

**INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN
LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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The article examines the use of information and communication technologies in teaching foreign languages. The author's materials are presented. The effectiveness of learning with multimedia programs and a set of educational and authentic Internet-materials and with the use of the virtual language environment are considered.

Nowadays, information technologies permeate all spheres of human activity, and information competence increasingly defines the level of education. It is considerably more challenging to structure the educational process without the extensive use of information

and communication technologies (ICT). Learners who possess IT skills are willing and able to utilize them in mastering a whole range of subjects. In this regard, "foreign language" is no exception. In the context of modern society, the information and communication competence of a teacher, their ability to solve professional pedagogical tasks using ICT, becomes a crucial component of their professionalism. This very fact determines the relevance of this issue.

The process of foreign language teaching constitutes a gradually evolving system. It should be noted that computerization is not merely an effective tool for foreign language instruction. Therefore, we believe that the development of methodological foundations for computer-assisted learning should be based on a thorough analysis of the methodological and didactic opportunities that contribute to achieving the primary goal in foreign language teaching: namely, the formation of communicative competence skills and abilities, and teaching its practical application.

Information and communication technologies can be employed in language teaching across various forms of organizing learner activities, including: classroom work; extracurricular work; distance learning; blended (hybrid) learning, which combines classroom work utilizing ICT with elements of distance education.

The use of ICT in classroom instruction involves direct work on a computer during an entire lesson or a part of it.

Extracurricular use of ICT for language learning may include the following types of work: independent, supplementary, and extracurricular activities.

Independent work can be organized as group work on specific tasks that complement classroom activities in one way or another. Supplementary extracurricular work may include both self-paced assignments designed by the teacher and learner-initiated educational activities. Extracurricular work, as a rule, is not directly related to the learning process and allows for creative and project-based assignments that involve the use of ICT and the foreign language being studied (for example, preparing conferences, publishing electronic materials, communicating with peers from other regions or countries, etc.).

Distance learning implies mastering a foreign language through the active use of multimedia teaching tools and electronic communication tools. Such organization of learning requires special software (learning management systems, virtual learning environments) that enable the entire educational process to be conducted remotely. The

effectiveness of language learning largely depends on the students' initial level of preparation and the technical resources available for the learning process.

Blended learning formats are currently considered the most promising in education in general and in foreign language teaching in particular. They allow for a combination of direct interaction with the teacher and the group, the use of ICT in the classroom to organize independent work, and additional communication through electronic means [1, pp. 12–13].

Integrating information and communication resources into the process of teaching foreign languages involves planning tasks, courses, and lessons using ICT. However, it is important to note that the use of information and communication technologies is not an end in itself but an organic part of the entire learning process.

Let us explore how appropriate it is to use ICT in foreign language learning and what benefits they bring to students and teachers.

If we asked teachers why they use textbooks in class, they might say that a textbook allows for clear and illustrative presentation of important information. At the same time, they certainly would not work with every textbook that meets the above criteria, but only with those whose design and content align with the specific goals of a particular student group.

The same applies to computer-assisted learning programs. It is necessary to evaluate their suitability not in general, but for each specific student or group. When assessing an educational program, attention should be paid to a number of the following questions.

First, can teachers and learners achieve goals through computerization that are unattainable by any other means?

The answer to this question is likely affirmative simply because the emergence of information technology has led to new goals in foreign language learning: language proficiency now also implies searching for information on the Internet, communicating via email, and creating one's own electronic products.

Second, does the process of learning a foreign language become easier and more interesting through computerization? Most students positively assess the fact that with the advent of the Internet, opportunities to communicate with native speakers have significantly increased, which provides additional motivation and ultimately benefits their language proficiency. Furthermore, students can find information on topics of interest on the Internet, which also contributes to motivation [8].

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The use of IT promotes the implementation of a learner-centered approach in education. Learning a foreign language through computerization generates significant interest among students. In our view, a modern teacher should possess skills in using information technologies in a professional context. They must create conditions for the practical use of the language, and their teaching arsenal should include methods that allow each learner to demonstrate their abilities and activity.

