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THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS FOR INTENSIFICATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Abstract. An increasing number of lecturers are experimenting with innovative computer-mediated approaches to foreign languages teaching (FLT), dramatically altering the ways students interact with learning content. This comparatively common acceptance of digital learning technologies has enlarged the integration of multimedia teaching and learning tools into the traditional, face-to-face classroom setting, thus blended approach to content supply in FLT has experienced extensive progress in higher education. The article deals with the practice of usage of the most popular multimedia technological tools, such as Prezi, Google Slides, PowerPoint, in foreign languages teaching at higher educational institutions. In the course of research surveys were made to determine the types of collaboration and evaluation preferred by the students, their expectations from foreign language learning process, which, in their turn, gave grounds to point out the factors promoting intensification of the teaching process in the context of blended learning.

Keywords: blended learning; ICT in language teaching; multimedia presentations; intensification of teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem setting. The concern of providing the proper level of information services in the education system is becoming more significant these days. A stable tendency to expand the impact of ICT in the teaching-learning process has been preserved. It is undeniable that the application of ICT in education promotes progress in language learning.

Nowadays educators are often guided by the following statement: “Modern information computer technologies make the process of learning a foreign language more effective, since they promote faster and qualitative mastering language skills”. In this situation, if the principle “the more these technologies are used, the better it is” dominates, the positive result of such learning is unlikely to be reached, and the classes themselves are often turned into pure demonstration of videos, slides, Internet resources, etc. Thus, there is a need for research of effective ways to use ICT in language studies environment of blended learning.

The analysis of recent studies and publications. Problems of information society have become subjects of study for philosophers, political analysts, sociologists, specialists in the Humanities and technical sciences. Quality issues related to open education resources, educational space and learning environment in the information society have been scrutinised

by V. Bykov [1] and V. Kremen [2]. Ways to improve the quality of Higher Education in Ukraine in terms of use of ICT have been presented in recent works of N. Morze [3]. The analytical studies of O. Ovcharuk and N. Soroko are dedicated to the problems of development and evaluation of the ICT competency in education and the main obstacles for school teachers towards the formation of computer-based learning process [4]. O. Spirin, Yu. Nosenko and A. Iatsyshyn characterised the organizational and pedagogical conditions for high-quality training of future PhDs and experience of their implementation at the Institute of Information Technologies and Learning Tools of NAES of Ukraine [5]. The system of future foreign language teacher preparation for information technology usage in professional activity has been worked out and scientifically approved on theoretical, methodological and methodical levels by L. Morska [6].

As stated by the recent research [7], [8], a computer is a tool and medium that facilitates people in learning a language, although the effectiveness of learning depends totally on the users. The technology in this era has grown up not only from the quality but also the efficiency.

According to a number of foreign scholars [9], [10], [11], foreign language teaching (FLT) has been shaped by the search for the “one best method” of teaching the language. Some specialists in language education [12], [13] strongly support the utilization of ICT in language learning to improve efficiency and effectiveness of teaching process that can improve the quality of understanding and mastery of the language studied. ICT use, in the scholars’ opinion, will help to generate interaction and improve communicative competence, including providing authentic material to the class or self-learning [14], [10]. M. Warschauer [11] states that the opportunity for students to use ICT in the foreign language classes highly increases their motivation to study. P. Svensson [10] defines four different ways in which ICT can be used in language teaching: ICT as an automat, ICT as a tool, ICT as an arena and ICT as a medium. M. Kenning [13] suggests that two of the major advantages of ICT are that it helps learners to gain control of their own learning and that it can help teachers individualise teaching. According to recent research, the most important way to involve the computer more in the teaching process was said to be the interest, capability and motivation of the lecturer, being the most important for the successful integration [9], [12]. Ulf Jämterud [14] claims that “digital competence” is as important as being able to read, write, count and should not be taught as a subject on its own, rather, to be successful, it should permeate all disciplines.

However, M. Kenning [13] has claimed that most new technology has been implemented without much research on its benefits, mostly because of the rapid development of technology. Moreover, there are many teachers and researchers that have reacted strongly against the use of the computer as an automat, since they state this to be an outdated way of learning a language. M. Estling Vannestal [12] has dealt with possible problems that might occur in the language classroom where ICT is applied highlighting the discrepancy between research on technological benefits and the quickness with which ICT has been implemented.

