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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ІНТЕРНЕТ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ

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У статті розглядаються дидактичні можливості застосування інтернет технологій у процесі навчання студентів вищих навчальних закладів спеціальностей «Міжнародний бізнес» і «Міжнародна економіка» іноземної мови професійного спрямування. Описані переваги навчання із застосуванням інтернет технологій, а також розроблені завдання з англійської мови професійного спрямування, метою котрих є покращення мовних та мовленнєвих навичок в галузі міжнародного бізнесу та економіки, які можуть бути використані студентами і викладачами. Представлено результати експерименту, які доводять ефективність застосовуваної методики викладання АМПС.

Ключові слова: навчання із застосуванням інтернет технологій, навчання за допомогою інтернет технологій, інтернет технології, англійська мова професійного спрямування (АМПС), високий рівень володіння АМПС.

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ИНТЕРНЕТ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ

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В статье рассматриваются дидактические возможности применения интернет технологий в процессе обучения студентов высших учебных заведений специальностей «Международный бизнес» и «Международная экономика» иностранному языку профессионального направления. Описаны преимущества обучения с использованием Интернет технологий, а также разработаны задания по английскому языку профессионального направления, целью которых является улучшение языковых и речевых навыков в области международного бизнеса и экономики, которые могут быть использованы студентами и преподавателями. Представлены результаты эксперимента, которые доказывают эффективность предложенной методики преподавания АЯПН.

Ключевые слова: обучения с применением Интернет технологий, обучение при помощи Интернет технологий, Интернет технологии, английский язык профессионального направления (АЯПН), высокий уровень владения АЯПН.

WEB-BASED LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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This paper examines the impact web-based learning has on university students specializing in international economics and business in their attempt to acquire English for specific purposes skills. The article delineates benefits and guidelines for both teachers and students, and addresses issues towards an integrative approach to using technology (web-mediated learning) for the acquisition of speaking, reading and writing skills. Designed are the tasks for the experiment group of students (WBL group) the aim of which is to enhance students' economic and job-related vocabulary skills. Provided are some results of the experiment, which prove the didactic efficiency of web-based learning, integrated with other teaching methods, for improving students' autonomous learning skills.

Key words: web-based learning (WBL), web-assisted instruction (WAI), web-based technologies, English for specific purposes (ESP), ESP proficiency.

One of the major concerns of educators today is that there is a mismatch between graduates' foreign language competences, acquired from higher education institutions and the skill set by employers. Many of the current graduates, especially those majoring in international economics and business, are found to be lacking communications skills needed for socializing in the workplace and solving job-related tasks since the level of students' competence in a foreign language does not meet the proficiency levels defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. As such, there is much need for institutions of higher education to focus on training future specialists in international economic relations to be more competent in foreign languages as well as finding new teaching methods, which can efficiently develop students' basic job-related skills and improve students' autonomous learning motivation.

Computer technology has become a state-of-the art component in foreign language classrooms mainly due to the fact that web-assisted instruction (WAI), including the use of multimedia and authentic materials, can, beyond all doubt, facilitate academic achievement of university students. Consequently, teacher can improve students' individual learning trajectories, fostering both critical and analytical thinking and boosting students' foreign language (FL) competences. Since Internet is believed to be the most powerful tool in finding information, students need to develop their information literacy and information competency, the latter being one of the key competencies of a specialist, rather than merely acquire FL skills.

The issue of using web-based learning (WBL) foreign languages is highlighted in the works of Y. Bulakhova, N. Klevtsova, T. Kolesova, A. Lazareva, O. Paliy, O. Tarnopolskiy etc. WAI is regarded as a source of information for project work in the FL classroom (P. Asojants, Y. Davydenko, N. Ishchuk, T. Koval, O. Ogurtsova etc.), students' independent work (Y. Polat, P. Serdiukov, P. Sysoiev) and an effective tool for creating a virtual environment for learning a foreign language for specific purposes (FLSP) (O. Bihych, V. Krasnopolskiy). However, hardly any previous studies have included participants from universities, whose students specializing in international economics and business have a pressing need for English for specific purposes (ESP) proficiency in the workplace but are seriously undertrained in it to compete successfully in the labour market. Thus, despite the variety of methodical findings, the problem of using web-based technologies in learning ESP is still under discussion.