Familiarity with numerous computer programs, browsers, and various websites prompted us to use them actively in our classes.

For example, the use of multimedia presentations is based on a communicative approach to mastering all aspects of foreign language culture: cognitive, educational, developmental, and nurturing.

Within the educational aspect, the learner masters all types of speech activity: reading, speaking, listening, and writing.

The cognitive aspect in working on a presentation not only helps create motivation but also allows for the combination of all types of speech activity. To select the necessary material for their presentation, students have to review a considerable amount of information, work with cultural and encyclopedic reference books and dictionaries, and study original texts. Thus, students develop lexical, grammatical, and pronunciation reading skills.

Presentations also include developmental and nurturing aspects. Working on a presentation develops students' imagination, creative thinking, independence, and other personal qualities. Participants creating a presentation learn not only how to communicate with each other during its defense but also how to engage in discussion and form their own opinions [9].

Additionally, we use multimedia presentations when introducing and reinforcing lexical, grammatical, and cultural materials, as well as supports for teaching monologue and dialogue. Their use leads to better assimilation of material due to the possibility of using animation, highlighting key elements through color, font, diagrams, and adding tables and photographs.

The widespread use of Microsoft PowerPoint in classes leads to students themselves striving to create presentations. This method is effective in teaching foreign languages. Homework becomes much more interesting. We ask students to create presentations on a specific topic (no more than 7-10 slides) with corresponding comments for the slides.

While working on creating a presentation according to a chosen topic, students select phenomena, events, and facts that interest them most. Relevant issues of mutual interest are identified during discussion. Knowing that their work will be used, students take such homework more seriously. They also actively use multimedia tools when completing project work and preparing for language conferences.

Let us take a closer look at the project work method. For teaching a foreign language, the project method has a number of advantages, the main ones being:

- Integration of all types of speech activity in the target language;
- Involuntary memorization of lexical units and grammatical structures;
- Selection of language material, types of tasks, and the sequence of work in accordance with the project's theme and goals.
- Visual presentation of the non-linguistic project outcome.
- Use of the foreign language in situations as close as possible to real communication.
- Consideration of students' interests and individual characteristics.
- Creation of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning a foreign language.
- Intensive interpersonal communication among students.

It is worth noting that the project method provides broad opportunities for the formation, development, and assessment of foreign language communicative competence, helping to solve one of the important contemporary problems in foreign language teaching methodology: the search for teaching forms, methods, and tools focused on real communication. The project methodology embodies the key achievements of student-centered, problem-based, and communicative-activity approaches to foreign language teaching.

The effectiveness of the project method for foreign language learning depends on many factors, including the goals and objectives of foreign language instruction, the students' age, language proficiency level, group size, the material being studied, the state of the material and technical base, etc., as well as the method of integrating the project into the foreign language course.

Analysis of scientific and methodological literature, descriptions of projects implemented in practice, and project tasks in foreign language teaching materials allows us to identify three main approaches to integrating projects into the foreign language learning process. A project can:

- be used as a form of extracurricular work;

- serve as an alternative way of organizing a course of study;
- be integrated into the traditional foreign language teaching system.

Examples of foreign language projects used as a form of extracurricular work include various competitions, quizzes, creative evenings, concerts, etc. The main methodological objective of an extracurricular project is to apply linguistic material already known to students in practice and to comprehensively develop already formed foreign language competencies.

A project as an alternative way of organizing a foreign language course excludes traditional principles of planning and implementing the learning process. A foreign language course based on project work is structured as one long-term project or a series of projects thematically linked to each other, implementing the principles of continuity and gradual complication of language material. All actions performed by students and the teacher are subordinated to achieving the project's goal: studying the necessary lexical and grammatical units, searching for information sources, selecting relevant information, and presenting the results of the work. Project results can be visually presented in the form of a display stand, brochure, radio program, video film, theatrical performance, etc. The most vivid and already classic examples of such projects are "The Wheelchair-Friendly Guide" [3] and "New Generation's Choice" [4].

