

Internet as the Means of Spanish Study as a Foreign Language

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Abstract: The study considers the role of Internet in the study of Spanish as a foreign language and the possibility of internet resources use in a planned learning. The method of planning is one of the innovative trends in modern professional study of a Foreign language. Its use during a Foreign language lesson not only motivates a student to a real communication but also promotes the development of intellectual and analytical abilities of a learner in the process of practical tasks implementation. The factual material for the article was the results of the survey conducted among KFU students studying Spanish as a first and a second Foreign language. The survey showed that 95% of students actively use Internet to learn the language. Along with the analysis of the most common and effective ways to get practical information and improve the language skills of the students (the reading of authentic newspapers, online TV watching, listening to radio, etc.) the study provides the recommendations for Spanish teachers concerning the productive use of internet resources during a classroom and the means of their incorporation in a planned learning methodology. The most popular resources of the internet system and the impact of their application to improve the communicative competence of students are considered.

Key words: Online learning, planned learning, Spanish, online discourse, internet

INTRODUCTION

The modern Russian education in the field of a Foreign language study is undergoing significant changes which require an in-depth study of a learning process within the new approaches, trends and technologies that aim to not only on the transfer of knowledge and the identification, development, improvement of creative interests and abilities of each student, the stimulation of his independent productive learning activities and the learning of independent work methods. One of the innovative technologies in the professionally-oriented learning of a foreign language is a the method of planning which is an implementation of a student-centered learning in collaboration.

The planned training was introduced by the American philosopher and educator John Dewey (1938) in the early 20th century. Originated from constructivism, the planned learning is based on the work of such psychologists and educators as Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget. Such a training is based on a personal interest and on an active participation of students in the solution of problems that are closely related to reality. The surveys showed a high efficiency of this type of training because according to the planned methods the students gain valuable knowledge about the object of research that contributes to a better

understanding of its essence. Besides, the planned learning makes a beneficial effect on the motivation and development increase of intellectual and analytical abilities of students.

On the other hand, the modern educational process can not be imagined without the use of information technologies during the preparation of a student for a lesson and during a self-study of a Foreign language. So a variety of activities related to the use of internet resources becomes more and more popular in a planned learning.

This study attempts to incorporate the use of internet resources in the design methodology for the teaching of Spanish. The most popular resources of the internet system are considered and the results of their use to improve the communicative competence of university students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methods of empirical knowledge were used during the study in particular, the written survey the revealing of respondents' views through a questionnaire. The 80 students who participated in the study, were offered to answer a number of questions (Appendix) which needed a detailed written answer in order to identify the frequency of Internet resources use by the

students during the Spanish language study, the determination of individual resources, popular among students for a further disclose of development means of communication, auditive and writing skills of students via internet as well as for the web resources implications for a planned training. In addition to the methods of empirical knowledge for the processing of data obtained by questionnaires the mathematical and statistical methods were applied. The latter allowed to determine an average value of obtained indicators. In order to determine the study results, the descriptive statistical analysis was applied.

Project-based learning: The project-based learning is a type of an individual or a group activity which results in a project, a presentation or an other form of students' creative work. Usually, it is a long time project with the forms of continuous monitoring and other aspects of a formative assessment during the performance of an assignment (Guskey, 2003). SidmanTaveau and Milner-Bolotin (2001) define a project-oriented learning as "a comprehensive approach used to involve the students in a survey and/or in the solution of real life issues" (Sidman-Taveau and Milner-Bolotin, 2001). According to the researchers, the main characteristic of a project-based learning is the use of an authentic material and the focus on the needs and interests of students. A range of questions and the areas of students' interest influence the type of a project and the progress of work concerning it and the title role in the learning process attains not a summative but a formative assessment (Moursund, 2005).

The role of a teacher in a project-based learning is closed to the coordinator function. A teacher models the process, directs, encourages and supports a student throughout the course of the project by making available a variety of educational resources designed to develop and improve the skills and abilities of students in the situations of real communication (Collins *et al.*, 1989). At that the function of a teacher is not to point out a pre-determined "correct" answer but to help students identify the strategies of information gathering aimed at the resolving of a situation (Sidman-Taveau and Milner-Bolotin, 2001) and coordinate the entire process on their own.

With regard to a Foreign language lesson the project-oriented training has the following advantages: first of all, a student is interested in real communication that activates the determination of a verbal behavior strategy by him; secondly, the learning of grammar and

vocabulary becomes not a direct one and assimilated on the basis of a communicative situation that contributes to a better assimilation of language structures and the areas of their practical application.

