

FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Summary

The article deals with the feasibility of implementing information and communication technologies in the process of foreign language teaching. The specifics of their use in order to improve the quality of foreign language teaching have been revealed. The role of information-communication technologies in providing a student-centred approach have been described. The prospects for implementing digital learning and the possibilities of cross-border initiatives within the Bologna Process and the Erasmus+ programme have been analysed. Particular attention has been paid to the role of information-communication technologies in internationalisation of student youth and scientific-pedagogical staff at the global level, the development of partnerships with leading institutions of the world, which improves the quality of education, teaching and research. The development of educational partnerships as a key element of the European strategy of cooperation with other regions of the world has been considered. It has been found out that the wide availability of high-quality educational resources, the ability to adapt these materials to specific conditions cause significant qualitative changes at different levels of education in many countries. The European experience in the development of e-learning strategies, the structure of pedagogical training and institutional support, as well as the possibility of integrating it into the national system of foreign language teachers' advanced training have been researched.

Key words: cross-border initiatives, online learning, ICT competence, Bologna Process, higher education.

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1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies have the huge potential for expanding access to higher education and increasing the diversity of students as they provide the opportunity to study anywhere, anytime and choose a course lecturer. Such flexible learning is very important for students with special needs and changes the role of higher education institutions in professional development and lifelong learning programmes. In turn, this allows us to enter the international markets of educational services and supplement existing solutions in the field of cross-border education.

Improvement of educational partnerships is a core element of the European strategy of cooperation with other regions of the world, as well as a mechanism for increasing the level of education in emerging economies. At the local level, innovative technologies can support national efforts to strengthen cooperation between institutions, exchange experiences, and create a "more critical mass". A key role is played here by online courses as new ways of

transferring knowledge in terms of lifelong learning opportunities, professional development and internationalisation of higher education. New technologies promote closer collaboration with both global and local partners.

E-learning creates new opportunities for collecting and analysing student data, unlocks the great potential for more personalised learning, although at the same time, much caution should be taken to ensure that higher education students are aware of the risks and agree to the collection and use of their personal data. In the national pedagogical science, the role of modern ICT in the professional activity of a foreign language teacher is not sufficiently researched and requires more detailed consideration.

Nowadays many scientific-pedagogical workers are paying considerable attention to the implementation of technological innovations in the context of the modernisation of higher education. As a result, we observe changes in the ways of teaching and learning university students. In their opinion, although classroom learning will continue to be the basis of higher education systems, it will be supplemented with a new variety of teaching tools and methods, as well as many other e-learning opportunities. The positive impact of information, communication and innovative approaches on higher education within the Bologna process and the Agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems has been described by N. Avsheniuk, O. Dzhedzhula, K. Kovalova, R. Kravets, O. Levchuk, O. Lokshyna, O. Yumachikova and others. Such technologies are already providing better learning and teaching both at universities and online, as educational resources from around the world are becoming more and more accessible and learning uses more interactive media. At the same time, scientists note that teaching methods can better meet the needs of individual students, and advances in the analytical learning process provide faster feedback. Therefore, mastering modern information and communication technologies is an urgent issue for foreign language teachers, that has determined the purpose of the article – substantiation of the feasibility and advantages of implementing information and communication technologies in the process of foreign language teaching at higher education institutions.

2. Development of ICT and online platforms

New ICT and online platforms have evolved and still continue to grow in terms of speed, interactivity and potential coverage of various fields of activity of higher education applicants. Copying digital material costs little or almost nothing, and a more flexible approach can be applied to copyright. Broadband Internet access helps to reach students anywhere in the world. According to the International Telecommunication Union, more than 5 billion people have access to the Internet, and this is a great potential (*ITU Statistics, 2022*).

A foreign language teacher achieves the education quality improvement of by providing high-quality educational materials and a more creative, personalised pedagogical approach. At the same time, in this process, it is necessary to increase the quality of the content as a priority, since digital technologies by themselves do not guarantee improving the quality of teaching, but these technologies can make the quality of presentation better and support efforts in organising more personally oriented learning.

