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USE OF TED-CONFERENCES ELEMENTS AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract

The article deals with the possibilities of using open educational resources such as TED conferences as a rich source of authentic video information from the point of view of their relevance to teaching English students of non-linguistic universities. The authors see the creation of conditions for practical mastering the language, the development of such teaching methods that would allow each student to show their activity and creativity; enhancement of students' cognitive activity. The diverse topics of the lectures arouse students' keen interest, the desire to evaluate the information received and to discuss it. This leads to increased motivation to learn English. The authors consider the use of TED conference materials in the classroom as part of the CLIL methodology - an integrated subject-language learning, in which the language is considered to be a tool of cognition, a means of communication and an object of study. In addition to increasing motivation, these authentic materials enable to satisfy the interests of students, to expand the vocabulary, reflecting various spheres of human activity, to form skills of listening, speaking and translation. Particular attention is paid to the method of facilitation, which allows to effectively organizing a group discussion of a video lecture. The authors suggest using several basic techniques for organizing group discussion of the information, such as "future search", "work out", "brainstorming", and "polarization of opinions". At the same time, the method of structuring the work of the group is implemented.

Keywords: TED conference, authenticity, discussion, on-line.

1. Introduction

The content of education at the present stage of the society development is not the least connected with the innovation processes in the organization of teaching foreign languages, which makes this process interesting, causes an emotional response from students, facilitates motivation, the desire to learn something new and unexplored.

There is no doubt that the priority area of modern higher education evolution is the humanistic orientation of teaching process, in which the development of every student's potential comes to the forefront. It involves taking into account the needs and interests of students and implements a differentiated approach to teaching.

Today, the student, his personality and unique inner world are in the center of attention. Therefore, the main goal of a modern teacher is to choose methods and forms of organization of students' educational activities that would correspond to the goal of their personal development.

Since this article deals with students of higher educational institutions, it should be noted that the study of any science always follows a certain system, where all laws, formulas and rules are interrelated. As scientific knowledge is being mastered, individual inner experience is being restructured and organized in accordance with the system of objective relationships that are inherent in a particular science, where each element or concept is naturally associated with others (Yasyukova & Belavina, 2017). The scientific knowledge obtained as a child is organized into conceptual structures and gradually develops into a general conceptual principle of structuring information, i.e. conceptual thinking is formed.

2. Problem Statement

Currently the issue of the application of new information technologies in higher educational institutions has been frequently raised. This is not only new technical means, the use of the Internet, but also new forms and methods of teaching, a new approach to the teaching process.

The main goal of teaching foreign languages is to form and develop a communicative culture of students, to teach practical methods of mastering a foreign language. In this regard, the task of the teacher is to:

• create conditions for practical language acquisition;

• choose such teaching methods that would allow each student to show his/her activity and creativity;

• intensify the cognitive activity of students in the process of learning foreign languages.

Such modern pedagogical technologies as collaborative learning, project method, the use of new information technologies and on-line resources, help to realize a student-centered approach to teaching, to provide for individualization and differentiation of teaching, taking into account the abilities and training status of each student.

3. Research Questions

In this connection, it is worth mentioning the currently popular TED conferences, which have been held annually since 1984 in Monterey (California, USA), and since 2009 in Long Beach (California,

USA). These conferences were organized by Richard Saul Wurman and Harry Marx, and Chris Anderson became their curator.

The main objective of such conferences, which are called TED (technology, entertainment, design), is the spreading of unique ideas (the motto of regular conferences is «ideas worth spreading»). The topics of the lectures are diverse: they touch upon issues of science, technology, entertainment, art, design, politics, culture, business, problems of the society development. The speakers at the conferences were famous scientists, presidents, Nobel laureates, the founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales. The mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot demonstrated the practical application of the theory of fractals, which he developed, Marvin Minsky, an expert in artificial intelligence, presented his model of the mind.

