Presentation in English language teaching in the context of higher education digitalization

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Abstract. The paper is devoted to one of the main multifunctional elements of any foreign language training course – multimedia presentation. The authors describe basic requirements to a presentation, its aims and advantages, consider different types of presentation tasks. Special attention is paid to the analysis of using presentations in their practical experience and feedback from students. The study allowed to examine students’ attitude to presentations considering 5 aspects such as the choice of presentation topics, students’ willingness to do this task, their self-assessment, the level of PC skills, literacy and speech competences. The questionnaire was used to analyze effectiveness of this task in different periods of time (2008-2010, 2018-2020), to prove the influence of computerization of higher education on students’ scientific and academic work, to identify the main difficulties for students in creating presentations and offer possible ways of overcoming them. The intensive use of information technologies contributes to the formation of an intellectually developed creative personality, well-oriented in the information space, ready for self-development and application of this knowledge in their future professional activities.

1. Introduction
Russia's accession to the Bologna process implies a transition to a two-level system of higher education, the use of innovative teaching methods and techniques, the intensification of the learning process, and the formation of students' speech, information and ICT competences that ensure the success of professional activities of graduates. In other words, modern higher education is aimed at developing the professional orientation of students' educational activities; development of creative attitude to educational activities, creative abilities of students; formation of skills for creative solutions to professional problems; formation of motivational needs to acquire new knowledge; creation and implementation of innovative technologies [1].

Computerization of modern education has two content guidelines: providing the availability of education, i.e. increasing the number of students of any age, and changing the quality of education by expanding the use of distributed information resources in training, increasing the share of independent work in the educational process. Digital education is one of the fastest growing segments of the global education market: it is supported by the digitalization of foreign language learning, test preparation, the growing demand for online Tutors, and the development of the corporate online learning market.

Since technology has become the main part of everyday life for many people, and the Internet is widely accessible all around the world, teachers should endeavor to develop PC skills of their students regardless of the subject matter they teach. Especially it considers foreign language teaching. The
sanitary and epidemiological situation in the modern world and the need to limit social contacts also make certain adjustments to educational activities, testing information technologies in practice.

There are various methods and forms of active and interactive learning in the scientific literature. This paper is devoted to one of the most effective multifunctional training tools – multimedia presentation. The choice of this topic is dictated by 15-year experience in the successful practical use of this educational resource by the authors of the paper, analysis of its use and feedback from students based on a questionnaire.

2. Methods

2.1. Definition of a presentation. Its aims and advantages

A PowerPoint presentation is creatively reworked information on a particular topic which is adapted to specific group of students. The presentation allows you to demonstrate linguistic and non-linguistic visibility. In teaching any foreign language, presentations may differ in speech aspects (for example, lexical and grammar), types of speech activity (for example, learning to read and write), types of supports (for example, illustrative) [2].

Most researchers [3, 4, 5, 6] note that using of PowerPoint presentations in the educational process contributes to impact on several types of memory, development of intellectual person’s functions (analysis, synthesis, abstraction, comparison, generalization), ensuring the effectiveness of perception and memorization of new material, helps increase motivation, activation of attention, creative processing of the learned material, a combination of class and extracurricular independent work of students, effective organization of training in accordance with the interests and needs of students, the formation of computer competence.

2.2. Basic stages of working on the presentation and requirements to it

The main stages of working on the presentation are: choosing a topic; preparation of a work plan (collection, analysis, and classification of information, etc.); registration in Microsoft Office PowerPoint; presentation; answers to questions.

Before working on a presentation, students should be familiar with its basic requirements: a number of slides (at least 7); structure: title page (title of the presentation, full name of the author, place of study), content (presence of titles, use of short sentences on slides); conclusion (results, conclusion, list of references), optimal quantity and correspondence of the illustrative material to the content, colour compatibility; oral presentation must complement the content of the presentation. While using such educational means as presentation, the lecturer should appeal not only to the memory but to the students’ mind and their ability to analyze what they are doing and what for. Creating a presentation requires from students to conduct research, which in its turn helps develop their horizons, background knowledge, and prepares them for future independent professional activity.

3. Experiments and results

3.1. Experimental groups

The survey participants were 18-20-year-old technical students of Reshetnev Siberian State University of Science and Technology who were learning English at university for two years but in different periods of time (2008–2010) and (2018–2020). All of them had basic PC skills. The majority of them were Russian students (98%), about 2% were Tadjik students. The authors didn’t consider students’ age, sex and their language proficiency.

This study was based on students’ evaluating a multimedia presentation as an interactive task while learning the English language at the university. The questionnaire was used to compare the amount and analyze effectiveness of this task in different periods of time, to prove the influence of computerization of higher education on students’ work, to identify the main difficulties for students in creating
presentations and offer possible ways of overcoming them. The data collecting took place at the end of the second academic year of each tested period.

3.2. The aims of the experiments

A multimedia presentation as one of the active methods of foreign language teaching at higher school has been and is being applied at Reshetnev Siberian State University of Science and Technology in English class. The authors examined students’ attitude to a presentation as a home task considering 5 aspects such as the choice of presentation topics, their willingness to do this task, their self-assessment of the presentations done, their level of PC skills being used in this kind of work, their literacy and speech competence.