The **objective of this paper** is discussing key features of the use of multimedia presentations on the grounds of implementation of blended learning into language studies.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Theoretical methods have been used, namely: analysis and synthesis of pedagogy literature; system, inductive, deductive approaches; interpretation of research results; the practical approach involving the firsthand research in the form of survey.

3. THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the syllabi in teaching foreign languages, the main objective of teaching process is to build students' communicative competence based on communication skills, formed on the basis of language skills, mastery of skills and ability to communicate orally taking into account motivations, goals and social norms of verbal behaviour in typical areas and situations.

However, by using ICT, a foreign language is not merely learned but at the same time students enhance their competencies, which is beneficial for their future careers such as accessing information efficiently and successfully, assessing information critically and proficiently and using materials precisely and creatively.

Needs analysis survey has been carried out to determine the types of collaboration and evaluation preferred by the students, as well as their expectations from foreign language learning process.

The results of the survey on the kinds of collaboration and evaluation students would like to be used to make considerable progress when studying foreign languages (Figure 1) demonstrate that in a foreign language class the highest percentage of learners would like to participate in online collaboration via audio, video, and text chat instead of physical classroom collaboration. This choice can be clarified by the fact that this kind of approach enables students and lecturers to create their own learning environments that fit their requests perfectly. Moreover, lecturers are able to create interactive lessons using the materials they have collected online and prepare their students for future tests. However, lower-level students hesitate about applying technological methods, and have preferred manually-graded assignments to automated evaluation through online tests.

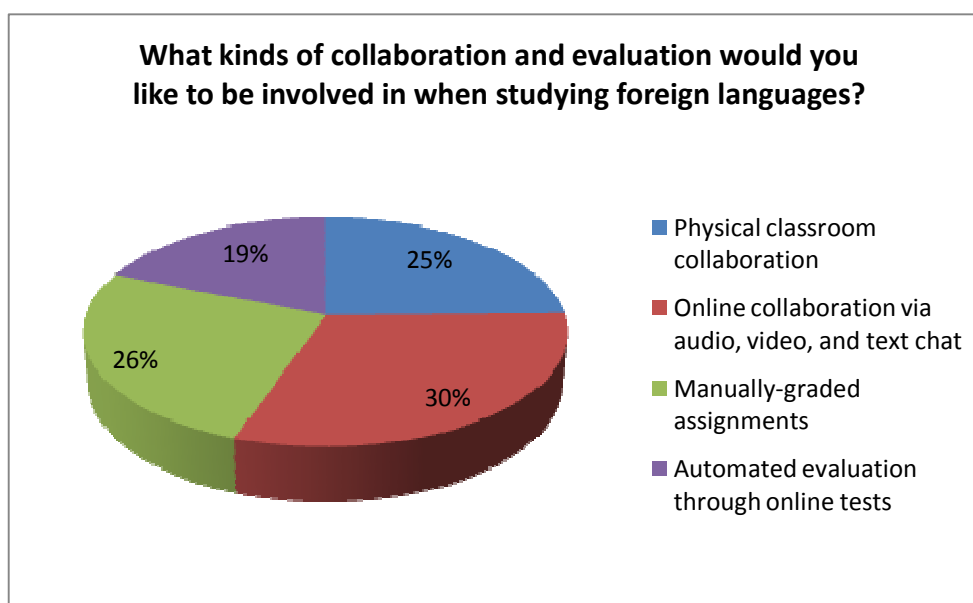


Figure 1. Collaboration and evaluation in FLT

In our next survey language groups have been formed on the basis of the students' knowledge and skills in a foreign language. In accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) learners have been divided into six levels as follows: A1 Beginner; A2 Elementary; B1 Intermediate; B2 Upper intermediate; C1 Advanced; C2 Mastery or proficiency.

According to the survey basic users of the foreign language are more reluctant to use

ICT tools in the classroom most likely as a consequence of lack of confidence in their own language abilities. Figure 2 shows students' preferences of learning tools in answer to the survey question: *What types of teaching methodology would you like to be applied in the foreign language lessons to intensify learning?* The lower levels have revealed aptitude towards methodology not connected with the use of ICT, deciding on printed texts, hand-outs and workbooks. Students of levels A2 and B1 altogether would rather keep to traditional teaching methods such as lecture notes and blackboard writing. Conversely, students with extensive language knowledge have chosen educational content focused on Moodle, having provided a simple, clear view of all learning activities and resources and diverse forms of multimedia and animation, Prezi and Google Slides in particular. Higher level students have proved to be more encouraged to practice their language skills and are willing to validate their progress using ICT.