The practical application of the studied material, the increase of motivation and self-confidence, the overcoming of a language barrier allows the students to believe in themselves and begin to communicate in a foreign language. For the successful use of a project-based learning techniques during a lesson it is necessary to determine the possibilities of a project practical application in the language environment and to study the students' interests (Schwarzer, 2011). Then a teacher has to come up with some interesting, effective and urgent tasks which meet the modern educational technologies. Thus, the appeal to Internet resources as the most popular source of information among modern youth may solve this problem.

Internet discourse during Foreign language study:

Internet discourse is a special form of keeping cultural knowledge. Like other types of media discourse, the Internet discourse is a complex lingvo semantic message expressed by verbal (text) and iconic (melody, video, images, etc.) signs, intended for a complex audio-visual perception by a recipient (Dunyasheva and Gritsenko, 2013). It is the unity of verbal and nonverbal components of online discourse linguistic and extralinguistic elements of online discourse which conditions its enormous impact potential on Internet users (Gritsenko and Dunyasheva, 2013) and consequently, on the students who actively apply the global network resources for a language study.

The relevance and the benefits of Internet technologies introduction in the process of a foreign language learning at the moment makes no doubts any longer. Over the past decade, the researchers thoroughly studied the positive impact of various forms concerning the synchronous and asynchronous Internet communication (email, chat, forums, web conferencing, etc.) on the development of students foreign language communicative competence. The Internet resources are an invaluable and an immense base for information-subject environment creation, the education and self-education of people, the meeting of their professional and personal interests and needs (Sysoev and Yevstigneev, 2008).

Besides, a student using online resources in addition to independent work during the study of a foreign language, acquire such key skills as the ability to formulate correctly the search queries concerning the studied subject, the ability to distinguish the main

information and cut off the irrelevant data, as well as the ability to analyze the obtained results obtained by structuring then in accordance with a task (Morales, 2000).

The didactic aspect determines two main components of the Internet discourse: forms of telecommunication and information resources (Sysoev and Yevstigneev, 2008). The most common forms of telecommunications (i.e., the communications via Internet technologies) may include e-mail, chat, forum, ICQ, WhatsApp, Wechat, skype, video, web conferences, etc. The forms of telecommunications originally designed for a real communication between people who are at a distance are being actively applied in a foreign language study. The information resources of the Internet contain text, audio and visual material on various subjects in different languages. There are also special educational online resources designed to meet the educational and professional needs.

The telecommunications and information resources of online discourse have a great application potential in the design methods of Spanish language study.

Apart from the obvious advantages offered by the internet during the study of Spanish language, we should note some disadvantages of electronic resources use in the public domain:

- The limitations of electronic translators
- The presence of non-professional sites that contain grammatical and lexical errors and the sites with an incorrectly stated material
- The fragmentation of information supply and perception
- The difficulties at independent search of reliable information sources by students

To avoid the negative aspects of Internet resources impact in the process of language learning, a teacher must know well the field of Hispanic Network and regularly update his knowledge about the taught discipline to be able to guide the students, to reduce the time for the preparation of projects and monitor the quality of the obtained information. The successful implementation of e-learning resources in the project training will allow students and teachers to get a desired result (Abdrafikova *et al.*, 2014).

Internet resources for training spanish

Analysis of survey results: This part of the study is devoted to the analysis of the survey results conducted by researches in order to identify internet resources

which are the most popular among the students and for the subsequent development of project methods focused on the personal needs of students (Appendix).

The 80 students between the ages of 17-24, studying Spanish as a first (10%) and as a second (90%) Foreign language took part in the study. The students who participated in the survey, studied such fields as international relations, Foreign philology (Spanish language and literature, English language and literature), the translation theory and practice, the history of international relations, socio-cultural service and tourism, banking, journalism, Foreign regional studies, pedagogic education (the teacher of English and Spanish), logistics and law. The time during which they learn Spanish language ranges from 4 months to 4 years. The language skill is basic (62%) and average (38%).

In the course of the survey, it was found out that 95% of respondents use the Internet resources in order to study Spanish language constantly, 3% use them periodically, 1% use it rarely and 1% do not use it at all. The 98% of students use Internet to learn Spanish grammar and vocabulary. They look for grammar rules, verb conjugation scheme explication, specify the rules of irregular verbs conjugation, perform the exercises to test knowledge, including the preparation for the test. The site "Everything for Hispanist" (www.hispanista.ru/) was taken as an example. Its educational material is presented in the form of celebrity statements, the presentation of historical facts and interesting information about Spain, which undoubtedly contributes to an increased interest for the learning of Spanish.

