THE ROLE OF ICT IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Irina Meshkova, Olga Sheremetieva, Larissa Spynu

PFUR (The Peoples' Friendship University of Russia) (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

Abstract

The Internet and computer technologies (ICT) widely integrate in educational process. When teaching foreign languages an important place is given to ICT. This situation increases the effectiveness of the classroom work and makes the independent work of students more efficient and motivating students. It also motivates University teachers, allowing them to approach teaching more creatively, offering students tasks that allow to create multimedia content.

Electronic educational resources are successfully used in teaching foreign languages in Russian High education.

The use of ICT has radically changed the role of the teacher. He is now a guide between the learner and the object of learning who helps students to achieve their learning goals and get the desired results.

New computer technologies give the possibility of creating an individual approach and optimize the independent work of students. It reinforces the autonomy of the learner. Students become more independent and more self-confident.

ICT promotes professional growth, enriches the content of courses, opens the opportunity to share and to compare their teaching methods with the methods of their colleagues on special forums in the Internet.

ICT assumes the use of telecommunication technologies in order to achieve mobility of learning. Using e-mail and forums, teachers and students can receive the necessary consultations, using the time in the classroom more effectively.

Keywords: educational process, teaching foreign languages, computer technologies, information and communication technologies (ICT), communicative and active competence.

1 INTRODUCTION

The popularity of the Internet and computer technologies among young people and in society as a whole has created serious grounds for the successful integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into educational process. The application of information and communication technologies in education has, in modern conditions, an increasingly significant impact on the quality and competitiveness of the national education system. The integration of Russian education into the world educational system is connected with the observance of the fundamental international standards requirements.

The use of ICT has been introduced in teaching foreign languages, performing sociological and didactic functions including teaching French as a foreign language in high school. In fifties of the 20th century the programs for automatic translation had appeared, jointly developed by programmers and linguists, and in sixties the regular use of ICT in teaching [1, 2] began. Teaching using ICT technologies is an important competence of the modern teacher.

World practices in the field of new technologies and forms of teaching, methods of educational activities managing and the quality of the learning process, the creation of electronic educational resources are widely used in teaching foreign languages in Russian universities. National standards of the ICT use are coordinated with international standards and regulations. Creation of the national e-learning systems also meets the international requirements.

A special development the ICT received in the early 21st century that led to the application and continuous improvement of various new technologies in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, which allows the introduction of new technologies, new techniques, shifting the emphasis to the independent work of a student, making the training diverse. In applying an active and...
communicative approach in teaching foreign languages computer has become an essential tool in teaching.

Both of these approaches emphasize that language has not only communicative and active competence, but also linguistic-syntactic one. It depends on the teacher particular how to use ICT in the classroom. But, undoubtedly, ICT has an auxiliary character in teaching foreign languages, topping up the main process of teaching a foreign language, helping not only interaction between the students and the teacher, but also the interaction of students with each other, which undoubtedly enhances the interactive nature of education [3].

The acquisition of the academic presentation skills takes place within the framework of a blended education format, where students work in the classroom and independently. Examining the texts in the group, students can discuss various issues; perform the analysis, moving to a higher level of the text understanding.

It is impossible not to agree with F. Mangenot that the study of foreign languages must necessarily run along with the use of multimedia technologies [4].

2 METHODOLOGY

How ICT can help to increase the motivation of teachers and students in the process of learning a foreign language? In recent years, the process of learning radically changed compared to the classic one, when the learner receives the tasks from the teacher who guides the learning process. Instead the constructivist approach came to, which considers this process as an interactive exchange in which the learner is actively involved, creating their own training schemes. Constructivism here is a set of activity and internal processes for obtaining knowledge, information, perception and understanding of the problems’ solution [5].

Traditional pedagogy assigns the learner a passive role, where the teacher is the sole bearer of knowledge. In recent years there is a trend to swing the process of learning to the student, making it the main actor of the teaching process ("flipped teaching") [6]. This form of teaching will allow to personalize the learning process, shifting the emphasis to work at home. So this method of training allows to develop the autonomy of students, further enhancing their knowledge and skills [7].

From the constructivist approach point of view, the important moment is the activity of the learner throughout the training. He constantly makes the choice depending on a situation in which he is located. This approach gives the first place to experience, intentions, cognitive strategy of the student and his motivation. At the lessons of foreign languages, one should integrate the linguistic, sociocultural and communicative approaches, taking into consideration teaching a foreign language for specific purposes, i.e. to study foreign languages in combination with practice of communication in professional field. To achieve these goals, it is very important to use the whole potential of Internet resources.

The use of ICT has radically changed the role of the teacher, who becomes a kind of consultant, mediator between the learner and the object of learning. From this point of view, teachers help students to achieve their learning goals and get the desired results. The teachers in particular should help trainees to understand their individual goals based on personal characteristics of the trainees and content of training programs.

The use of ICT helps students to learn how to assess their knowledge and progress made during the learning process. Students can self-assess their knowledge not only in the classroom but also outside of it.

The main objective of learning process is the fact that the trainees should be able to prepare and to present their project work, to cooperate with other students, teachers, as well as to plan and coordinate information from multiple sources with the aim of acquiring knowledge. It should be noted that the use of ICT is an effective tool to facilitate the study of a foreign language, to improve intellectual abilities and thinking, which stimulates the process of searching for more information on any issue, helps to establish the relationship between received knowledge and existing information, cooperation of students within the same or different courses, different universities, regardless of their location.

