V. B. Balabanov

lecturer of the Department of social and humanitarian disciplines
of the Mogilev Institute of the Ministry of internal affairs

ON THE ISSUE OF CREATING E-LEARNING TOOLS FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER SCHOOLS

К ВОПРОСУ О СОЗДАНИИ ЭЛЕКТРОННЫХ СРЕДСТВ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ В УЧРЕЖДЕНИЯХ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

Annotation. *The article deals with current issues concerning the features of creating electronic means of teaching foreign languages and their use in the educational process of higher education institutions. The strengths and weaknesses of different types of e-learning tools are determined. The article analyzes the quality of e-learning tools and their impact on the motivation of students and the effectiveness of learning language material.*

Keywords: *electronic textbook, foreign language teaching, e-learning tools, motivation in learning foreign languages.*

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются актуальные вопросы касательно особенностей создания электронных средств обучения иностранным языкам и их использования в учебном процессе учреждений высшего образования. Определяются сильные и слабые стороны разных типов электронных образовательных изданий. Анализируется вопрос качества электронных средств обучения и степень их влияния на мотивацию студентов и эффективность усвоения учебного материала.*

Ключевые слова: *электронный учебник, обучение иностранным языкам, электронные средства обучения, мотивация в изучении иностранных языков.*

Modern processes of intensive informatization require from the educational system serious changes both in terms of curriculum revision and in terms of transition to digital sources of educational and methodical information. In this regard, there is a clear tendency to promptly make the necessary changes to the existing requirements for the development and publication of electronic educational materials (e-learning tools), but the fulfillment of these requirements, unfortunately, often leads to an increase in the number of electronic publications without an explicit emphasis on quality. On the one hand, a positive factor is the activation of the methodical research

of teachers, and on the other hand is an unreasonable increase in the number of small electronic tutorials exclusively for the internal needs of a particular faculty without the obvious purpose of creating a series of publications with a single teaching method. In other words, the study of different topics within the limits of mastering a discipline can take place with the use of several small electronic tutorials, not connected to each other by a logical chain of a unified methodology, or even by the homogeneity of style and structure. Such a situation does not contribute to the efficiency of foreign language teaching, since the lack of a unified methodology and the excessive abundance of new-fashioned electronic publications provoke a kind of methodological chaos.

This text is devoted to the general issues of creating e-learning tools in foreign languages with the sole purpose of increasing the efficiency of mastering foreign language material. To understand this problem, it is necessary to determine what an e-learning tools in a foreign language should be. In the chain of types of electronic educational publications, there are two extreme links:

1) publications based on traditional text tasks in the form of an electronic document with a consistent presentation of educational material. Such electronic manuals and textbooks are more like traditional printed publications, but presented in electronic form for use in modern electronic gadgets;

2) publications, which are a full-fledged e-learning application, including text and multimedia information, arranged in a logical sequence, but using hypertext links to navigate through the vast material. Such publications can combine the advantages of traditional textbooks, but with the widest possibilities of interactive tasks with automatic verification of the result and even with the function of remote communication with the teacher.

It is quite logical to assume that for objective reasons electronic training materials developed by foreign language teachers on their own most often have a simplified technical implementation. The process of creating an electronic tool for teaching foreign languages from an idea to a finished product seems to be very laborious. It is rarely possible for a single author, even if it is a simple text version without elements of interactivity. If the task is to create a technically sophisticated electronic tool with all kinds of interactive tasks and integrated multimedia elements, its implementation is entrusted to a team of authors, including specialists in the field of teaching methods, linguistics and programming.

Let's consider another variant of classification of electronic educational foreign language textbooks based on the criterion of information availability. In particular, e-learning tools can be divided into three groups: online, offline and combined ones. We are talking about organizing the structure of an electronic

textbook in a form that needs or does not need access to a computer network to obtain the necessary educational information or to perform interactive tasks remotely. Offline electronic textbooks are created as a computer program or electronic document that include all the necessary theoretical and practical educational material, and distributed electronically by copying to a separate personal computer (or other device) via optical disks or flash drives.

As you can imagine, in order to work with online electronic learning tools you must have access to a global or local computer network. In the case of online educational publications, the didactic material is stored on the server of the educational institution, and students have access to it over the network.

Combined e-learning tools combine both of the above technologies. For example, any electronic textbook has both static material (theoretical bases, educational texts, classic post-text exercises) and dynamic information that is regularly subject to changes and updates (test tasks, interactive exercises, databases of users and the results of their educational activities). Combined e-learning tools are a reasonable combination of static and dynamic learning information, providing students with the ability to work independently on educational texts, self-assessment using interactive tasks (with automatic verification of the result), as well as remote testing with saving the result on the server, sending completed tasks over the network for review by the teacher, and so on.

Practical experience with electronic textbooks allows us to draw conclusions that the main drawback of offline versions is the lack of feedback from the student, the inability to organize distance learning, as well as the lack of technical ability to simultaneously update information and promptly make changes to tasks and tests. The weak side of online e-learning tools is the complete technical dependence of users on the availability and speed of access to the global or local network: if the network connection is lost, the student cannot access the educational materials.