Objective of the paper is to look into the ways the WBL enables university students specializing in international economics and business to improve their ESP proficiency in the classroom and outside it, and increase students' interest in the subject.

Being dominant, student-centered approach to education implies that the learner is not only a passive recipient of knowledge but an active architect, therefore, only through students' active construction will the information they have obtained from the outer world be converted into their own knowledge. In this way, students will be active achievers and architects instead of passive recipients. With WBL, teachers have to upgrade their educational ideas timely; otherwise the advantages of web-based technologies will not be used to the fullest possible extent. Consequently, ESP teachers have to convert their traditional ideas, update their concepts and accomplish the conversion in their role facilitating the students' progress in learning the language. That does not only mean handing over learning initiatives to students, providing them with rich learning resources or changing the lecture-based class pattern into research-based pattern. It means that students will be actively involved into self-learning supported by both the teacher and web-based technologies. The latter creates a proper atmosphere for students' active learning, hence it is a powerful tool to improve teaching-learning process and satisfy both the teacher's and students' demands to the largest degree. [1]

Accordingly, teachers should employ courseware to conduct heuristic education while avoiding the cramming method preferred in traditional class, to properly manage students' class learning, to change the former man-machine communication into teacher-student communication and student-student communication and to penetrate the heuristic method and the open method into the teaching process in order to improve students' involvement and enthusiasm. [2]

WBL encompasses all aspects and processes of education that use World Wide Web as a communication medium and supporting technology. There are many other terms for WBL: online learning, virtual learning, Internet-based learning, and learning via computer-mediated communication. WBL in this study refers to the use of web-based learning resources and activities by the teacher to supplement classroom teaching so as to provide students with additional learning opportunities out of class.

WBL has indeed influenced education since it enables FL learners exposed to acquire language skills through tutorials, drills, simulations, instructional games, tests, and controlled practices either in the classroom or when doing homework autonomously. Besides, it is the advantages of web-based technologies that enrich the patterns, methods and means of FL learning, hence optimizing teaching resources to the largest degree as soon as enhancing the chances for success in FL learning. Thus, using web-based technologies in ESP learning with students specializing in international economics and business has obvious positive effects.

To improve their ESP competence, students are supposed to:

- be aware of hot issues related to international economics and business that will enable them to participate in scientific conferences/seminars or forums both in Ukraine and abroad including those held online;
- be flexible and efficient in ESP in social, academic and professional environment, making good use of job-related vocabulary and idioms as well as being accurate in grammar;
- be able to prepare and deliver a detailed and well-structured and coherent report, making use of authentic information from specialized sites, showing a good knowledge of cohesive devices;
- be able to write business letters;
- be able to skim and scan authentic texts online, translate, summarize and analyse socio-political and economic literature in English displaying a profound understanding of the content;

- have excellent listening and speaking skills;
- be competent users of web-based technologies.

When dealing with the analytical review of economic publications students were offered to read authentic socio-economic articles on the web site of *The Wall Street Journal* [5]. First, they were to find a socio-economic article of about 2000 symbols on the suggested site and skim it. Then they were to render the article in Ukrainian looking up new words in ABBYY Lingvo Live online dictionary. Next, students were to memorize the new vocabulary including economic or professional terms using the online learning tool Quizlet. Finally, they were to write an essay on the issue discussed making use of the new vocabulary.

