

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A TECHNOLOGY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

The article reviews the social media as an Internet phenomenon, determines their place and level of popularity in the society, as a result of which the social networks are a resource with perspective pedagogical potential.

The analysis of social media from the point of view of studying a foreign language and the possibility of their usage as a learning medium has been carried out. The most widespread and popular platforms have been considered and, based on their capabilities in teaching all types of speech activities, the "Instagram", "Twitter", and "Facebook" Internet resources have been selected as the subject of the research. The system of tasks of teaching all types of speech activities and showing the advantages of the "Instagram", "Twitter", and "Facebook" platforms has been proposed and briefly reviewed.

Keywords: Social Networks, Foreign languages, Technology, Discipline, Pedagogy, Method.

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INTRODUCTION

At the present stage of development of pedagogical science, more and more diverse and complex methodologies and technologies are used for teaching. They appear, disappear, intertwine, and change. Their presence in the educational system is preconditioned by the fact that with the development of information and computer technologies, with their spread in all areas of life, students have become more and more accustomed to them, and they are no longer surprised by the presence of an interactive whiteboard, or tape recorder, computer, or other audio-visual teaching "aids" at the lesson.

Pedagogical innovations and technologies exist as long as pedagogy itself exists.

However, despite all this, year after year, new pedagogical technologies appear, new approaches in educational practice are identified, the need for education, new teaching models, and flexible educational systems is recognized. Updating the educational system is also aimed at increasing the level of methods of teaching a foreign language as the main means of entry into the global educational community and the main way of communication between the representatives of different nationalities.

Over the course of time, such personalities of pedagogical science as T.L. Gerasimenko, P.V. Sysoev, I.G. Makarevich worked on this topic. At the present stage of the transition of society from industrial to informational, an important aspect of teaching a foreign language is mastering the basic principles of working with modern information and communication technologies.

Nowadays, one of the most widespread manifestations of Internet technologies is social networks.

The topicality of the research is preconditioned by the wide distribution of social networks in the modern world and the practicability of their use as an environment for teaching foreign languages.

The aim of this article is to estimate the use of social networks as an environment for teaching foreign languages.

MAIN MATERIAL

The main aim of teaching a foreign language is the development of communicative competence, which comprises teaching to communicate in a foreign language.

Over the past few years, the number of participants in social networks has grown rapidly and very significantly, and nowadays more than two-thirds of online audiences around the world use certain social networks for their needs. The number of social networks like "Instagram", "Twitter", "Facebook", etc. is increasing as well. With the help of social networks, people pursue a wide variety of aims: keep in touch with friends, look for a job, promote their business, exchange professional opinions, receive educational services.

The "Facebook" and "Instagram" resources are a publicly available social tool and means of interaction for building one's own space. In recent years, the global pedagogical community has been discussing the use of social networks in education. Surely, social networks cannot be the only means of network teaching, but, nevertheless, their educational capabilities are underestimated [1, 5-10].

Nowadays, the Internet space is not only a digital means of information exchange but also a platform for communication between users. Their usage is a perspective direction for improving the quality of education.

These technologies have significant pedagogical potential, which should be understood by the professional community and put into practice [2].

In recent years, in the global pedagogical community, there has been a wide discussion of issues related to the use of social networks as an educational tool.

It should be clarified that social networks cannot be the only means of network teaching, but, nevertheless, their educational capabilities are underestimated.

Social networks can be used in teaching foreign languages, as well as can be an acceptable source for solving the tasks of forming the following skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Social network resources can be used by teachers in teaching English, as children spend a lot of time communicating in social networks.

In order to fully estimate the possibilities of using social media in foreign language teaching, it is also necessary to pay attention to their availability.

Now many social networks are completely open to the outer world, others, in turn, are highly specialized. Some social network services are not aimed at publicity because of their business orientation, thus the access to them is closed.

The issues of using social networks in education have been discussed in the global pedagogical community in recent years. Surely, social networks cannot be the only means of network teaching, but, nevertheless, their educational capabilities are underestimated. So, the methodological capabilities of the "Facebook" service in the development of writing skills were highlighted in the works of P.V. Sysoev, O.V. Pustovalova [3-4].

