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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF E-MAIL IN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT SPECIALTIES

The article deals with the problem of using e-mail in learning a foreign language by students of different specialties. The experience of foreign colleagues in the field of teaching foreign language by means of information technologies, by the example of e-mail is considered. The pedagogical advantages of the e-mail are revealed. The problem of learning foreign languages of students of different specialty is substantiated.

Key words: e-mail, information technologies, higher educational establishments, graduates, foreign language, didactic systems, online resource, interaction.

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ЕФЕКТИВНІСТЬ ЕЛЕКТРОННОЇ ПОШТИ ПРИ ВИВЧЕННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТАМИ РІЗНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

У статті представлено проблему використання електронної пошти при вивченні іноземної мови студентами різних спеціальностей. Розглянуто досвід іноземних колег у галузі викладання іноземної мови за допомогою інформаційних технологій на прикладі електронної пошти. Виявлено педагогічні переваги електронної пошти. Обґрунтована проблема вивчення іноземних мов студентів різних спеціальностей.

Ключові слова: електронна пошта, інформаційні технології, вищі навчальні заклади, випускники, іноземна мова, дидактичні системи, інтернет-ресурс, взаємодія.

Introduction

Nowadays due to Ukraine's entry into the world educational space and orientation to the labor market there is a need to change the organization of training of specialists in higher educational establishments.

It should be noted that the current economic situation requires graduates of higher educational establishments to practice high quality knowledge, a sense of new creative approach to solving production problems and relationships with partners, in particular, from foreign countries.

It is well known that foreign language training in higher education has several disadvantages and requires improvement of the system of teaching organization. The creation of effective didactic systems, the use of new information and communication technologies, forms and methods of teaching that could ensure intensive mastery of the system of knowledge could significantly increase the level of students' activity.

It is possible to solve this problem through the use of forms and methods of training. It involves the use of information technologies which would not only convey the totality of knowledge but also ensure optimal personal development as a whole, transformation of cognitive activity into professional [1].

At the present stage of development, expansion and deepening of international, scientific, technical contacts, a prerequisite for successful professional activity of a specialist is a practical knowledge of a foreign language.

The purpose and objectives of the article are to get acquainted with the experience of work of foreign colleagues in the field of teaching foreign language by means of information technologies, by the example of e-mail.

Presentation of the main research material. E-mail has been named the main source of all online resources as a form of asynchronous computer and mediated communication (Warschauer, Sheltzer, Meloni 2000). With the evolution of the

Internet world computer technologies offer tremendous opportunities for foreign language teachers: "... they can be a means of communicating in a specific language including messaging with other students in and out of class" (Warschauer) [7; 14]. In addition, foreign language teachers are already becoming more aware of the impact of this tool on their profession through the use of e-mail during exams and creative interaction with students. In recent years researchers from different countries have presented a lot of innovative ideas for using e-mail when learning a foreign language.

The pedagogical advantages of the e-mail are the extension of time and space for learning a foreign language. As many e-mail researchers point out it empowers students and teachers by providing them with opportunities to meet and communicate in a foreign language outside the university. Thanks to e-mail, students do not need to be in a special room at certain times and days to communicate with others in a foreign language. They can send e-mail from their convenient place at home. Such spatial capabilities give them more free time to spend writing and reading in a foreign language in a communicative context. An important point is that thanks to e-mail students do not need to spend money to travel abroad just to socialize.

Today there are many publications mostly foreign ones in which researchers substantiate the problem of learning foreign languages of students of different specialty. They consider information and communication technologies in particular e-mail as an effective means of learning.

Rankin, for example, notes that the extra interaction in a foreign language provides students with even more value than usual [11]. E-mail also allows students to communicate with others in authentic communication situations. Interaction with the help of e-mail allows you to feel the reality of the effort that is spent during communication comparing to artificial communication in the classroom. Such communication is more fruitful and reminiscent of spoken language due to its informal and interactive nature. Unlike face-to-face communication e-mailing takes place in writing which serves the language learners quite well. As Schwienkorst

points out "the main advantage of written communication is the ability for each student to retain holistic communication and have great examples of language use in the future" [12].

Foreign language teachers are often faced with the problem of following a schedule and technology maps on certain topics which must be laid out over a period of time and as a result there is almost nothing left for free communication. E-mail allows students to communicate in a context where the teacher is not the principal. In communication with e-mail students have the opportunity to gain experience of increased control over their personal learning and independently choose a topic and change the direction of the discussion. The ultimate goal is to communicate with other students in a foreign language but not to write text with many mistakes.

According to Beauvios computer and mediated communication improves student participation by 100 percent. Other researchers have noted that students who do not wish to interact face-to-face are more likely to communicate in an electronic context [4].

Undoubtedly e-mail can offer a number of benefits for students and teachers of a foreign language. For example, the wide variety of activities are successfully used by foreign language teachers. We can split these activities into group and single email exchanges.

