in Linguistics with any ICT (ps)</th>
<th>PhD dissertations (ps)</th>
<th>DrSc dissertations (ps)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (Jan.–Sept)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1338</strong></td>
<td><strong>234</strong></td>
<td><strong>216</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1 represents cumulative and comparative number of dissertations (pieces) by titles and authors listed in the VAK Database from 2012 to 2017 as of the end of May 2017. All dissertations both PhD and DrSc are real and were defended or ready to be defended by higher education teachers at Universities. Unfortunately, we cannot supply here the full list of the selected titles and authors because it’s in Russian language and there is not enough space for such big lists.

The table also shows the trend of the drop in general dissertations number from 2016 for about 64% which is partly due to ongoing education system reforming and reducing number of Higher education institutions in the country in general, started in 2014 till now. On the other hand, the terms and requirements to dissertations defense became much more strict, especially for post doc students preparing DrSc one. So, we stay rather pessimistic on any growth perspectives in this field for the coming years.

As for random of dissertations we looked through and selected to the list of Pedagogy in Linguistics at higher education level, where any ICT tools are mentioned or applied in the context of research, its share averages some 17,5 % of total, and PhD seekers are prevailing (92,3%). This is no wonder as higher DrSc degree is much more complicated and strict in requirements according to the current regulations by the Ministry of Science and Education of RF. So, we consider DrSC dissertations small growth in 2013 and 2016 will stabilize at comparatively low level as postdocs research stays expensive and elite activity against massive production of postgrads’ seekers at Universities in the country. We are to say that ICT usage for Language and TS for offering new ways of teaching and research at University level is relatively low.

The below graphs and pie charts illustrate the above trends and data from the Table (pic.1)
Picture 2.

Picture 3.

Picture 4.
4 CONCLUSION

The observation covers only a small part of the research on the current situation with ICT, CALL and Internet tools applications for languages and translation studies teaching at Universities in the Russian Federation. The Database we analysed is only for new ICT applications for Languages and TS teaching at Universities, that became a part of research for the degree and defended, so we did no estimate private teachers’ experiments in the field – there is no any reliable statistics on that. But even those figures demonstrate the persistent line to apply technologies in Humanities and Languages teaching and to recognise officially accept its importance both for theory and practice of pedagogy.

But we consider that the above findings could be useful for other scientists in the same field to complete information about particular country.

REFERENCES