Each lecture is called TED Talk. Lectures are available on the conference website www.TED.com. Those interested have access to both official and unofficial applications that allow them to watch videos of presentations (including those with Russian subtitles), to listen to TED Internet radio, etc. At the end of 2013, as part of the TED Open Translation Project, the official application was translated into different languages (in subtitle format). As part of this project, more than 8,000 volunteers translate speeches into dozens of languages. The project allows you to make any presentation of the material available to residents of all countries of the world. TED-style presentations have become a very popular format, resulting in national TED conferences.

Anyone can become a TED conference participant: listen to and then discuss the problem of interest with his or her classmates or colleagues when it comes to a higher education institution.

4. Purpose of the Study

TED lectures have always attracted young people, so the format of video lectures can also be used to spread general educational knowledge. This is especially true for higher education institutions. In addition, video lectures are a good aid for teachers in the educational process, forming a full-fledged conceptual thinking (an essential part of academic intelligence), which is activated while mastering a science and is a condition for an adequate understanding of any work and life situation. It is also necessary for human adaptation and survival in the world, where there are objective laws.

The undoubted advantage of TED conferences is the fact that they are short (about 18 minutes), and the lecturers speak a simple and understandable language, explain many interesting facts that students may not have paid attention in everyday life or in the process of academic training.

TED conferences have several advantages over regular classes:

• teach public speaking;

• provide an opportunity to practice listening to native speakers;

• provide an opportunity to get a lot of ideas on topics of interest;

• increase motivation.

There are no divisions into groups - all are included in the general atmosphere of the emotional acquisition of knowledge and experience.

The purpose of the study is to prove how useful is the application of the described format for students and teachers.

In this regard, when drawing up a lesson plan and including such lectures in the curriculum at the university, the following elements can be incorporated into the structure of TED conferences:

- a keynote presentation which touches upon the topic of the lesson or some general education topicthat is interesting for the students of the study group. Such a presentation may consist of a lecture by a leading scientist or one / two students of a group specializing / interested in a particular subject;

- TED Talk; this type of TED conference can be a prototype of the main component for students' joint reports / speeches on the main topic using drawings, models, layouts, etc. Activity in the TED Talk format includes the discussion of the topic, which was offered by the teacher or chosen by the students on their own and may involve one or several reports. Students carefully listen to the reports, make notes that they need for their future work. Such work consists of short presentations of the students discussing the submitted projects, all pros and cons are considered, the most interesting projects are selected, the winners are identified;

- the «TED Open Translation Project» may include simultaneous and written translations, since speeches are held in a foreign language. Simultaneous translation simulates the situation of a TED conference with participants who do not speak English. In this case, students gain primary knowledge of simultaneous translation, which are then included in the training material on this topic. Such classes should be conducted primarily in groups of upper intermediate or advanced levels. Written translations are sent to all members of the group, the students themselves can correct them. Translations are discussed in class. Each of the students presents their point of view on the «difficult matters to translate»;

- creation of subtitles, including translation, which was discussed in the classroom. During its discussion, the most successful option is chosen, which forms the basis of the created video.

The modern educational standard stipulates the use of authentic materials, i.e. created by native speakers. Such an authentic material can be a TED videoconference, which not only helps to develop listening skills, but can also be considered as part of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method - one of the most interesting and widely used approaches to teaching a foreign (English) language. It should be noted that the methodology developed initially for the system of secondary general education has now been successfully applied in the system of higher education (Integration of Content and Language in Higher Education, ICLHE) (Almazova, Baranova, & Khalyapina, 2017).

The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh (CLIL: An interview with Professor David Marsh, 2009) in 1994, although this method has been known for a long time. According to the author, this methodology implies "subject-language integrated learning", which refers to any educational context focused on two subjects, i.e. this refers to a process that is focused both on mastering the subject (content) and the language (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010).

CLIL is conventionally divided into hard CLIL and soft CLIL. Hard CLIL means that any subject can be studied in English. In the course of such classes, geography, literature, biology, physics, mathematics, social studies, history, computer science, or even sports games are studied through a foreign language. English teachers use soft CLIL when they teach a foreign language using topics and materials from other subjects. Typically, such training takes place, based on the main 4 «C»: content, communication, cognition and culture (informative, communicative, cognitive and cultural components).

All these components are continuously linked with each other. Such interdisciplinary learning is very important in the modern educational space.