Projects integrated into a traditional foreign language course are closely linked to the material studied within it. The most typical use of such projects is as final assignments within a series of lessons on a specific topic. Examples of implementing this method of integrating projects into a foreign language course can be found in English language textbooks such as "Generation 2000" [5], "Project English" [6], and the German language textbook "Hallo, Nachbarn!" [7]. Such projects are designed to function as real-communication tasks, in which the foreign language competencies formed during the study of the entire course or its section are applied to solve communicative tasks in the target language. Another variant of integrating a project into the traditional educational process is implementing the project while studying a particular topic within the foreign language course. In this case, part of each lesson is devoted to completing exercises and tasks from the textbook, and the remaining time students apply their formed skills and knowledge by working on the project [2, p. 10 – 13].

It should be noted that the project method requires significant effort from the teacher, related to coordinating the project and integrating it into the foreign language course. At the

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same time, it allows for the effective organization of students' classroom and extracurricular activities. They are given the opportunity to immediately apply the learned material in educational and real-communication situations, which significantly increases student motivation to learn a foreign language.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that the use of new information technologies provides a real opportunity to build an educational system. The information-educational environment of the global network offers students and teachers the opportunity for free access to various educational resources. It not only provides these resources but also allows for the independent creation of various electronic products.

For example, let's consider a few of them.

Hot Potatoes. A software tool for developing computer-based exercises. This universal shell program allows both teachers and students to independently create interactive training and assessment exercises in HTML format [10]. Based on this software tool, the website www.agenda.org was created.

The website offers a wide range of exercises for developing grammar and vocabulary skills, as well as monologue and dialogue speech skills, along with listening and speaking practice. In addition, you can use video files, online dictionaries, and a variety of authentic texts.

Filamentality. This platform was developed in 1997 and allows creating five types of online tasks in English using Internet resources. They are then automatically published on the educational portal SBS Knowledge Explorer Filamentality. The name is formed from two English words: filament (thread, fiber) and mentality (mind, intellect). It symbolizes the creative use of Internet resources for educational purposes. Searching the databases can be done by task title, topic, or author. These tasks can be used independently for studying various topics or as a set of tasks on a single topic, aimed at a deeper and more comprehensive study of the material [11].

Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning) allows creating courses in 30 languages. It is a web application that enables the creation of sites for online learning, also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The system implements the philosophy of "social constructionist pedagogy" and is primarily focused on organizing interaction between the teacher and students, although it is also suitable for organizing traditional distance learning courses and supporting face-to-face

education. It is worth noting that this environment is convenient for working with part-time (distance) students (conducting orientation sessions and checking assignments) [12].

I would like to say a few words about our own electronic resource. For distance work with full-time students, we created a website: <http://leselena74.narod.ru>.

Our website has a special "home tasks" section where we post assignments, video and audio files, install various widgets, and also include podcasts.

Authentic podcasts contain recordings by native speakers and can serve as a rich resource for listening practice.

Podcasts created by the teacher are often made to provide access to specific material that is otherwise unavailable.

Student podcasts can be created by the students themselves, often with the teacher's assistance. Here, they can learn about the lives of their peers, listen to similar examples, and immerse themselves in another culture.

Learners find it much more interesting to work in this environment. They can easily consult online dictionaries on the website, listen to the necessary information on a given topic without extensive Internet searches, and add their own comments and suggestions.

In conclusion, it should be noted that multimedia tools, various electronic resources, and the virtual environment of the Internet allow users to communicate with real interlocutors, work independently when searching for information, and create their own digital products. However, it is important not to forget that the global network is merely an auxiliary technical teaching tool. To achieve real results, its use must be skillfully integrated into the learning process, primarily in the form of independent work. It is also crucial to remember that much depends on the competence of the teacher, who must competently organize and plan the educational process, adapt existing electronic resources to specific learning conditions and objectives, and progress to creating their own electronic resources. All of this is a key factor for the successful integration of information and communication technologies into the foreign language teaching process.

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