Based on years of experience, the authors can say that this type of work improves students’ independent work skills, their creative thinking, ability to analyze the received information. It is a good form of control of previously learned lexical and grammar material. A presentation is a visual help for students’ monologue making; it facilitates their speech activity, reveals creative potential of students even with a low level of language proficiency.

Students were offered four groups of presentation topics to choose: 1) daily activity topics (for example, “My family tree”, “My home town”, “My usual day”, “The happiest moments in my life”, “The university of my dream”); 2) scientific and popular topics (for example, “Great Russian scientists”, “Famous foreign scientists”, “The world around us”, “My 7 wonders”); 3) professionally-oriented topics (for example, “An essential chemical element”, “National parks and gardens”, “Ecological problems destroying the world”); 4) English-speaking countries study topics (for example, “The national symbols and traditions of England”, “The national holidays of the USA” “A trip around the world”).

Figure 1 presents students’ choice of topics in the period of learning English from 2008 to 2010. Figure 2 presents students’ choice of topics in the period of learning English from 2018 to 2020.

As shown in figure 1, 45% of the participants preferred daily activity presentation topics to other groups of topics. On the other hand, only 20% of students in 2018 and 2020 (see figure 2) have chosen this group of topics. Obtained qualitative data allowed us to make following conclusions. Students made presentations connected with their daily activities ten years ago more often than nowadays. Such kinds of presentations are easier to understand and to perform; there is no need to search some extra information in the Internet; students’ presentations are based on their personal experience. Modern students (see figure 2) speak about their families or native towns unwillingly. They prefer presentation
topics which make them think, analyze, create. Scientific and popular topics connected with modern technological and scientific achievements are more interesting for them. These students are interested in their future profession; they use their main subject knowledge in English practice with great pleasure in spite of the fact that professionally-oriented topics contain hard professional vocabulary.

A number of students’ presentations has grown recently. Ten years ago, this kind of task was considered as an extra task only for students with good language proficiency. Nowadays the skills and abilities for creating a presentation are defined in the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education as one of the professional competences every highly qualified specialist should have.

3.3. The results of the experiments

The obtained qualitative data allow us to show students’ attitude to presentation tasks in figure 3.

![Figure 3. Students’ attitude to presentation tasks.](image)

As you can see from the diagram, the majority of students, regardless of the period of time, were afraid of doing that task, though at the end of their work almost all of them were pleased with the presentations they had done. The authors suppose that the reason of it is in the fact that work on a presentation is a complex process, which requires from a student not only certain skills and abilities, but patience, creativity and besides, a lot of hours of hard work. The lack of desire to do these kinds of tasks can be explained by students’ fear of speaking in public, too.

The results obtained through the questionnaire show that students studying in the period of 2018 – 2020, were more confident and advanced in their PC skills. They used special effects, extra computer programs to make their presentations more spectacular, creative and visual. In comparison, presentation works of students (2008 – 2010) contained mostly their own photos.

As for literacy and speech competences, the students of both compared periods faced difficulties not only in highlighting the main ideas in their presentations, but also in planning of their reports. Moreover, most of them tried to put the whole text of their report on slides.

In the years of 2008 and 2010, a presentation was a form of communicative skills training. In spring 2020, lecturers had to shift communication skills training from university classrooms to different Internet platforms so that to develop these skills in the current pandemic situation. The modernization and digitization of higher education let lecturers apply such Internet platforms as Zoom, Skype, BigBlueButton, messengers Viber and WhatsApp in order to have opportunity to teach students at a distance, communicate with them, let students show their works to the groupmates, ask questions and discuss various topics. A presentation under these circumstances is a multifunctional effective form of students’ independent work. Moreover, this educational resource promotes students’ self-organization, creativity and originality.
4. Discussions
To sum up, according to the results presented in figure 3, working hours spent on creating a presentation, students’ laziness, their inability to use modern technologies, the lack of logic and literacy in a presentation, students’ inability to highlight the main ideas are the main students’ difficulties they face working on presentation. They can’t systematize, generalize, shorten information, use right speech and language means too. The task of a lecturer is to help students master the set of phrases necessary for a presentation, report the content of a presentation logically and correctly, use keywords instead of the whole text.

A presentation as one of the interactive teaching methods increases the effectiveness of teaching, improves the educational process, consolidates and activates all the skills and abilities developed by the student in the process of foreign language learning. A presentation as a form of students’ independent work in English class is the most effective among second-year students due to their higher level of memory development, creative thinking, skills and abilities of foreign language speaking, the ability to self-education and self-control.

5. Conclusions
Thus, the intensification of the learning process contributes to the use of active techniques and teaching methods based on the principle of direct participation of students in the educational process, encouraging students to speak English as much as possible. Providing the students with new opportunities to practice speaking English will help them learn and improve more rapidly. These activities also help students improve their computer literacy, which is equally important these days. Currently, independent work is becoming increasingly important, which contributes to the more active use of information technologies in foreign language learning. The intensive use of information technologies contributes to the formation of an intellectually developed creative personality, well-oriented in the information space, ready for self-development and application of this knowledge in their future professional activities. However, we must remember that technology will never take the place of a teacher. But technology, used in the correct place and at the correct time, can enhance the educational process greatly. Moreover, the use of computer technologies in the classroom provides individualization of the learning process, reveals the creative reserves of students’ personality, develops the desire for constant intellectual growth, expands the didactic capabilities of lecturers, and optimizes educational process.

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