



Consolidating The System Of Fostering Students' Linguistic Skills At Philological Higher Education Institutions Of Specilized In Teaching English Based On The Approach Of Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT

The quality and content are constantly increasing their relevance in the conditions of modern education. If quality can be understood as means and educational materials which are used in the process, the content is a sign of the diversity of these materials and a factor which takes into account the age, abilities and chances of learners. Taking into account these two important factors, the theoretical and practical bases of combining modern information technologies in improving the quality and content of the system of blended learning at philological higher education institutions of specialized in teaching English are described in detail. In addition, the paths and stages of creating a specific system that runs continuously, combining the effective and reasonable functions of social networking services (SNS) and messengers in consolidating the quality and content indicators of blended learning, are gradually illustrated. Besides that, by combining online educational materials with traditional place-based classroom methods at philological higher education institutions which are specialized in teaching English based on the approach of blended learning, the system of fostering students' linguistic skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking can be optimized and modernized according to the results of this research in the article.

KEYWORDS

Blended learning, quality education, content, modern education, higher education, content of study materials, teaching foreign languages methodology, teaching systematically, innovative approach.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching foreign languages at higher education institutions is a much more complicated process than other stages of education because of the tasks and aims of this stage in preparing personnel. The most important factors at higher education are quality, content, approach, method, and progress by which students are guided to specialities after they graduate. Taking this factor into account, the process of teaching foreign languages is closely connected with innovations of education. Innovations and the process of teaching foreign languages should work cooperatively in practice so that language learners can make progress in practice both quickly and effectively which depends on both a teacher and learners. In the past decade much research has focused on how innovative technologies could be applied into teaching foreign languages separately in the field of teaching foreign languages methodology. Because information technologies are used to develop a particular skill or competence separately, much research has been targeted to solve problems of only this or that skill in practice. Analysing the current status of world education and ICT in practice, the system of TFL is also getting developed in our country as well. Of course, it should be mentioned that the advent of information technologies has brought a lot of benefits into a human life; however, when a solution is found, a new problem appears on the way. Thus, at higher education institutions, it can be figured out that the system of teaching foreign languages has not resulted in enabling teachers to obtain as many reasonable results as they expect. As our President Shavkat Mirziyoyev mentioned: **“...And which spheres and for which fields**

will specialists in the near and distant future of economic development be needed? Already, it is necessary to think deeply about this issue, to educate personnel that meet the requirements of the time and pace of the reforms. Our future depends on the solution of this issue” [1]. Because of this, it remains unclear why the system of teaching foreign languages has not got developed remarkably since that time when new innovative means were implemented into practice? The answer to this question is connected with the above-mentioned significant elements, in fact. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to outline the most efficient ways of consolidating the quality and content of the system of teaching foreign languages at Uzbekistan higher education institutions based on the theoretical and practical basis of our investigation. Also, it should be mentioned that this study is based on the system of teaching English at higher education.

Innovative means of our research paper are social networking services (SNSs) and messengers. Generally, we have aimed to utilize those means in increasing the quality and content of the system of teaching English at higher education observing their practical benefits which can be considered as the most crucial factors in the process of updating the system so as to consolidate the quality and content. **The quality of the system** means functions and benefits of SNSs and messengers and results of this approach in the process of teaching English at higher education. Quality teaching initiatives have raised teachers' awareness that teaching is neither an obvious nor a natural activity. They understand that their initial qualification is not

sufficient to ensure the quality of the teaching delivered and hence requires ongoing improvement [2]. **The content of the system** is variety of sources and tasks on the platforms of SNSs and messengers. These two main factors are also significant in making the process of teaching and learning foreign languages continuous for a teacher and learners. Moreover, a combination of face-to-face education and CALL is called blended learning which aims to increase learning potential much more in practice [3]. As for the form of implementing modern ICT into the system of TFL at higher education, blended learning is the most necessary approach according to the basic objectives of our research. Blended learning is a particular approach to education which combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods, thereby requiring the physical presence of both a language teacher and learners [4]. In addition, the two main terms of our research exist in teaching foreign languages methodology (TFLM), and they are in the following:

1. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of a handheld mobile device [5].
2. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can be briefly defined as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" [6].