At the next stage, students' task was to search on other web sites for an article dedicated to a similar issue and make an article rendering in writing, making use of the plan below:

1. *The article in question / under analysis / the present article / the analyzed article goes under the title / is entitled / headlined ... and is written by ...*
2. *It is taken from the Guardian / the Economist / the Ukrainian Week and dates back to ... (e.g. October 23, 2016).*
3. *The article deals with information about ... / focuses on the issue of ... / presents information about ...*
4. *The central idea of the article is about... / The main idea of the article is.../ The article is devoted to.../ The article deals with... / The article touches upon... / The purpose of the article is to give the reader some information on... / The aim of the article is to provide a reader with some material on.../ The discussed article first presents (detailed) information about .../ This article provides an extensive analysis of...*
5. *Give a summary of the article (no more than 10-20 sentences).*
6. *I find/found the article topical=urgent / interesting / important / dull / of no value / too hard to understand because ... / In my opinion the article is worth reading because ...*
7. *State the main problem discussed in the article and mark off the passages of the article that seem important to you.*
8. *To prove / exemplify his/her statement the reporter of the article informs (the reader / the audience) about...*
9. *The article continues by saying / stating that / with information about ...*
10. *Point out the facts that turned out to be new for you.*
11. *Look through the text for figures, which are important for general understanding.*
12. *Speak on the conclusion the author comes to: The reporter concludes by saying that ... / The article finishes with information about ...*
13. *It is also necessary to say / emphasize that ...*
14. *Express your own point of view on the problem discussed: It is my strong belief that... / In my opinion... / In the end, my hope is that ...*

The new vocabulary was not to be translated into the native language since the main objective of the task was to read an article and understand the ideas it conveyed because skimming skills are crucial for international economists.

After that students were assigned another web-based task which also implied searching for a topic-related article and its reading. However, this time students were to write a discursive essay, referring to the previously read articles from different web sites on one of the topics:

1. The influence of economic thought on NAFTA.
2. Role of World Trade Organization in international business and the argument that whether WTO is helpful or a hindrance to international trade.
3. Ukraine's economy is experiencing recession, but it will eventually recover due to free trade.
4. The WTO and democracy.
5. Advantages with disadvantages of free trade policy.
6. How do negotiation techniques change when more than two parties are involved?
7. A case study of a disastrous business negotiation.

The goal of a discursive essay is to present a balanced and objective examination of a subject. The topic may be controversial, but in the discursive essay students are assigned to present a much more balanced discussion of the issue, disclosing both sides of the discussion supported by facts and research. The author may draw tentative conclusions about the subject and suggest them to the reader.

In writing a discursive essay students were to stick to the following structure:

- 1) an introduction (stating problem from the point and of view of its previous or present-day state);
- 2) a clear indication of author's position in relation to the topic;
- 3) the first argument, with supporting evidence;
- 4) the second argument, with supporting evidence, and so on (the number of paragraphs like this will depend on the number of arguments the author can offer);

5) a single paragraph, indicating that there is another side to this argument, with some idea of the points likely to be made for the view(s) which are opposite to that of the author;

6) a conclusion, in which the author reiterates their position.

The ability to comprehend and understand a text effectively is an important part of ESP competence. Achieving reading and writing skills include mastery of specific skills like summarizing, understanding the main point, identifying organization (for both reading and writing), evaluating support arguments, predicting, drawing conclusions, organizing content, developing writing skills (content, organization, word choice, etc.), among others [3].

As the research showed, reading socio-economic articles with further writing coherent discursive essays, which required high level of cohesion, appeared to be a difficult aspect for students to be reached. Some texts were arranged inappropriately and often made the students rather hard to comprehend the message sent through them. However, a comprehensive analysis of the issue enabled the students to obtain information about current events taking place in the world of international economics, to study problem from different points of view, to express their own opinion in relation to the issue, to enhance critical thinking skills, and boost their information literacy and information competency which they will need not only in their academic environment but also to carry out further research work in their postgraduate course and perform effectively in the competitive international business environment.

Apart from essays, the assessment of the executed oral tasks was carried out through discussions, the objective of which was to increase students' communication skills. Also students prepared their reports on in the paper from that contained: a title sheet, a printed out article with the name of the web site they got the article from, a discursive essay or annotation, and a vocabulary list. During the discussion, students also were access the website they used.