Group messaging – e-mail allows students a hands-on opportunity to interact with others in a foreign language. Students can create their own mailing lists or teachers can organize a group list. By allowing interested parties to subscribe to such a list we are creating an additional opportunity for authentic communication in a foreign language with other students without taking group mates into account (Gonglewski). Students can also attend discussion forums in addition to scheduled classes [6].

According to Moran and Havisher e-mail is a communication and writing medium with elements of both written and spoken language. As e-mail is separated from direct contact the great pressure of the immediate response is reduced and students have time to form their thoughts [9].

Communication via e-mail helps students prepare for interpersonal discussion in class on the one hand and improve writing on the other (Van Hardle and Corl) [13]. When communicating within a single class the teacher can easily relate the communication task to the topic being discussed and extend the time for communication on the topic. The foreign language teacher has the opportunity to develop assignments using e-mail as an activity before the start of classes after classes and additional activities that involve students' independent work.

Let us consider some types of activities that a teacher can use as a student's independent work prior to the start of class. Based on my own experience I would like to point out that it is quite difficult to involve students in foreign language activities without prior preparation. Thanks to such independent tasks pre-class assignments give great attention to the main work and save a lot of time during the class.

Another example is the preparation of written tasks with the help of e-mail. In this case the teacher can offer the following activities to students: write a short biography of the famous person of their choice. With the help of e-mail students can collaborate on topics for this task thus saving time in class. In addition you can share your knowledge of a particular topic before performing listening comprehension exercises. Before listening to a particular topic in the class students exchange their knowledge of the topic via e-mail based on their own experience.

We consider it appropriate to note that e-mail is effective for the preliminary preparation of the discussion. Ramazani shares experience in using this type of activity as a Weekly Essay. A few days before the class his students transmitted their own works using e-mail. With this approach a more thorough preparation of students to discuss the work in the classroom was observed. Further implementation of this idea through the handout material allows activating students to participate in brainstorming and stimulate discussion [5; 10].

Considering post-class student activities it can be noted that teachers are able to create online assignments in order to consolidate or extend what students have already done in class. This method encourages students to repeat the discussion in

the classroom, enabling them to repeat or clarify the thoughts that were expressed during the discussion. In post-class activities students can also use the new vocabulary or structures that have been offered for the class.

The case method is preferred. Here is an example of how it is used when studying business English.

CASE STUDY

6 Organising a conference

Background

VMI, an international financial services company based in Valencia, Spain, is holding its first international conference later this year. The Chief Executive, senior managers at head office and about fifty managers from its overseas subsidiaries and sales offices will attend. The aims of the conference, in order of priority, are:

- to allow managers to get to know each other and become a stronger international team.
- to thank managers for their hard work.
- to discuss how the company can improve its products and services.

The conference will take place in July. Participants arrive on Friday evening and leave on Monday morning. The budget is \$2,000 per participant.

This is an important event and the Marketing Department must plan it carefully. The venue they choose must have:

- reasonable access to an international airport.
- one large conference room.
- preferably four or more seminar rooms.
- a choice of activities outside the main conference programme.

The marketing team sent out a questionnaire to find out what type of venue the participants preferred. They have selected four to choose from. All prices include the cost of flights.

Preferred location

• Seaside	24	• City	28
• Out of town	23	• Island	25

Task

You are members of VMI's Marketing Department.

- 1 Work in small groups. Discuss which hotel best meets the requirements of the conference.
- 2 Meet as one group and listen to each other's ideas.

Writing

As Chief Executive of VMI write an e-mail inviting the overseas sales managers to attend this year's conference. Inform them of the dates, the purpose of the conference and the details of the location.

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Case Study provides a variety of student activities to solve problem situations prepare, analyze, transmit and receive information via email. Students try to independently find out the essence of the problem and determine their own position in the assessment of the situation; think through the answers to the questions and find specific ways of solving the problem; there is an exchange of views; intellectual leaders are found to be able to offer solutions to problems after group discussion.

Bauman offers to enrich the conversational activity in the second session through the use of e-mail between groups. During one class he provided students with handouts describing three types of crime. In small groups students discussed cases and reached decisions to punish suspects. As homework he asked each student to write an original case and send it by e-mail. He then sent two cases by e-mail to each student with instructions to study the cases and suggest punishment methods before going to class.

In the second session students who were assigned the same tasks came together to discuss ideas and try to reach an agreement on punishment. According to Bauman through the exchange of materials between the students of the group in writing and their discussion the results were achieved outside the main class time. With these exercises invaluable time in the classroom was saved for face-to-face interaction [3].

Mantegi offers a different kind of e-reading task. In the first session students read a case from life and discuss the article, its features and linguistic structure. Then they create the story together with an e-mail. Each student creates a new story and adds it to the story after it's his turn [8].

For the purpose of establishing effective interaction between students it is advisable to use the technology "reader circle" which involves discussing the read material outside the classroom by e-mail. The teacher divides students into subgroups (4-5 students). Students are then asked to read the article after which they can send their feedback via email to other members of the group [2].

Conclusion. To sum up the experience of foreign colleagues in the field of information and communication technologies and foreign language teaching should be used in the educational process of universities when organizing foreign language classes especially among students who are trying hard to master a foreign language.

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