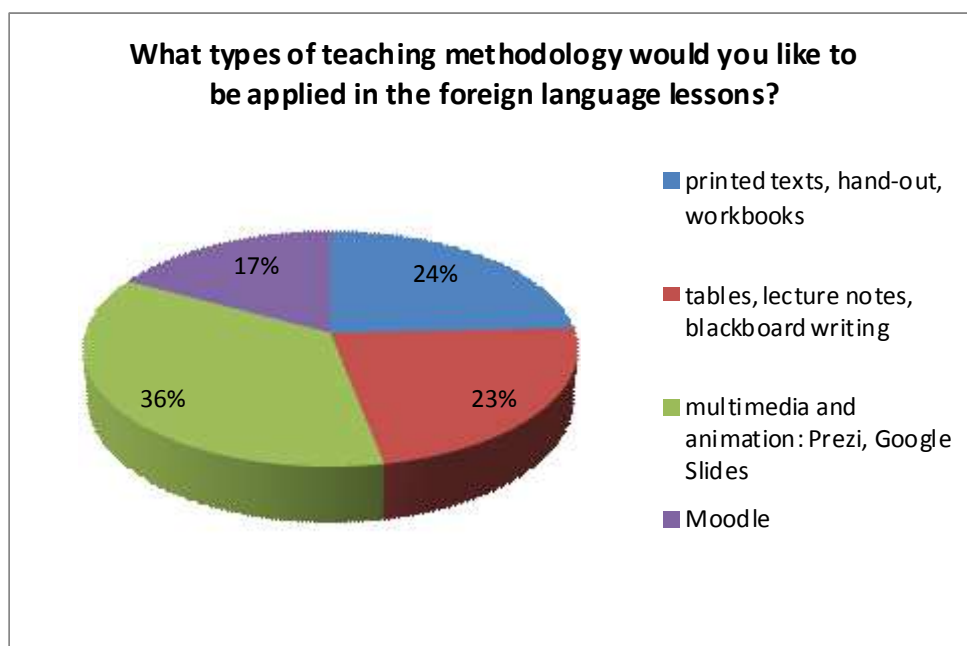


Figure 2. Types of teaching methodology to be applied in FLT

Computerisation of educational process leads to the reconsideration of traditional forms and methods of foreign languages teaching, the emergence of new practices of conducting lessons, such as *blended learning approach*. It integrates face-to-face classroom methods with computer-mediated activities developing a cohesive instructional methodology. The objective of integrating face-to-face teaching in class with online tuition is to optimize the educational process as the number of in-class seminars is insufficient for undergraduates to master the language units that have been taught during the meetings and to practice the skills required in their future careers.

In the foreign language classes the chosen model of blended learning is the additional one having retained the basic structure of the traditional course and used ICT to supplement traditional approaches. (See Table 1).

Table 1

Traditional approach versus blended learning

Traditional approach	Blended learning approach
Passive learning.	Active learning.
Textbook-driven.	Research-driven.
Time-based.	Outcome-based.
Knowledge, comprehension, and application.	Synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.
Learners work in isolation.	Learners work collaboratively.
Lecturer-centred: lecturer is the centre of attention and provider of information.	Student-centred: lecturer is a facilitator/coach.
Lecturer is a judge. No one else evaluates students' works. Assessment involves taking tests, and handing in manually-graded assignments.	Self, peer, and authentic assessments. Automated evaluation conducted through online tests.
Curriculum is irrelevant and meaningless to the students.	Curriculum is connected to students' interests, experiences, talents, and the real world.
Print is the primary vehicle of learning and assessment.	Performance, projects, and multiple forms of media are used for learning and assessment.
Learning environment can be dull and humorous atmosphere in class is kept to a minimum to avoid disciplinary issues.	Learning environment can be stimulating and fun. Moderation teaching tools allow the lecturer to easily control the class.

The conventional systems in FLT, mainly depending on textual resources, are dramatically changing to a blended learning system where it consumes the e-Learning as a fundamental constituent of teaching process. The use of blended learning in the process of education in the foreign language classes, in particular with an aim of intensification of learning process, necessitates the application of *multimedia presentations*.