Many students use digital libraries (www.koob.ru/, Euroeducation www.euroeducation.net/, <http://book2.me/>, <http://tululu.org/>, <http://best-lib.net/>, kpfu.ru, www.royallib.com, www.litres.ru/, Bibliorossika www.bibliorossika.com/, <http://flibusta.net/>, <http://www.e-reading.link/>, www.lebook.com/, www.litlib.net/). The 81% of respondents download reference materials and Spanish textbooks for additional training for an additional training. Some students learn the rules in detail, 1% download and read Spanish tales.

The electronic dictionaries and translators are extraordinary popular among students. They are actively used by 96% of respondents. The most common is the dictionary ABBYY Lingvo, Yandex Dictionary (<https://slovari.yandex.ru/>), Multitran dictionary (www.multitran.ru/), the online dictionary www.diccionario.ru as well as the sites of automated translation <http://www.translate.ru/>, www.lingvolive.ru, <http://ru.pons.com/>, Babylon (www.babylon.com/), PROMT (www.promt.ru/), Google translate

(www.translate.google.ru) and the applications for Hedgedict smartphone. The great popularity of such sites may be explained by the desire for a false automated translation: to save time, facilitate the process of translation because such systems provide the translation of whole sentences while a dictionary contains the translation of only a single word or a phrase. The ease of an electronic dictionary use is explained by the fact that a dictionary entry contains the data of multiple dictionaries (for example, the site www.diccionario.ru appeals during a word translation not only to monolingual dictionaries but also to the polytechnic, medical, marine, transport, economic, geographical, law dictionary, the dictionary of proverbs and sayings, Latin American dictionary, etc.).

In addition to online dictionaries, some students use the applications for smartphone with similar functionality. The 40% of respondents use AppStore or PlayMarket application not only for translation but also to learn Spanish (FunEasyLearn (Español), Fabulo (Spanish), Spanish verbs, Duolingo, Busuu, WordPowerLt, SpanishDictionary, Elconjugador, LearnSpanish-Phrase book for training, 6 words, Polyglot, Spanish language, Spanish, Lessons: Spanish, 50 languages, RU-ESDictionary, Colecciones delibros, Escribieren, Memorize, Conjugacion, SPANISH, TED, 6000 words in Spanish, Spanish in 7 lessons, Turn and Learn, Verbform, Learnbots, Hedgedict, TuneInRadio, Drops). Some applications work as a mechanical repetition and the fixation of passed material (Spanish verbs, Duolingo, Elconjugador), some are the dictionaries and phrasebooks (Hedgedict), others are tutorials and video lessons (Spanish in 7 lessons, Polyglot).

An interesting fact is that 18% of respondents listen to podcasts (iTunes application in audio files) in Spanish. Usually, a podcast is a small audio clip (from 5-20 min), which parses and voices a certain topic. Among the most listened podcasts the following ones were determined: CoffeeBreakSpanish, DiscoverSpanish, LearnSpanish, SpanishPod101.comwithTuneIn, #RealRadio<http://tun.in/tdkHUN>, 5 min Spanish. Listening to these records gives an idea about the correct pronunciation, as the researchers are native speakers. As a rule, a series of podcasts consists of several issues which are for an everyday listening which forms the habit of authentic speech perception and enriches a student's vocabulary.

Another way of auditive skills development is the listening to Spanish radio stations online. 13% of respondents constantly listen to Spanish radio, preferring such radio stations as Superestrella107.1, Cadenadial, RNE, CadenaSer, TuneInRadio, RadioCapital, LaLey 107.9, LoveRadioSummerTime as well as the radio stations with Spanish songs.

The online Spanish television is watched by 16% of respondents. The most popular programs are the Spanish movies and TV shows, football broadcasts. Such channels as RealMadridchannel, Russia Today Spanish, Antena3, TVE are popular.

Another option of improving listening skills are YouTube channels which use 40% of respondents. Students view the video Spanish lessons (to study vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation), the Spanish short films, videos about cities and provinces of Spain, enriching their cultural world. Some of students are subscribed to the channels about Spanish culture, the channels with the comparisons of Spain and Latin America vocabulary. Students are also interested by the news, the celebrity interviews and video where they speak in Catalan or Galician. Many watch movies and TV shows in Spanish (including the training series "Extraenespañol"). A large percentage of respondents watch the clips of Spanish songs with subtitles. The 19% of respondents actively observe the news of such Spanish bloggers as the fashion blogger Jessie Chanes, the creator of makeup video tutorials Nataly Olvera, the actor Francisco Sanelemente, the comedian German Garmendia or Spanish football players and commentators.