Mastering modern ICT will allow foreign language teachers to significantly increase the productivity of professional activity. In this process, it is worth highlighting the following specifics:

- 1) Nowadays foreign language teachers have the opportunity to use a wide range of materials in various formats to improve the quality and diversify their curricula.

2) Each student is a unique person who studies at an individual pace, so the teaching tools at universities and colleges should be chosen taking into account age and personal characteristics (student-centred approach). Some students will learn better and faster when using interactive media which include images, graphics, video and audio, while others will prefer static text and numbers.

3) The pedagogical technology can combine all of the above mentioned elements to create a personalised offer for each student on the basis of their strengths. In addition to improving the efficiency of education, such adaptation of the offer to individual needs can have a significant impact on the increase in the number of students pursuing a second higher education.

4) Digital assessment tools provide quick feedback, they can form objective viewpoints about students' progress, and enable adaptation of the curricula according to their needs. New technologies and communication platforms make better interact between the teacher and students, as well as between students in the classroom and extracurricular activities.

5) As much of the curriculum content can be realised through self-directed e-learning, educators can focus on their role as mentors, developing information management, information acquisition and survey skills, critical thinking and practical mastery of the obtained material.

Thus, digital media can contribute to a more active, problematic presentation of educational materials and can better motivate students to be more involved in the educational process.

3. Demand for higher education and ICT

According to N. Avsheniuk (*Avsheniuk, 2015*), the global demand for higher education will grow exponentially: from 1,8 million students to more than 7,2 million in 2025. Emerging economies such as China and India will be the main drivers of this growth. Even in many EU countries, where there is a decrease in population, the number of people studying at higher education institutions continues to grow. A significant percentage of this increase falls on adults. These forecasts require clearly planned actions, so scientific-pedagogical workers often ask the following questions: Will higher education institutions in Europe and abroad be able to maintain and improve the quality of education in the face of constant growth and diversification of the student contingent? In what way should educational institutions adapt to meet a wider range of needs? Will sufficient funding be allocated for the development of higher education?

In our opinion, the development and implementation of modern information and communication technologies in a teacher's professional activity is a partial answer to these questions, designed to help in the implementation of digital learning, because the pace of educational changes around the world is also associated with the opening of online courses. However, it is worth noting that such changes are only one of the components of the wave of innovations, which affects not only higher education in general, but also foreign language teaching and the assimilation of knowledge by students.

Identical considerations are expressed by O. Dzhezdzhula and O. Levchuk (*Dzhezdzhula, Levchuk, & Kravets, 2021*), stating that the growing demand for open educational approaches and resources, the development of innovative pedagogical technologies have led to the creation of a huge number of digital platforms and portals which offer easy access to educational services and materials, make online participation in many different courses possible. Changes in the perception and attitude towards distance learning have been observed. More and more people are choosing online learning. Traditional educational and professional programmes are being modernised in a certain way. Therefore, foreign language teachers and students have access to

more materials, and modern ICT and new methodological approaches are used while studying in a group. I agree with scholars that these forms of education are becoming increasingly popular and recognised in the society. Higher education institutions are currently developing online offerings which cover learning objectives, advanced training programmes, and special courses such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). In Europe, these changes were slow, and the discussion about them was not as wide as in other regions of the world, especially in the United States. The possible impact of these changes is not defined in the Bologna Declaration, although ensuring quality and widely accessible education is the main goal of the European Higher Education Area.

The main purpose of the Bologna Process is to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. In the context of globalisation and dynamic modernisation of higher education in developing countries, European universities are trying to create a well-known brand in order to remain competitive in attracting students, employees and international partners. Accordingly, European governments are taking various steps to ensure that their higher education systems can respond effectively and in a timely manner to various socio-economic challenges and global competition. They are increasingly adopting a systematic approach and implementing new strategies to create a coherent structure of complementary, cooperative and diverse institutions, offering various forms of education to meet the needs of people, employers, and society. At the same time, the European Union's support for joint cross-border initiatives, in particular Erasmus +, deserves positive assessment, as it encourages the teaching staff to change the teaching methodology, and public authorities to create an appropriate environment, incentives for action, ensure the quality and recognition of loans, financing of higher education institutions at the national and institutional levels (Lokshyna, 2018).