In increasing the quality and content of the system of teaching foreign languages, the CALL and MALL methods are significant not only because of their theoretical basis, but also their practical factors. As our investigation deals with combining the CALL and MALL as innovative technologies in

forming blended learning successfully, we have decided to divide SNSs and messengers into two types according to their basic functions and features:

- a) Platforms to teach a foreign language (English) – YouTube SNS, Instagram SNS, Telegram messenger, VKontakte SNS.
- b) Platforms to test language learners and receive tasks – Google Plus SNS, YouTube SNS, Telegram messenger.

Following the two above-mentioned types of the means, in the following, general features of those innovative means are highlighted based on our investigation:

- ✓ **Google Plus SNS** - tests for learners to check and foster their language skills.
- ✓ **YouTube SNS** – video files for learners as a platform to receive video lessons and submit their video tasks easily.
- ✓ **VKontakte SNS** – a platform to learn and practice language skills using appropriate applications which can work on any device.
- ✓ **Instagram SNS** – a platform to receive continuously updated posts. archived video lessons and watch lessons online.
- ✓ **Telegram Messenger** – a convenient platform to gather all language learners in various groups and channels presenting all sources and materials comfortably and innovatively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As our research has aimed to increase the quality and content of the system of teaching English at higher education, the research methods we have used in practice are presented one by one in the following according to the most reasonable features and functions of SNSs and messengers in the process of our study.

3.1 YouTube SNS

To consolidate the quality and content of the system of teaching English at higher education, we have concentrated our attention on providing students with video study materials which can be viewed as supplementary sources. As students of higher education (who study a foreign language as their speciality) learn this or that foreign language in both academic and general modes, we have made video lessons in two versions:

- a) video lessons to teach and explain rules of the target language theoretically based on requirements of the study-programme of the educational system;
- b) video lessons to teach students how to use linguistic units, such as phrases, collocations, idioms, academic words in practice fluently and successfully.

We have posted both video types on a special channel on the platform of the SNS. These materials can be used as additional materials for students in learning and practising the target language distantly and innovatively. Furthermore, below the video lessons, we have uploaded further materials, sources, and, of course, (home) tasks for the students distantly.

3.2 Instagram SNS

This platform has been used as a means of presenting visual and graphic materials using various designs of the SNS. Firstly, we have prepared special materials to post on the platform to foster each skill in the target language effectively, for example, tips on developing listening skills, main factors of a

particular subject, such as theoretical grammar, phonetics for students. Also, it should be mentioned that on the platform of this SNS, both graphic and video forms of information in the target language have been shared under special profiles online, and students have been informed of newly posted materials on time, namely before classes as an introductory part, after classes as a concluding or supplementary one to work on themselves independently.

3.3 VKontakte SNS

Today's language learners have become avid users of digital technologies and means, such as mobile and computer applications and devices. Taking this factor into our consideration, we have planned to use the platform of this SNS as an online library of e-books and mobile applications for our students. We have created a special page on this SNS and uploaded all the sources on it with particular applications. In other words, after students have learnt theoretical rules and information, there has been the availability of practicing those rules via special mobile applications.

3.4 Telegram Messenger

Working cooperatively in teaching and learning foreign languages enables a teacher and learners to achieve their goals quickly and efficiently. As a consequence of this, the platform of Telegram messenger has brought very many benefits into our research process. We have implemented this platform into practice following our two main objectives:

- a) As a platform to distribute all sources comfortably – we have created both special groups and channels on the platform for the participants of our

investigation which has assisted us to work with them comfortably during the whole process.

- b) As a platform to work cooperatively – we have presented tasks on the platform and set deadlines, other details innovatively for the students and received their tasks there distantly.

While conducting online lessons on the platform of the messenger, we have tried to provide the students with feedback, advice, and support online making them feel convenient and interested in learning the target language and fostering their skills. Moreover, there have been discussions and questionnaires in the target language on the platform in order to improve students' language skills and support them.

3.5. Google Plus SNS

After learning something new, it is important and beneficial for a person to check his or her knowledge on newly studied information to be aware of his or her strong and weak sides. Taking this considerably significant factor into account, we have applied this platform into practice to check our students' results and figure out our progress in practice, in fact. What is more, we have discussed possible functions and features of this SNS and selected most effective ones to achieve our goal. The methods for this platform include the following ways:

- a) A platform to test the students' language skills – we have used Google Forms to make this objective happen. At first, we have made special tests for our students on language skills separately. Then, at the end of each lesson or after classes, the students have been checked innovatively. While

doing this, we have paid our attention to the quality and content of the sources and tasks as well.