And here are certain important issues to be discussed in this regard.

There are numerous cases, when teachers treat multimedia presentations and so called traditional (oral) ones as identical. In our opinion, a multimedia presentation is a complement to the main presentation, a well organized element, reflecting a certain educational aim, encouraging students to think critically, use, synthesize, and evaluate information, discuss the topic. It is neither a substitute for other activities in a class, nor for a teacher.

These days, there are many different tools available to create and present a slideshow—SlideShare, Google slides, MS Power Point and Prezi, if we name a few big ones. Which one is better to use, despite numerous disputes among professionals and amateurs, is often decided due to a specific learning situation, teacher's technical skills, time for doing a project, etc. The comparison of such programs as Google slides, Prezi and MS Power Point will be made later in this article. Now we would like to discuss certain features common for all of the above mentioned tools.

There are certain cons of teaching via multimedia presentations, such as:

a) Many, or too many slides, and a lot of text can make any presentation really boring;

b) In terms of technical side of a presentation, computers can break down, viruses can block or delete a presentation. Different versions of a program used to make a presentation (as MS Power Point, for example) installed on different computers can make it difficult or impossible to open a presentation file. Moreover, as for the content and look, the layout can be changed, fonts may not be supported in various versions, links deactivated, etc.;

c) Overuse of presentations can bore learners and diminish their effectiveness as a tool;

d) Being a time-consuming activity, a successful presentation usually takes hours to develop and practice.

Let us consider some pros of teaching via multimedia presentations:

a) Communication over multi channels is more efficient than the one over a single channel, since it provides a considerably better result in perceiving a message;

b) Various illustrations, including images, charts, sounds, videos, etc can be used to represent an idea;

c) Motivation for teachers and students;

d) Development and use of technical and creative skills of teachers and students.

Regardless of the program or tool used to make a multimedia presentation, besides the pros and cons of use of such kinds of presentations, the following should be considered in the preparation process:

1. Communication. Presentation is a means of communication. All decisions taken concerning formation of a presentation and its content should provide answers to the question “what ideas, information and emotions does the author want the audience to acquire?”

2. Technology is only a tool. If a slide-show has no value apart from its content, the same thing concerns the technology. The tutors should know themselves, and teach their students how to use the multimedia technologies on the grounds of educational expediency, that is use multimedia on condition that they will improve the expected outcome of showing a presentation and raise its overall value.

3. Combination of words and graphics. It’s very important to use a good mix of text and illustrations. This would not overburden the audience with excessive amount of visual information.

4. Words as audio rather than onscreen text. Depending on which slideshow tool is to be used, there may be an option to add audio to the slides. According to our previous research, 64 percent of students found presentations that used graphics with audio more effective than presentations that used graphics with text.

5. Two-way discussion. Apposite and successful presentations are usually followed by discussion of key issues. This should be planned beforehand, and included into the content of a presentation, as, for example, in the form of slides offering topics, questions for discussion, etc.

We create presentations using web application Prezi and Google Slides, enabling us to explain complex instructions, grammar rules and ensure students’ comprehension contributing to visualization and illustration of the learning content. (See Table 2).

Table 2

Presentation Tools Comparison

Prezi and Google Presentation Slides	PowerPoint
Map/Slide-stack layout.	Slide-stack layout.
Web-based creation.	Computer-based creation.
Free for basic use.	Purchased with Microsoft Office Suite.
Limited/Multiple printing options.	Multiple printing options.
Audio narration and music import/ No audio import.	Audio narration and music import.
Must be online to play linked YouTube or uploaded videos.	Videos can be embedded for offline play.
Collaborative. One file, multiple online editors.	One master creator incorporates all changes on local computer. Possibly stored on a shared drive to support multiple editors.
Non-Linear/Linear navigation.	Linear navigation.

On the whole, the received data to these issues have shown that both traditional and interactive approaches are needed to keep students motivated. Consequently, the application of blended learning might contribute to achieving an intensification of the educational process in foreign languages teaching.