Scientists (Dzhedzhula, Levchuk, & Kravets, 2021) substantiate the feasibility of improving access and promoting lifelong learning by creating a more diversified higher education system. Methodologists-practitioners point out that traditional teaching forms have never met the needs of all social groups, and current financial, temporal, and spatial constraints still prevent some groups of the population from benefiting from higher education. To our mind, today there is an urgent need to create opportunities for advanced training, retraining and continuous professional development so that citizens have the appropriate skills and qualities necessary in the modern labour market. The achievement of this goal is provided by ICT and e-learning. The flexibility inherent in this form of learning can also provide rapid adaptation to the changing needs of the workforce and skills shortages. In the US, there are several interesting projects like Starbucks, AT&T and Udacity which consider the types of partnerships, explore different training opportunities, offer their employees subsidised online research and special courses, form their basic knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to work in positions held in the company.

The reasoning of teachers to improve the individualisation of learning by increase the quality of data collection seems quite grounded. In this context, online learning helps a foreign language teacher to collect a series of data that can be used to monitor student performance. Therefore, based on the analysis of the data obtained, it is possible to modify the system of higher education according to the students' individual needs. However, the collection, analysis and use of the collected data should be carried out only with the consent of the subjects of the educational process. These data can form the idea of a foreign language teacher about the students' participation in the course, their cooperation with classmates, the specifics of mastering information.

The EU assigns a special role in the development and implementation of a comprehensive national framework to the European Commission in order to expand educational proposals and integrate new ways of learning and teaching into the higher education system of member states. This higher executive body of the EU should promote mutual studying on key aspects, covering skills development, infrastructure, legislative framework, quality assurance and funding, in particular through the use of the potential of the Erasmus+ programme. First of all, the European Commission should support higher education institutions through the Erasmus + programme to increase the digital potential of new ways of learning and teaching, incorporating them into the overall system. Accordingly, Erasmus+ grants should be provided to facilitate experimental partnerships with specialised service providers (*Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2022*).

In our opinion, there is enough room for cooperation between institutions and countries in the development of e-learning strategies, the structure of pedagogical training and institutional support. The impetus for further actions is the development and operation of a number of platforms, portals, storages: Educational Era in Ukraine, FutureLearn in the UK, Iversity in Germany, FUN in France, MiriadaX in Spain, OpenupEd as an initiative of EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities). Thus, national authorities should contribute to the development of a competence system in relation to digital skills. This basis should be integrated into the national system of advanced training of foreign language teachers.

4. ICT competence of a foreign language teacher and five models of using ICT

A modern teacher is expected to have the knowledge, skills and abilities to use modern ICT, necessary to improve the quality of education, integrate new teaching tools into traditional education and expand the possibilities of e-learning during the professional training of students. The foreign language teacher also does not stand aside from these issues and faces the problem of choosing the best tools, programmes, digital technologies and sources of information.

Contemporary ICT and related teaching methods require different skills than traditional teaching, which can lead to additional pressure on foreign language teachers. In this regard, O. Dzhezdzhula, K. Kovalova, R. Kravets, O. Yumachikova express views on organising qualified activities, which require proper preparation, leadership, support. This is especially significant because the consequence of applying these new forms of education causes the change in the role of foreign language teachers to experts in a particular field and mentors-assistants in the development of critical thinking. Scientists suggest introducing certified pedagogical training and mandatory advanced training to master digital skills as a key element in this process (*Kravets, Dzhezdzhula, Kovalova, & Yumachikova, 2022*).