A small-scale study of ESP students' opinions on the usefulness of the WBL activities was conducted by using a self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the students after they did the suggested reading, speaking and writing tasks as well as improved their vocabulary skills with Quizlet. A total of 27 students majoring in international economics and business at Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University completed the questionnaire. Related to the students' views on the WBL activities, the questionnaire contained 6 statements to which the students responded with Strongly Disagree (1 point per answer), Disagree (2 points per answer), Uncertain (3 points per answer), Agree (4 points per answer) and Strongly Agree (5 points per answer). The results of the students' responses to the questionnaire are summarized and given in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Student Responses and Average Ratings on the Questionnaire

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I enjoyed the WBL activities	0	0	0	12	15
2. I learned a lot from WBL	0	0	2	11	14
3. I found that WBL facilitates acquiring vocabulary skills	0	0	5	10	12
4. I find it effective to use WBL to improve reading skills	0	0	2	14	11
5. The experiences in WBL made this course more interesting	0	0	0	10	17
6. I would like to do more WBL in-class activities	0	0	0	7	20

The ability to learn autonomously is regarded as one of the key competencies of university students, since they have to retrieve more than 60% of the overall academic information by themselves. We identified three levels for qualitative comparison of autonomous learning skills between WBL and non-WBL groups: *high*, *medium* and *low levels*.

To identify the level of autonomous learning skills we analyzed the students' language proficiency in writing a discursive essay. The obtained data are shown in fig.1. Besides, through numerous observations we established that students in the WBL group did not hesitate to join group discussions and were more confident in offering arguments than students in the non-WBL group. In other words, they showed an increase in communication competency along with social and psychological adaptation. Furthermore, the improved general learning skills facilitated students' didactic adaptation to university academic requirements.

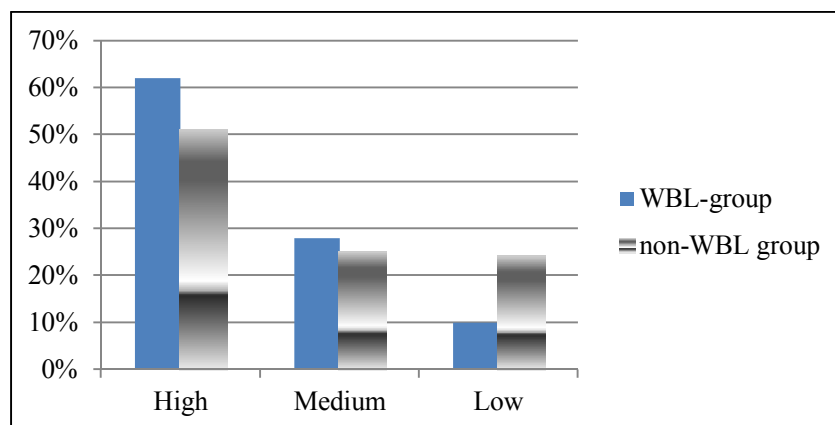


Fig.1. Levels of students' autonomous learning skills in WBL and non-WBL groups

Overall, the students showed positive attitudes toward the WBL, agreed that they enjoyed the WBL and would like to do more WBL activities both in the class and outside it. Although the study reported in this paper involved a small number of students in a short period of time, the findings of the study confirm that WBL can be useful and helpful for the ESP learning.

The designed tasks aimed to develop students' skills in reading authentic socio-economic literature from periodicals online, analyze articles, express their opinion about current socio-economic issues and improve their ESP competence through the increased job-related and economic vocabulary skills.

As an increasingly developing ESP teaching form, WBL supports listening, speaking, reading and writing skills by providing opportunities for individualized learning for students at all levels. In the research we did not put emphasis on developing students' listening skills; the students were exposed to extensive reading and writing through conceptualized practice. However, our findings convincingly demonstrate that WBL proved to be an efficient tool in raising students' specializing in international economics and business ESP proficiency along with their information literacy and information competency as part of their basic professional competency.

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