- b) A platform to receive the students' feedback and suggestions – again we have used Google Forms so as to make this plan work. After each lesson or weekly, the feedback forms have been sent to the students in order to find out their opinions and suggestions for our lessons because it was important for us to resolve any problem wherever it occurred so that results of our research would be successful as we expected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While obtaining the results of our investigation, we have focused on the practical outcomes of implementing the innovative means into practice in order to highlight their benefits in increasing the quality and content factors of teaching English at higher education based on both reasonable theoretical and practical basis in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. Furthermore, while analysing the results of our research, we have also paid our attention on the students' feedback on using these means in learning foreign languages distantly and innovatively. Accordingly, the analysis and results of our investigation are presented by taking the above-mentioned factors into account step by step in the following:

4.1 YouTube SNS

According to the obtained results, the students have supported the chance of receiving video lessons in both two forms because those two forms of video lessons have assisted them to work on themselves

independently and comfortably. In other words, being provided with video versions of the lessons which are taught at higher education enables them to make progress remarkably by following everything continuously. In addition to that, the participants have approved of the function of sharing sources and tasks below video lessons because it has been much more convenient for them to practice what they learn immediately after having watched video lessons and studied other further sources as well.

4.2 Instagram SNS

The results on this platform have also been satisfactory as well because of the students' positive feedback. According to them, they have mentioned that being informed of the contents of each lesson beforehand has enabled them to be ready for each lesson psychologically being more and more interested in learning English, in fact. Furthermore, the participants have supported the method of being informed of the secrets and tips of fostering language skills in both visual and brief forms. Also, they have approved of the feature of receiving the lecture materials in visual versions on the platform of the SNS after each lecture.

4.3 VKontakte SNS

On this platform, the students have reinforced the availability of an online library of e-books and appropriate mobile applications innovatively. This factor can be proved in such a way that it has been beneficial for the participants to be able to find all sources on the same platform which has enabled them to study everything continuously. After that, the participants have separately highlighted the

function of sharing special mobile applications on the platform in line with study materials has created a comfortable environment in which they have been able to practice what they learn automatically in an innovative way.

4.4 Telegram Messenger

As we have expected this to happen, the participants have mentioned the main two features as their most favourite ones in their feedback. Firstly, they have highlighted the feature of special groups and channels on the platform with dissimilar sources from the other platforms on the same means. Secondly, they have mentioned the atmosphere of learning English on the platform one of the best features of this innovative means in the process, especially, discussing different problems in the virtual groups, receiving feedback and advice from a teacher on the platform innovatively, and so on. Moreover, they have also illustrated the feature of doing tests, questionnaires to check their progress and obtain their results on the platform.

4.5 Google Plus SNS

As the progressive development of TFLM is bringing a number of advancements into the process currently, implementing this platform into practice has been successful according to the results of the method and feedback of the participants. First of all, we should mention that the participants have shown the feature of giving feedback and suggestions as one of their most favourite ones on this platform because the learning atmosphere has got developed more and more as they have mentioned in their feedback which has motivated and involved them to learn English in a more interesting and innovative way. Besides that, they have outlined their positive

feedback about the functions of testing language skills on the platform. It should be mentioned as well that the procedures of testing, assessing and receiving feedback have been held online to meet the requirements of modern education in practice.

CONCLUSION

Taking all the main factors which are mentioned above into consideration, the process of updating and consolidating the system of teaching foreign languages is dynamic which includes changes and improvements all the time. Following that, we can summarize that the approach of blended learning serves to unite the two processes of getting higher education both online and offline successfully for both teachers and students by working co-operatively on fostering their linguistic skills under the control of their teachers continuously. For instance, if we take the process of testing language learners as an example, we can state that the system is being changed from a paper-based form to a computer or internet-based one, and this condition can be noticed not only at the international testing systems, such as the IELTS or TOEFL. Consequently, we as specialists of TFLM should draw our attention to the rapidly changing forms of methods, techniques, means, and approaches of the today's TFLM because learners and their needs, abilities are also getting developed day by day which are totally connected with modern innovative technologies. Furthermore, the findings of this study clearly show that implementing modern innovative technologies right enables both a teacher and learners to achieve their aims in the process in the guaranteed condition in which the only most crucial task is to be able to find a key to create a convenient

atmosphere in a classroom. As we have analysed basic methods of implementing SNS and messengers as means of modern innovative means in increasing the quality and content of the system of teaching English at higher education, our further research will focus on involving students of higher education in more practical tasks and activities on the platforms of SNS and messengers by developing their self-confident and self-assessment skills in learning foreign languages based on the practices of the world education system.

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