As you know, one of the best ways to improve speaking and writing skills is the communication with natives. The 86% of respondents use the resources of the social network site as Facebook. Another popular social network is a Russian network V Kontakte. However, unlike the communication with Facebook natives, the novelty and practical value of this social network is that 96% of students use it to get information about different aspects of Spanish language and culture which they acquire through the Spanish language groups publishing the information about the interesting facts concerning the country and culture (https://vk.com/typical_spain), literature and art (<https://vk.com/artespanol>) or the articles from the Spanish press (https://vk.com/prensa_y_revistas_en_espanol). Also some interesting articles about Spanish grammar (<https://vk.com/idiomaespanol>), the convenient schemes of verb conjugation, the tables with prepositions and exercises (https://vk.com/ejercicios_espanol); some contain idioms and vocabulary distributed by topics (<https://vk.com/hablaespanol>). Besides, many groups have the works of fiction, reference books and textbooks for all levels (https://vk.com/espanol_con_amigos) within a public domain. The presence of such groups greatly facilitates the process of preparation for classes not only for students but also for teachers, who may find the necessary material in a short time.

According to the survey results the reading of Spanish press was the least popular. Only 15% of students regularly read such publications as *Mujer Única*, *Hoy*, *ElMundo*, *ElPaís*, *Marca*, *As*, *National Geographic*, *Russia today en español*. However, the undoubted advantage of the electronic version availability concerning the well-known online publications contributes to the fact that a teacher has the opportunity to support the study materials by some authentic texts of the Spanish newspapers, provide students with the latest information on events in the studied language country.

Besides the above mentioned means of internet use during the study of Spanish language the students mentioned the visiting of Spanish forums which help to resolve doubts on the use of a particular expression, passing of an online test to determine the level of proficiency as well as the themed sites such as Spanish cooking.

The survey data confirmed the frequent use of online resources during the learning of Spanish language, revealed the most popular resources to improve various types of speech activity and served as the basis for the development of the main types of project activities during a Spanish lesson.

Use of internet resources in project-based study of spanish language: The results of the survey allowed to select the most effective internet resources as a teaching material for the formation of students communicative competence. Let's consider some project activities that may be used effectively for the teaching of Spanish language with the help of internet resources.

Mass media: The use of the articles of the leading news publications in Spain (such as: www.elmundo.es, www.abc.es) contributes to the familiarization of students with the Hispanic culture, the expansion of their linguocultural views. A teacher may give a task to translate and analyze the articles of certain subjects as an independent work according to the topic of study. For example, during the study of the political system in Spain it is appropriate to refer to political texts for the in-depth study of Spanish culture topic a student may make a presentation after reading a review of a cultural section from one or more Spanish newspapers in during the course of Spain geography, students may prepare the presentation about the autonomous regions of Spain, based on data obtained from the leading articles of these

areas. Also, one may offer to read the world news in Spanish as a project assignment followed by the discussion in small groups for 3-5 min, summarizing the most important and relevant news and then to create your own mini-newspapers, based on the principle of the leading Spanish editions. This kind of tasks makes the consolidation of verbal constructions, train indirect speech, etc., at the same time promoting some interest to the current events of the world.

Radio: The ability to listen to some Spanish radio stations online greatly simplifies the process of listening preparation, especially if a teacher aims to teach students to recognize the differences in pronunciation among Spanish and Latin American broadcasters. In this case, the SRS may be based on listening to Spanish (www.rtve.es/radio, www.espana.fm) and Latin American (www.radioamericalatina.com/) radio stations and the revealing of phonetic and lexical differences, followed by their discussion in a classroom. As a project work, you may offer students to perform the lexical selection of the most used words and phrases of a certain subject and their phonetic transcription when teaching the variants of individual words pronunciation.

Podcast: The term "podcast" originated from the English 'iPod' and 'broadcast' and is used for the naming of audio or video files, available for many people in order to listen and view online. Typically, podcasts are the authentic voice records of native speakers in communicative situations.

In order to fix the grammatical or lexical topics the task of listening to some episodes from some popular podcast will be the relevant one. For example, using the audio course "Spanish through history" a beginner may fix the studied grammatical topics presented in the course as the record short stories ("storytelling" technology, used by an researcher is the implementation of the "natural" approach theory for the development of a second language developed by an American linguist Stephen Krashen).

Depending on the level of language proficiency podcasts as well as any other listening exercises, contribute to the development of primary auditive skills (at basic level) or develop the ability of students to interpret some text (advanced level). The use of podcasts is a certain way for a student motivation increase which facilitates the language learning and removes the language barrier.