Social networks carry a lot of useful information that can be used in the educational space. Social networks can be used in teaching foreign languages, as well as can be a good source in forming the following skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

Let us consider the teaching technology as a set of rational methods of scientific organization of labour, ensuring the achievement of the set aim of teaching for the minimum time with the least expenditure of effort and money [1, 11-14].

In order for the social network teaching to be effective, it must meet the characteristics of the teaching technology.

Therefore, it should be, first and foremost, effective, that is, ensure a high level of achievement of the set aim by each student. Also, profitability should be inherent in it, thus, a larger volume of material should be assimilated per unit of time than without using such means with the least expenditure of students' efforts to master the material.

The profitability of foreign language teaching technology lies in the speech of information exchange between the teacher and students via a social network, as well as in levelling the inconvenience of the distance between students, thereby allowing to conduct teaching in any place where there are an Internet connection and the necessary equipment.

In addition, the process of teaching should take place in an atmosphere of cooperation and a positive emotional microclimate, in the absence of overload and fatigue, as well as have high motivation in studying the subject, helping to increase interest to lessons and allowing to reveal the reserve potential of students. In relation to teaching English on the platform of the "Facebook" social network, these characteristics are satisfied through the fact that students are familiar with the social network and perceive the learning process as part of their daily pastime activities. In turn, the habit of using a social network contributes to the liberation and increase of motivation to study the subject.

Thus, teaching on the platform of the "Facebook" social network arouses interest amongst students, a desire to engage in communication, a willingness to participate in it, since students are very interested in using the already mundane means of communication to learn a foreign language. Consequently,

technologies for foreign language teaching via social networks differ from the traditional ones.

First of all, to complete tasks for the development of each of the speech skills, we suggest forming a group of ten students of the same level of proficiency who will complete the tasks proposed by the teacher. Each of them must be registered in the "Facebook" social network under their own name and have basic skills of working on this platform, that is, be able to send messages, attach photos, video and audio material to them, communicate with fellows via chat and comment on the proposed material in writing. Then the teacher creates a general conference, in which the completion of the proposed tasks is carried out. All participants of the project are added to it, while the teacher acts as the administrator of the conversation. It is also necessary to provide all students with audio and video equipment – microphones and webcams, as well as other working input means – keyboard and mouse. The location of the lesson, in our opinion, should be a computer audience, as this audience provides all the necessary conditions for teaching, and in addition, puts all participants in an equal position. The teacher occupies a place in the center of the audience and conducts teaching with the help of pre-prepared materials.

Next, we will consider the possibilities of forming the listening skill with the help of the "Facebook" social network.

Speaking about the technology of teaching listening with the help of the "Facebook" social network, students are offered to complete an exercise to develop listening skills using the capabilities of the social platform in question. The aim of the exercise, first of all, is to complete all stages of working with audio text: pre-text, text, and post-text. When teaching listening using a social network, it is advisable to complete exercises not in a computer class, but in a private mode, using voice messages. This solution will provide an additional effect, as in addition to listening to the audio recording itself, the students will have to listen to the voices and guesses of their fellows, and interpret their speech.

As an exercise for the pre-text phase, students are invited to complete a task focused on removing difficulties in understanding the text in question. The teacher sends the title of the audio recording to the conference and asks the participants to express their guesses on its contents. A voice message recorded using the microphone is taken as a response form.

Let us consider the order of conducting a lesson:

The teacher sets the order of answers so that there is no confusion. Students record and send their guesses to the conference, and the teacher, upon listening to them, provides textual comments. Then he sustains the title with a thematic image and suggests assuming the content of the audio recording on its basis.

A short discussion using voice messages follows. Only the teacher uses the text, commenting, and asking leading questions.

Further, at the text stage, the teacher offers an audio recording to listen in the conference. It is important to ensure that the audio recording does not contain any subtitles. Enough time is allotted to listen for the student to hear the recording twice. Then, the teacher gives a list of words on the given topic and asks students to indicate which of them were used in the text using voice messages. The teacher monitors the right answers and pronunciation, using a microphone to correct, if necessary.