According to Coyle (2015a, 2015b), in this methodological approach, the informative component is a backbone, that is, determining the subject of development, goals, objectives and topics - a set of theoretical knowledge and skills that allow you to make correct statements in the framework of the studied range of problems. The process of communication, according to the author, determines the special status of a foreign language, which in the framework of integrated learning is expressed in the form of a triad (Coyle et al., 2010):

• language as a tool of cognition (language of learning);

• language as a means of communication (language for learning);

• language as a subject of study (language through learning).

At the same time, the student's language training is focused on the «growth» of the lexical and grammatical component. According to Oliver Meyer and Teresa Ting, the cognitive component of CLIL implies the creation of an effective learning environment through which learners develop cognitive abilities. The development of critical thinking skills is carried out from lower-order thinking skills (knowledge, understanding) to higher-order skills — analysis, synthesis, and assessment (Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck, & Ting, 2015; Ting, 2011; Ting, Grandinetti, & Langelotti, 2016).

The work with TED-conference can be organized in the framework of blended learning. The concept of blended learning was proposed in 1999, but a clear definition of the term was given in 2006 in the book "The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs" by Bonk and Graham (2005), who clarified that blended learning involves the process of education using a computer and "face to face." In the modern sense, blended learning is the integration of methods and forms of distance and general education, aimed at developing students' internal motivation and their ability to self-education, taking into account increasing the speed of learning the material (Chirkova & Zorina, 2017). Such a mixture makes this model of learning more flexible and adapted to the constantly changing tasks of society in the field of education. The teacher can invite students to view the TED video conference prior to the class or record themselves in this format and put it on the Internet.

5. Research Methods

When discussing the reports, the teacher uses the method of interpretation, which is a set of techniques for analyzing the presented material, revealing their meaning (content) for practical implementation.

In this case, the teacher acts as a facilitator, organizing a group work process aimed at clarifying and achieving the goals set by the group.

Facilitation (from the English facilitate - «help, guide, aid») - at the same time is a process, a group of skills and a set of tools that allow you to effectively organize a group discussion. According to Mann (2014), the facilitator should be able to:

• direct the discussion in the right direction;

• select truly successful solutions;

• take the risk, go out yourself and take facilitation participants out of the comfort zone;

• work with all sorts of groups;

• navigate in all formats of conversations;

• combine different tools and equipment in the process of working with the group;

• respond quickly to changes in the situation, difficulties of the participants - and, accordingly, quickly overcome them;

• resist stress;

• open up to people, motivate them for personal change.

The method of facilitation leads to increasing the effectiveness of group work, involvement and interest of participants, and revealing their potential. In order to come to a decision on the proposed subject of the report, the process of discussion and group work must be managed and coordinated by the actions of the participants of the TED conference.

There are many facilitation tools, but there are several basic techniques (Killermann & Bolger, 2016):

• Future Search. The technology is used when different groups need a common basis for cooperation and the creation of a future common project.

• Work Out. The method is used to develop innovative ways of interacting, overcoming the standard of thinking, improving processes and the ability to achieve the desired results.

• Brainstorming. The method is used when it is necessary to summarize the available information and find new, fresh ideas.

• Polarization of opinion. The method is applied when it is necessary to reduce the negative attitude to the topic that will be discussed further; it is necessary to determine the pessimistic and optimistic forecast of the development of the situation.

The method of structuring the work of the group is implemented, when the teacher stimulates and directs the process of searching and analyzing the information presented in the speaker's report, supports the actual ideas, suggestions and solutions that are born during the group discussion.

When working with a TED conference, it is important to consider the students' interest in the process of viewing and creating it. Such motivation can be considered as a kind of technology of education - learning with entertainment. A famous researcher of this technology Kobzeva (2012) points out that education is a combination of modern technical and didactic teaching aids. It is known that learning through the game never becomes obsolete, although it is subject to fashion in the choice of tools. However, it should be borne in mind that the game is only one of the components of the technology of education. The specificity of this learning technology is determined by the presence of the following features (Zorina, 2017):

• Focus on enthusiasm: the student's immediate interest is important, which leads to the accumulation of knowledge and the development of new skills.