Thus, the technologies are incorporated into the instructional approach of the foreign language classes with the help of supplemental model of blended learning but without altering their basic structure. Students are required to complete online tasks and fulfil various activities or prepare and submit presentations and projects. Online conferences are combined with offline activities enabling students to complete tasks at their own pace, providing beneficial effect for achieving the teachers' learning objectives. It has been proved that using the blended learning approach helps students develop a greater awareness in the subject matter of the course. Moreover, ICT provide assistance in integrating new lessons plans, presentations, and afterschool activities, which lecturers can then share with their students as well as facilitate communication which can help to receive feedback on their learning workflows and assignments.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The concept of intensification is thoroughly related to the use of ICT which offers new possibilities for the process of teaching English, including the following:

- 1) The speed of the teaching process is increased by supplying a various range of educational resources within a short time;
- 2) Interactivity: the opportunity is provided for immediate feedback to both the lecturers and the undergraduates;
- 3) Partial or complete computerisation of the student assessment procedures along with creating and working with tests;
- 4) Constant monitoring of the teaching process of a foreign language is carried out.

Digital learning materials applied to blended learning in the context of FLT, including interactive multimedia presentations among others, are able to engage students, influence time on tasks in their learning process and promote learners' success in mastering new knowledge. It should be kept in mind, that the use of modern multimedia presentations in a foreign language class should involve not only teacher's technical skills in this regard, but also educational expediency.

Implementation of ICT in the educational process encourages interest in learning activities, promotes students' logical and creative abilities, and contributes to the development of information culture. In addition, lecturers are able to create interactive exercises and make their lessons more thought-provoking, enhancing students' attendance and motivation to study. Thus, information technologies are not simply a subject area but they are to be applied to improve the teaching process in other disciplines studied at university. Moreover, the learning environment is becoming more flexible and the educational methods are responsive to the various requirements of students so they become more encouraged and collaborative. Among the perspectives of further research we suggest that ways of improvement of students' and lecturers' technical competence should be further investigated.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ МУЛЬТИМЕДІЙНИХ ПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЙ ДЛЯ ІНТЕНСИФІКАЦІЇ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

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Анотація. В умовах сьогодення зростаюча кількість викладачів експериментують з інноваційними комп'ютерно-опосередкованими підходами у сфері викладання іноземних мов, кардинально змінюючи шляхи взаємодії студентів із навчальним змістом. Поширене визнання цифрових технологій навчання значно розширило можливості інтеграції мультимедійних засобів навчання і викладання до традиційних форм і методів організації навчального процесу, тому змішаний підхід до викладання іноземних мов нині зазнає суттєвого прогресу в галузі вищої освіти. У статті вивчаються практичні аспекти

використання найпоширеніших засобів мультимедійних технологій (Prezi, Google Slides, Power Point) у процесі викладання іноземних мов у вищих навчальних закладах. Були проведені дослідження з метою визначення шляхів співпраці і способів оцінювання, яким надають перевагу студенти, а також вивчення їхніх очікувань від процесу вивчення іноземної мови. Результати роботи дозволили виокремити фактори, що сприяють інтенсифікації процесу викладання у контексті змішаного навчання.

Ключові слова: змішане навчання; ІКТ у викладанні мови; мультимедійні презентації; інтенсифікація навчання.

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МУЛЬТИМЕДИЙНЫХ ПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЙ ДЛЯ ИНТЕНСИФИКАЦИИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ В УЧРЕЖДЕНИЯХ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

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Аннотация. В наше время растущее количество преподавателей экспериментируют с инновационными компьютерно-опосредованными подходами в сфере преподавания иностранных языков, кардинально меняя пути взаимодействия студентов с учебным контентом. Распространенное признание цифровых технологий обучения значительно расширило возможности интеграции мультимедийных средств обучения и преподавания в традиционные формы и методы организации учебного процесса, поэтому смешанный подход к преподаванию иностранных языков в настоящее время испытывает существенный прогресс в области высшего образования. В статье изучаются практические аспекты использования самых распространенных средств мультимедийных технологий (Prezi, Google Slides, Power Point) в процессе преподавания иностранных языков в высших учебных заведениях. Были проведены исследования с целью определения путей сотрудничества и способов оценивания, которые предпочитают студенты, а также изучение их ожиданий от процесса изучения иностранного языка. Результаты работы позволили выделить факторы, способствующие интенсификации процесса преподавания в контексте смешанного обучения.

Ключевые слова: смешанное обучение; ИКТ в преподавании языка; мультимедийные презентации; интенсификация обучения.



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