ICT AS A TOOL TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *The article deals with the development of students' communicative competence by means of information and communication technologies. The utilization and integration of ICT tools can assist students in acquiring a foreign language competency. The article makes special reference to practicability, effectiveness and possibilities of ICT tools used at a foreign language lesson.*

Key words: *information and communication technology, a foreign language, teaching methods, ICT tools, communicative competence.*

ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-КОММУНИКАТИВНЫЕ КОММУНИКАЦИИ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ У СТУДЕНТОВ ИНОЯЗЫЧНОЙ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ

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Аннотация: *В статье рассматриваются вопросы развития коммуникативной компетентности студентов с помощью информационно-коммуникационных технологий. Использование и интеграция инструментов ИКТ могут помочь студентам в овладении иностранным языком, авторы рассматривают целесообразность, эффективность и возможности использования инструментов ИКТ на занятиях иностранным языком.*

Ключевые слова: *информационные и коммуникационные технологии, иностранный язык, методы обучения, средства ИКТ, коммуникативная компетентность.*

Russian national strategy for development of education states that informatization of education is one of the primary steps in education, emphasizing the necessity to introduce modern information and communication technologies with the aim to improve educational process, accessibility and effectiveness of education and to prepare the young generation to live in the information society. In addition, informatization of education imposes new requirements to professional skills and to the level of teachers' training, to methodical and organizational aspects of ICT used in education. The role of the teacher in this context is not only leading but it also becomes even more complex.

However, the informatization of education is seen today as the new area of pedagogical knowledge. Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) mean the implementation of information and communication processes, specifically

the methods of information search, collection, processing as well as methods of its distribution. The definition of two terms used in ICT says that ICT is the combination of informatics technology with communication technology. They both are combined, integrated, applied, and used in the process of teaching and learning due to conceptual understanding of informatics. Students deal with ICT in many areas of life and it is necessary to provide them with opportunities to explore the technology and encourage them to use it as a learning tool [3].

The common goal of all foreign language teachers is to develop a communicative competence of students that ensures a communication at professional level. It involves a direct link between theoretical knowledge, professional practical skills and foreign language learning [1].

Communicative competence, a term coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principles of language usage. I.Zimniaia interprets foreign communicative competence as a goal-outcome of a language study, as an ability to perform language activities and implement linguistic behavior [5]. That is to say, a foreign language speaker has to use the language not only correctly, but also appropriately (based on linguistic and communicative competences). But, of course, learning the grammatical rules of a language is still of great importance. The four components of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic) should be respected in teaching a foreign language and they are usually employed in second language teaching by advanced teaching methods.

Communicative competence in a foreign language is considered, on the one hand, as an ability and willingness of an individual mastered in the learning process to express and understand information in a foreign language in a particular communicative situation, and on the other hand, as the means to develop information and learning competences.

The modern institutions of higher education create favourable conditions to introduce new methods to effectively develop communicative competence in a foreign language due to availability of different information resources, the possibility to accumulate and share linguistic information. At the lessons of foreign language ICT tools provide more opportunity to develop educational, information and communicative competences of students [4]. Incorporating ICT into the English curriculum teachers can solve a series of teaching tasks, namely, develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, using resources from the global network; improve students' vocabulary; motivate students to study foreign languages, allow them to become competent users as well as consumers in English.

Among the multimedia the following tools are widely used for language teaching: teleconferencing (interactive educational teleconferences); tests to monitor and check students' knowledge; multimedia educational presentations; blogs for placement of text, audio and video files; web pages; emails; interactive texts. They offer greater flexibility of the educational process and active interaction between a teacher and students when exchanging information.

Presentation software such as PowerPoint provides useful tools for performance, creates a more fluid environment for communicating a message, and

elevates a speech to a more filmic medium [5]. Its use activates students' thinking and their ability to comprehend a foreign language. It creates a positive environment for classroom activities such as group discussion, subject discussion and debates between teachers and students and also lets teachers show ideas dynamically and deliver meaning effectively.

Hypermedia (the linkage of text, audio, graphics, animation, or video through hyperlinks) suggests a great means to integrate curriculum content with instructional supports and address different student needs. Digital texts may contain various instructional supports such as vocabulary definitions, translations, explanatory notes, background information, etc. When using hypermedia, teachers can help foreign language learners with comprehension problems, to overcome some barriers of printed texts.

The leading position among Internet technologies is occupied by the so-called learning platforms (Moodle, Sakai, ATutor) – educational environment for on-line training courses, maintenance, management, and administration of the learning process. For example, Moodle, developed on pedagogical principles, can effectively organize the process of distance learning, blended learning, including seminars, tests, work with electronic journals, and many others. It is used to create private websites with online courses for educators and trainers to achieve their learning objectives [2].

Claroline LMS – a platform for e-learning and ebusiness, allowing teachers to create effective online courses and to manage learning process based on web technologies. It is also necessary to mention a wiki technology. This is a web site that is jointly used by multiple users and operates on a principle of collaborative trust. The users change the content of the page on their own using the tools provided by the site. This technology is also used in educational platforms. It should be noted that the use of new information technologies facilitates teacher's activity.

The use of E-books, multimedia projectors, interactive whiteboards, teaching material preparation; test making; distance education and self-education can be easily accessed and used by educators. Moreover, the use of ICTs in the classroom signalizes a change from the traditional teaching approach to a more collaborative one to learning. Computer-based activities allow the teacher to undertake the role of a facilitator (advisor) while students take on an increasing responsibility for their own learning.

At the same time, teachers should play the leading role even if they implement multimedia technology, meaning that their position should not be replaced by the computers and other devices. ICT is a valuable tool to improve teaching and learning. For teachers, ICT is a professional resource, which gives them many opportunities to diversify the learning process and make it more productive.

For students, ICT provides opportunities to develop their cognitive and creative abilities, teach them to be independent, communicate more effectively and its integration into the curriculum can lead to improved student learning and better teaching methods. ICT as a classroom tool has many advantages because it provides highly motivational activities for students; increases opportunities for student interaction and decision making; makes complex tasks more manageable in other words teachers can easily explain complex instructions and ensure students'

comprehension; images, pictures and sounds can easily be used in teaching and improving the retentive memory of students; teachers are able to create interactive classes and make the lessons more enjoyable, which could improve student attendance and concentration.

Thus, foreign language teachers can maximize the impact of ICT in their classrooms by ensuring that they and their students use ICT as an integral part of lessons, present ideas dynamically, and use a range of media. So the use of ICT tools in teaching and learning has positive effects on behaviour, motivation, communication and process skills and it enables students to learn more autonomously.

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