Electronic textbooks on the discipline "Foreign language" appeared quite a long time ago, and the first of them were mainly presented in the form of a commercial offline training software aimed at a relatively narrow audience due to the lack of popularity of personal computers at that time. Intensive processes of informatization contributed to the widespread use of personal computing devices, especially portable ones, which contributed to the popularization of electronic learning tools. Nowadays, the number of electronic teaching tools in foreign languages is constantly growing, created by the teachers themselves to meet the internal educational needs of faculties and institutions of higher education.

One of the most popular software platforms for creating e-learning publications is the open source software package learning platform "Moodle".

The list of features of this freely distributed system is really impressive. Probably, therefore many higher education institutions choose this system to host their e-learning resources. This choice is justified when it is necessary to provide didactic materials for students of extramural and full-time education, the most popular option may be the ability to remotely perform tests for intermediate knowledge evaluation. But, as noted above, online e-learning tools depend on technical issues related to the availability of network connectivity, connection speed, lack of server failures, etc. In addition, the objectivity of the results of remote performing of electronic tests is in ambiguo. We should not forget about the relatively high cost of access to the global network for users. In connection with the above, when compiling e-learning tools, the most optimal choice is in favor of combined educational resources that allow students to work with didactic materials offline, and, if necessary, and if there is a connection to a computer network, remotely perform interactive tasks with the results saved on the server. Such functionality can be provided by a e-learning tool that resembles an Internet site in form and content, but with local storage of information on the user's hard or removable drive and with hyperlinks to network resources.

As noted above, the content of an e-learning tool should include comprehensive theoretical and practical material within the curriculum. In addition, it is necessary to provide such types of tasks that contribute to the development of students' creative approach to learning a foreign language, stimulating active cognitive activity. This means that when working with an electronic textbook, the student will be interested in additional work with dictionaries, reference books, encyclopedias, as well as network resources to get more detailed information on the topic being studied. Such cognitive activities will help to enrich the vocabulary and expand the possibilities of its use in practice. In addition, creative tasks can encourage students to expand their circle of communication by establishing contacts with native speakers, for example, for the purpose of conducting an opinion poll on a given question or for sharing experience in solving a given task.

The main constructive conditions for the effective use of electronic means of teaching a foreign language is a high motivation of students. Only the fulfillment of this condition can be the key to the successful organization of the educational process, both during classroom classes, and when implementing strategies for self-education (individual study), for example, by extramural or distance learning. By the way, individual study in the framework of learning a foreign language should be controlled. For this purpose, the electronic textbooks should provide a function of feedback between the student and the teacher. This function can be implemented either as a link to the teacher's contact information

(preferably with the possibility of visual remote communication), or as an integrated communication service in the e-learning tool. In combination with interactive network tasks with saving the results on the server for subsequent control, visual communication with the teacher will create the effect of virtual presence of the teacher in the student's cognitive activity. Thanks to this form of organization of consulting support by the teacher, students will be further motivated by the inevitability of regular control.

In general, summarizing the above, we note that the introduction of electronic means of teaching foreign languages is an inevitable process in the context of globalization and informatization of the world community, freedom of movement and accessibility of remote international cooperation. In this regard, it is necessary to intensify work on the creation of e-learning tools and communication services so that the study of foreign languages is an integral part of the training of modern highly qualified specialists in various spheres.

List of main sources

1. Avdeev, A. A. The use of mobile interaction technologies for teaching and learning English in a non-language university [Electronic resource] // Bulletin Social-Economic and Humanitarian Research. — 2018. — № 2. — Mode of access: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/the-use-of-mobile-interaction-technologies-for-teaching-and-learning-english-in-a-non-language-university. — Date of access: 18.04.2020.

2. Balabanov, V. B. The usage of computer technologies in the vocationally oriented foreign language teaching for professional communication [Электронный ресурс] / В. Б. Балабанов // Психология и коммуникация в правовой системе : сб. ст. / М-во внутр. дел Респ. Беларусь, учреждение образования «Могилевский институт Министерства внутренних дел Республики Беларусь» ; редкол.: С. В. Венидиктов (отв. ред.) [и др.]. — Могилев : Могилев. институт МВД, 2016. — 1 электрон. опт. диск (CD-R). — Загл. с экрана.

3. Balabanov, V. B. On the issue of creating electronic means of teaching foreign languages [Электронный ресурс] / В. Б. Балабанов, А. В. Перунова // Медиасфера и медиаобразование: специфика взаимодействия в современном социокультурном пространстве : сб. ст. / М-во внутр. дел Респ. Беларусь, учреждение образования «Могилевский институт Министерства внутренних дел Республики Беларусь» ; редкол.: С. В. Венидиктов (отв. ред.) [и др.]. — Могилев : Могилев. институт МВД Респ. Беларусь, 2017. — 1 электрон. опт. диск (CD-R).

4. Notina, E. A. Distance technologies in language teaching [Electronic resource] // Conference proceedings. ICT for language learning. 10th edition. Mode of access: https://books.google.by/books?id=OJpaDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PA147&ots=iRxH2CGZy0&dq=the%20didactic%20material%20is%20stored%20on%20the%20server%20of%20the%20educational%20institution&hl=ru&pg=PA147#v=onepage&q&f=false. — Date of access: 10.05.2020.