Colleges are also encouraged to provide digital skills training. Recently, the results of the Teaching and Learning International Survey showed that in all EU countries, more than half of students do not use ICT in projects or in the classroom. Students are not sufficiently prepared for e-learning at schools. We believe that it is advisable to pay attention to the inclusion of soft skills acquired during schooling in educational and professional e-learning programmes (*TALIS, 2022*).

UNESCO, in partnership with Cisco, Intel, ISTE and Microsoft, has developed recommendations for the structure of teachers' ICT competence (*UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, 2022*), which defines the competencies they must master in order to use ICT skilfully in their teaching methodology and professional self-development.

Models of funding for higher education and tuition fees in the EU are not aimed at developing online researches, and in some cases are obstacles to this. This manifests itself to various degrees. In some countries, education is free, and the inability to earn additional income

	TECHNOLOGY LITERACY	KNOWLEDGE DEEPENING	KNOWLEDGE CREATION
UNDERSTANDING ICT IN EDUCATION	Policy awareness	Policy understanding	Policy innovation
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT	Basic knowledge	Knowledge application	Knowledge society skills
PEDAGOGY	Integrate technology	Complex problem solving	Self management
ICT	Basic tools	Complex tools	Pervasive tools
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION	Standard classroom	Collaborative groups	Learning organizations
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	Digital literacy	Manage and guide	Teacher as model learner

Fig. 1. Structure of a foreign language teacher's ICT competence

in online courses can reduce the institution's enthusiasm to invest in their development. In turn, the university will not receive government funding for online students, and therefore there is no financial incentive to expand the offer of online courses.

V. Chentsov, I. Degtyarova, O. Hryhorash, believe that the national funding framework should create an incentive for universities to work towards open education, develop more flexible learning regimes and diversify the student environment. In their opinion, state authorities can mobilise earmarked funds to support efforts to implement new teaching methods in the higher education system. The funds should stimulate joint efforts to meet the needs of infrastructure, pedagogical training and programme implementation. National and regional authorities, in turn, use the opportunities offered by European structural and investment funds to support the development of the necessary infrastructure, technologies and database storages (*Chentsov, Degtyarova, & Hryhorash, 2019*).

The latest report of the European Commission on Education and Training (*Education and Training Monitor, 2021*) actualised the issue of replacing the traditional approach to accreditation of individual programs by a more flexible approach to the development and conduct of courses, the introduction of innovative technologies and new teaching methods at higher education institutions (for example, open educational resources, information and communication technologies in the classroom, etc.). We suppose, these technologies and methods should be included in the standard quality assurance and accreditation procedures, taking into account European standards and quality assurance guidelines. At the same time, government agencies are expected to develop guidelines to ensure the quality of open online learning and promote the better use of ICT in higher education. While working with students, five models of using ICT can be distinguished:

- 1) A foreign language teacher uses ICT to prepare materials for classes. Students are recipients and work with the printed materials.
- 2) A student works with ICT independently or in a group getting ready for classes at home. The rest of the students and the teacher, as recipients, use the materials created by the students.
- 3) A foreign language teacher selects textbooks using ICT. Students use ICT in class, working with materials in an electronic form.
- 4) Flipped learning – the lecturer relies on ICT while preparing materials for students' independent work. Based on these materials, students develop a certain element of classes, use the knowledge gained during classes and learn from each other with the help of ICT.
- 5) ICT accompanies the educational process.

5. Conclusions

Nowadays it is difficult to imagine a university without the Internet and computers. However, just one introduction of computers into lectures or practical classes is not enough to improve teaching methods, and the use of information and communication technologies at foreign language classes is not the goal of educational work. Among the advantages of ICT are: increasing the efficiency of learning, enriching the content of education and forms of communication, supporting the personal development of students, increasing students' motivation, facilitating the work of the teacher, which is achieved through the use of not only their own, but also multimedia presentations of colleagues at lecture and practical classes. Thus, the essence of the modern pedagogical process reveals itself in developing such a concept of using new information and communication technologies, which will enrich the competencies of students and make it possible to view educational materials before the start of the course, that should become an integral part of online assurance of education quality.

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