Television: An alternative approach for a language study may be the watching of Spanish television. Of course, an important component of a student general cultural development is the watching of news blocks and educational programs in Spanish. The watching of Spanish TV series for example, the training series “Extraespañol”, in which the learning material is presented in the form of short comedy clips, united by one theme may be also useful in terms of auditive and communication skills development. The most commonly used words and expressions of daily are supported with subtitles for a better study of the material. After the self watching of a video during a lesson, students may simulate the similar situations in groups and develop them in dialogues. At a more advanced level, you may invite them to take part in the creation of their own video clips. During the preparation of this project all group students will be involved. They will learn the mutual development, will acquire some teamwork skills, will search together some unconventional ways of a problem solution together.

Blogs: Recently, web blogs become more popular among students. The reading and watching of Spanish bloggers news may be an additional source of vocabulary expansion concerning the studied topics. So, one of the tasks during the study of the topic “Fashion” may be the analysis of blog posts and comments of a Spanish fashion designer; the theme “Sport” may be supported by the news about a football team which is popular among students. This diversity during the presentation of the material as well as the fact that a student feels his ability to apply his skill learned during a lesson, greatly increases his interest to the subject matter.

An other task that meets the issue of writing skills may be the keeping of your own blog in Spanish where students may publish their own works (not only essays but also poems and stories) and a teacher may correct them quickly. Thus, students will acquire the skills of academic autonomy. An important aspect of motivation to do a good job will be the presence of some feedback from readers and other students, who will also be able to comment on the work, to propose new ideas, to continue the discussions started during a lesson and so on. The presence of readers makes the student keeping his blog more responsible in performing a task and will increase the level of his language competence.

The creation of your own Spanish web site may become a more serious project, presented in the form of a newspaper (the analogue of a student newspaper with appropriate headings reflecting the university life and

maybe some columns about the Russian and Spanish cultural events) which may be read by other students and their colleagues from the Spanish universities.

Online spanish: One of the many forms of work with Internet resources may be the preparation of a presentation concerning a particular subject. This type of tasks may be applied not only during the study of lexical topics (e.g., the presentation about the features of cooking in a particular region of Spain within the theme “Food”) but also in grammar. So for example, students may tell about the cases of Modo Subjuntivo (subjunctive mood), using some visual aids facilitating the study of complex topics.

CONCLUSION

The essence of the project work is reduced to the teaching of students to search the new ways of problems solution posed by a teacher during a lesson. The project-based learning contributes to the development of new activities that allow students to work subsequently with a variety of materials of any complexity in Spanish. The implementation of personal potential in terms of a project work is able to provide a student with a clear understanding of a group work, the ability to set the goals clearly and the awareness of his own responsibility for the execution of set tasks and thus to provide him with some core competencies according to qualification characteristics.

The introduction of means, one of which is the Internet, during the process of a Foreign language study, allows to develop its assimilation at a new level. The network use efficiency in the learning process will depend on several factors, including the correspondence of the material content to the educational problems in a Foreign language at a particular stage of learning. The use of Internet resources during Spanish lessons and during the self-study contributes to the development of communicative and speech abilities of students which coupled with the use of project-based learning methods increases the educational process efficiency.

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Appendix: Internet as the means of Spanish learning as a foreign language

Questionnaire:

1. Age: _____
2. Profession: _____
3. How long do you study Spanish? _____
4. What's your language skills level? (beginner, intermediate, high): _____

Questions	Answers
1. Do you use Internet to learn Spanish?	
2. Do you use electronic dictionaries and translators? What are they?	
3. Do you read press in Spanish? Which editions do you read?	
4. Do you listen to the radio in Spanish? What radio stations do you listen?	
5. Do you listen to podcasts in Spanish? What are they?	
6. Do you read Spanish bloggers? What Spanish bloggers do you read?	
7. Do you use digital libraries? What digital libraries do you use?	
8. Do you use Facebook resources to learn Spanish? What are these resources?	
9. Do you read the groups VKontakte, which publish materials for learning Spanish? What are they?	
10. Do you use AppStore or PlayMarket applications to learn Spanish?	
11. Do you use YouTube resources for learning Spanish an how?	
12. Do you watch Spanish TV online? What channels do you watch?	
13. Do you use Internet to study Spanish grammar (do you look for grammar exercises or rules, verb conjugation schemes)?	
14. Do you download Spanish reference materials and textbooks?	
15. Are there some other Internet resources that you use to learn Spanish?	

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