• Emphasis on entertainment: entertainment is the main motive that leads to pleasure, at the same time forming a strong interest in the learning process, removing the psychological burden.

• Game approach: the versatility of the game allows you to make the learning process effective, regardless of the age and level of training of students.

• Emphasis on modernity: using the current capabilities of modern technologies and diverse pedagogical tools, students are completely involved in the educational process.

According to an American Methodist De Fossard (2015), the edutainment features:

• Soundness: learning is more successful when learners can see the usefulness of the knowledge they receive.

• Additional training: training is more effective when learners can acquire knowledge on their own.

• Distributed Learning: A distributed learning network that provides broad access to the educational resources of different users, in which all students learn in different ways and at different times. It is important to present the information so that it can be learned.

Such a look at working with a TED conference allows to diversify tasks and develop students' conceptual and critical thinking. The teachers can also follow the assimilation of information, increasing the learning motivation and vocabulary of their students, individualizing the approach and varying the quantitative use of information technology.

It is advisable to talk about another method that can be used during TED-conferences - the method of creating and working with the presentation. It is directly related to the method of structuring work, which was mentioned above, because any presentation of information in a compressed form with drawings, highlighting the main issues and conclusions structures thoughts and is associated with visual thinking, which is activated, affecting the thinking «in general».

The technology (method) of visualization used by students in the preparation of the presentation is aimed at a more complete and active use of their natural capabilities due to the intellectual accessibility of the presentation of the material. When making a presentation, the combination of a visual image, text, oral and written explanation that constitutes a student, uses stereoscopic perception, which actually is amplified many times when using computer capabilities.

The polysensory perception of information that a learner encounters when making a presentation and its perception while being watched by other people not only allows each student to study in the most favorable, organic system for him, but mainly stimulates the development of a representative perception system.

Psychological research confirms that «perception is not the result of a simple point-to-point image transmission from receptors to the brain. When one perceives a picture, a person groups one part of it with other parts, so that the whole picture is perceived as something in a certain way organized» (Arnkhejm, 1994). Similarly, any information that contains visibly is composed in the minds of students from familiar and assimilable elements into a single visual image. As Arnkhejm (1994) correctly noted, "perception and thinking need each other, their functions are complementary: perception without thinking would be useless, thinking without perception would have nothing to think about" (p. 113). It is important that, complementing each other, they would form a new level of thinking - a visual-logical (speculative, according to Luriya (2003). Active perception of sign information requires special organization, elaborate ways of presenting material, which is facilitated by the presentation made for TED conferences.

6. Findings

As part of various types of training using TED conferences, the teacher acts not only as a facilitator, but can also select additional conditions during project development. Thus, during the last TED conference in one of the BA student groups of St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (SPb SUACE), the topic «My idea of a modern house or city» was chosen, the teacher set an additional condition: two colors should be used in the project - yellow and purple, and their application should be justified.

The students presented their projects with drawings, justified the choice of the project and the use of two colors, and then the winner was chosen based on the discussion. The students explained why they liked this or that project. Presentation of the project took place in the «TED Talk» mode.

Another option involves not only students, but also teachers. As part of the scientific work at SPbSUACE, there is a scientific psychological-pedagogical school «CHIR-sreda»(chir-sreda.ru) which is used as a platform for holding TED conferences: at its meetings the exchange of scientific ideas is organized, public lectures on the direction of the scientific school are given including the invitation of well-known specialists, the propaganda of higher education values and the involvement of students, undergraduates and graduate students in the course of attending school meetings are carried out.

Delivering lectures at TED-conferences helps to master the skills of working in public, which turns out to be useful both for teachers and for students at various levels. In addition, it is possible to read TED lectures in different languages with or without subtitles.

7. Conclusion

Organization of the learning process using innovative on-line resources, such as TED conferences, is a means of increasing students' motivation to learn a foreign language. A variety of topics discussed allows the teacher to select the best training material for each situation, taking into account the interests and needs of students. The forms and methods of work described above allow students to broaden their horizons, develop their listening, speaking, and translation skills, as well as communication skills, critical understanding and skills of leading discussions.

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