New computer technologies give the possibility of creating so-called "simulation", virtual reality, rapid obtaining the necessary variety of information, graphs, charts, providing more complete mastery of the
material. Before a student the task stands not only to be able to choose adequate learning strategies, but also learn how to learn. Because of this, students become more independent and more self-confident, which in turn improves the efficiency of classroom work and optimizes the independent work of students.

Thus, the development of various intellectual competencies, interest and attention to learning process, are the main aspects of ICT use that affect motivation during learning.

To maintain the motivation of students it is necessary to invite them to perform such exercises that correspond to their level of knowledge and experience, contribute to achieving goals, increase their confidence, improve the obtained competencies and set new goals. Student's motivation associates with such quality as curiosity, so students are doing role playing and situations that awaken their imagination and allow them to put forward original ideas with interest. In teaching foreign languages it is worth to offer the students a situation similar to the situations of daily life that will help them to relate the knowledge gained in the classroom, with the objective reality. Thus, the use of ICT in socioconstructivism context increases the self-esteem of the student and allows him to be more self-critical.

ICT plays an important role not only in motivating students, but also in the motivation of University teachers, allowing them to approach teaching more creatively, offering students tasks that allow to create multimedia content.

Currently, students interested in various forms of cooperation using tools of interpersonal communication, search for various hyperlinks to Internet sites that places demands on teachers when creating courses on the Internet sites. There is an opportunity to use the Internet as a teaching tool both for training all types of speech activity, and for research work and education.

3 RESULTS

The Internet offers users a wide range of information and resources that can be used by students and teachers: e-mail, participation in videoconferences, publication of research articles in the on-line system, numerous reference catalogs and search systems. Thus, teachers of the French language use the portal fle.fr., which is supported by the University Albert Camus Center in Montpellier and offers websites for teachers and students http://www.fle.fr/. The site Educnet, also suggests the use of new information and communication technologies in the field of education. www.educnet.education.fr; http://www.educnet.education.fr/dossier/formation-ressources/outils.htm

From the “flipped classrooms” methodology point of view which appeared in 2007, the teacher needs to develop a video lesson that includes the lesson’s plan, script and selection of audio and videotext, relying on well-developed didactic framework. This type of work will require additional teacher’s time and it will be his additional workload. The teacher should be able to use different software for filling the content such as, for example “Youtube”. The teacher develops his video lesson for HR and manages the learning process in the classroom. New computer technologies contribute to the development of this methodology.

In the absence of Internet connection the student can view the lesson on CD, DVD, USB flash drive, as soon as the access to the computer is open. Participating in online forums allows students to share information, helping each other and having the opportunity to work on collective tasks. Teachers who use the method of flipped classroom can make an online poll of students, testing their knowledge and evaluating their work, answer students’ questions on the solution of the task [8].

Creating Internet lecture courses, teachers use online creative tasks, different types of exercises and hyperlinks. ICT enables teachers to access the necessary information to the various educational sources.

Using new technologies in teaching, the teacher is a kind of animator, assistant in the learning process, the guide in the discovery of new information, knowledge, and skills. ICTs help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the learners, the difficulties they faced in mastering the material. Teachers can work more closely with their colleagues from other universities in planning and development of training programs. The use of the Internet allows to go beyond audience and create a new situation in which the learners can Express themselves in the best way.

ICT enables the teacher to cultivate, promote professional growth, open new tools of teaching, enrich the content of courses, to experiment with new methods in teaching, to compare their teaching
methods with the methods of their colleagues. The teachers can share their thoughts, experience and opinions on special forums in the Internet.

The undoubted advantage of using ICT is to achieve mobility of learning, because using e-mails and forums, teachers and students can provide feedback, they can receive the necessary consultations, using the time in the classroom more effectively.

The modern teacher must use ICT in teaching in order to develop their pedagogical scenario, to turn to various Internet sites, creating their own content, finding in the Internet a variety of topical authentic written and audio texts, graphs, diagrams, etc.

ICT assumes the use of such telecommunication technologies as computer training and test programs, electronic dictionaries for teaching students both professional vocabulary and reading in a special setting; telecommunication technologies, which give students the opportunity to participate in the dialogue of cultures through audio and video conferences.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The use of ICT is more efficient within the framework of a certain model of training, developed with consideration of the educational goals and conditions of learning.

The use of new technologies in teaching and learning foreign languages plays a special role, since they make it possible to use an individual approach in the learning process. ICT combines the advantages of various technologies within a single resource placing educational material in the form of electronic textbooks, audio and video files using hyperlinks. Using ICT, a teacher has an opportunity to monitor the knowledge and skills of students in the network, making the learning process more individual. It should be noted that of special importance is the visual component that allows you to move from a purely verbal dimension to the visual and verbal [9].

In conclusion, it is worth to acknowledge the important role of ICT in distant learning, where teachers and students are not together in one place. However, ICT cannot replace teachers and human contacts, but can provide substantial assistance, the introduction of a new style of work, to change the attitude of students to a foreign language and working on it.

As modern ICTs are evolving constantly and rapidly, it is difficult to imagine what new forms of learning will be offered in the near future. Undoubtedly, ICT has become an integral part of the learning process at the present stage.

REFERENCES