At the post-text stage, students are offered a communicative task which consists in discussing the theme developed in the poem – help around the house. The discussion is conducted sequentially, in the order established by the teacher. First, one student sends a

voice message with the answer, the teacher asks additional questions, comments on, and proceeds to the next participant in the conversation.

Also, as a part of teaching listening, students are offered to watch a video about the proper setting of the dining table. The video is published in a general conference.

TEACHING READING.

Reading is an independent type of speech activity that provides a written form of communication. Amongst all types of speech activity, it is one of the leading ones in regards to usage, importance, and accessibility.

For teaching reading on the platform of the "Facebook" social network, the teacher selects a text containing no more than four thousand ninety-six characters, as this number of characters is the limit for one "Facebook" message, and corresponding to the level of proficiency of students. For example, if a group consists of students with the beginner level of foreign language proficiency, the appropriate solution would be the use of a text of the appropriate level.

At the pre-text stage of the task, after the teacher calls the roll in the conference and the students inform him of their presence in the lesson, the teacher writes the title of the text into the chat and suggests the students a short discussion about its meaning, as well as to assume what will be discussed in the text.

Students express their opinions in the form of messages in English. Before that, a rule is established to avoid confusion and streamline the learning process – the thought should be provided in one message, no more than fifty to sixty characters long. Five to ten minutes of study time is allocated for discussion, which includes teacher's comments on the provided positions.

Next, the teacher goes directly to the text itself. First of all, he sets a learning task for students.

After giving students half a minute to read and understand the task, the teacher provides the text in the conversation and sets a time limit of ten minutes.

After ten minutes, the teacher announces that the time is up, and the students send their answers. Before announcing the correct answer, the teacher conducts a brief discussion, the aim of which is to find out the right option by the whole group using the opposite method.

As an example of an exercise for teaching speaking, we suggest a general discussion on a given topic. After the organizational moment, the teacher sets the general topic of discussion.

The teacher sets the order of performance. Using voice messages, students should express their thoughts on a given topic in the shortest possible time. It is advisable to limit students to the number and duration of messages in order to increase the complexity of the task. Also, a time limit for the answer is set in order to stimulate the mental activity of the students, as well as to reduce the likelihood of copying the ready answer from other Internet sources. The teacher comments on the answers there, in the chat, and also provides other students with the opportunity to discuss the answer of their fellows. At the end of the response of each student, the teacher summarizes the lesson.

Speaking about the development of such a type of speech activity as writing, it should be noted that teaching writing is conducted throughout all the other exercises, as the discussion and comment on the responses of other members of the group is carried out not only with voice messages but also with text messages. Nevertheless, it is advisable to use the discussion of a page of a group member selected in advance as an example of teaching writing. In addition, as an exercise for teaching writing

using a social network, it is convenient to use the compilation of various words from a larger one. To begin with, the teacher sets a task for students.

Then the teacher sets a time limit of two minutes for completing the task. After this time, students send messages with their answers to the general chat. An important element in completing the exercise is the simultaneous publication of responses in order to prevent cheating.

The choice of the "Facebook" social network as a platform for foreign language teaching was made taking into account its advantages in the realization of the practice of each type of speech activity. The realization of speaking is carried out through the ability to communicate via voice messages with a native speaker or a teacher, however, as practice shows, this method of communication is not popular. Teaching listening is realized by using the download and listening function of the audio recordings necessary as a teaching material, as well as the need to listen to the answers of one's learning companions. The practice of writing is carried out through comments and text messages accompanying the completion of other exercises. Teaching reading is conducted through the capability of the "Facebook" social network to accommodate the sufficient volumes of educational texts in a message, and, as a result, the convenience of working with them in a general conference.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the use of "Instagram", "Twitter", and "Facebook" social networks is an effective form of teaching, not only because of the convenience of training types of speech activity but also because this platform significantly increases the motivation to learn a foreign language for students of different age groups and levels of foreign language proficiency, as it is a daily way of communication for a modern student.

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