

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33739/2587-5434-2021-3-1-107-112>

USING LEARNING PORTAL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. Textbooks with the topics presented in the teaching materials do not always correspond to the needs and a wide variety of students' interests. A personality-oriented approach and the creation of a relaxed situation of immersion in linguistic realities are required. It is possible to increase students' motivation for a more in-depth study of a foreign language with the help of a pre-developed program and events and uploaded onto a special portal with open access for students of various faculties and specialties. The concept of creating a portal and a language laboratory, proposed by us in the article, contributes to helping students overcome the difficulties associated with mastering a foreign language. An independent choice of cognitive material, personalization of training, taking into account the interests of students, are possible when using a significant number of cognitive educational sites on the proposed portal.

Keywords: motivation, special portal, foreign language, study sites, media education, internet didactics, blog(site)didactics

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ОБУЧАЮЩЕГО ПОРТАЛА В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Аннотация. Пособия с тематикой, представленной в учебных материалах, далеко не всегда соответствуют запросам и разнообразию интересов студентов. Необходим лично – ориентированный подход и создание непринужденной ситуации погружения в языковые реалии. Повысить мотивацию студентов к более углубленному изучению иностранного языка, возможно с помощью заранее разработанной программы и мероприятий, рассчитанных на год и опубликованных в специальном портале, в открытом доступе для студентов различных факультетов и специальностей. Предложенная нами в статье концепция создания портала и языковой лаборатории, вносит свою лепту в помощь студентам в преодолении трудностей, связанных с освоением иностранного языка. Самостоятельный выбор познавательного материала, персонализация обучения с учетом интересов студентов, возможны при использовании значительного количества познавательных учебных сайтов на предлагаемом портале.

Ключевые слова: мотивация, специальный портал, иностранный язык, учебные сайты, медиаграмотность, медиаобразование, интернет-дидактика, блого-(сайто)дидактика

INTRODUCTION. In today’s media-saturated world, learning and teaching foreign languages is impossible without the use of information technologies. Younger generation grew up in front of computer screens, with smartphones, communicating through social networks; chats, blogs. Contemporary generation is used to receiving information, first of all, not through the sign writing system, but through visual images, perceptually. Their cognitive system has also changed, thus, the attractiveness of educational materials primarily depends on the usual format of obtaining knowledge via digitally rich learning environment, i.e. screen displays; in the form of bright and colourful pictures with sound.

In terms of rendering foreign language study material to the so-called ‘digital native’ generation of students, recent course books meet most of digitally - modern requirements, namely, they usually comprise:

- digital interactive board, which helps significantly save time and memorize the material with the help of more efficient visual presentation of information;
- interactive version of the course book;
- online workbooks with tasks designed to develop students’ receptive and productive skills in their customary format of information perception;
- supplementary real world relevant video content /footages in terms of language and cultural context which maximize the authenticity of the situation, for instance, in the context of interviews, as well as magazine and documentary styles and other components.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS. It should be noted that course books with topics presented by educational materials do not always correspond to the variety of students’ interests. In view of this, it is necessary to elaborate a person-oriented approach and create a relaxed situation of immersion into language realities. In this regard, the creation of a special university learning portal would meet these objectives by providing the students with: 1. selection of learning material at students’ choice; 2. self – directed learning online tasks with immediate feedback of problematic aspects which have arisen during learning process; 3. event information (film screenings, conversational/writing club, world news discussion clubs, etc.). Consider each item separately.

Selection of learning material at students’ choice, and therefore, personalized learning taking into account the interests of students is possible due to a significant number of educational sites on the Internet, such are some of them:

BBC learning English with fascinating sections such as: The English we Speak, BBC news and 6 Minute English with topics such as Ethical coffee, Bitcoin - digital crypto-currency, what makes a video go viral? The bitter taste of sugar, How much is your spouse worth? etc. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/>) The material provided on the site can be easily combined, or supplemented, if necessary, to the main ready-made course book material according to the topics studied at that time. For instance, when we studied the ‘Question of Taste’ Unit on food and taste habits, we complimented it with "Street Food: Why is it becoming so popular? " material taken from BBC learning English website, 6 Minute English section. When integrating this material, we used the "flipped lesson" approach, which implies the so-called "inverted" lesson, in which, part of the material is given as a link for self-study (audio material, audio script, a list of new words and an interactive vocabulary and text comprehension exercises). Thus, according to Bloom's taxonomy, based on the principle of a six-step diagram, in the flipped lesson, the first lower levels of cognitive

perception and processing of information, namely, memorization and understanding occur outside the class, however, the highest levels, such as application, analysis, assessment and creation, take place at the lesson. During the lesson, the students were divided into groups and on the basis of combination of studied course book text 'Health Alert' and the audio listening from the BBC learning English website section 6 of Minute English "Street Food: Why is it becoming so popular?" were assigned to extract basic information relating to fast food, distribute it into "positive" and "negative" handout information diagram, express their opinion, analyze the relationship between "harmful" and "popular" and also offer a possible alternative to fast food eating.

British Council Learning English with videos and English-speaking participants showing the realities and familiarizing the learners with the target language culture (<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/>). One of the many notable sections of the site is "Grammar Snack", which provides a large range of grammatical material in the form of authentic dialogues with easily memorable grammatical constructions in various contexts. In this case, at our classes, in addition to role-playing games with a direct repetition of phrases from the dialogue describing everyday actions (for example: "On Mondays, I have swimming practice"), students were divided into two main groups. One of them prepared and asked questions (for example: "What do you do on Mondays?") - the second answered, slightly modeling the content (for example, "On Mondays, I have dance/art classes...").

TED talks site (<https://www.ted.com/>) features talks and conferences - lectures on various topics such as global problems, science, new ideas (for instance: what can we do about culture of hate? ; how can we design timeless cities for our collective future? etc.). Since 2009, TED video podcasts have been available.

No less noteworthy is The English Channel, which combines art and language learning. The site presents interactive videos and exercises for developing English language skills. With these materials, students can expand their vocabulary, practice grammar and language listening skills, as well as get acquainted with modern UK art. The materials of the site are perfectly suitable for country-specific studies presentations, as well as student group projects.

News in levels site provides news from different parts of the world on a vast range of topics (Illegal immigrant is boy's guardian angel; train at your door, tarantula snack) with accompanying audio and the three levels of one and the same text (elementary, pre-intermediate/intermediate, advanced) with authentic video reporting (<https://www.newsinlevels.com/>). This news resource can be personalized according to students' interests. In our case, students chose any news at their choice and in pairs, discussed the event in English.

Considering the specific characteristics of digital-native generation, we assume, that English teaching and learning process would be much facilitated and enhanced if the students were given the opportunity to choose the learning material independently in accordance with their interests. In the course of our work, we constantly use the above additional material combined with the topic of the lesson and at the students' request; this significantly increases their interest, ultimately contributing to a better mastery of the material.

Self – directed learning online exercises with the immediate feedback of problematic aspects. A separate aspect of the learning portal could be devoted to a section which would include:

a) level-by-level (beginner- C1) lexical vocabulary and grammar point video explanations of the main points covered in the course. Thus, students would have the opportunity to pause and rewind the video explanation of the grammatical/lexical point at their own speed at which they are more susceptible to process the information;

b) each video explanation would have attached grammar/vocabulary online exercises with instant answer verification. This will enable students to verify their comprehension of the question and give them motivating confidence on their academic performance.

c) level-by-level (beginner- C1) tests which would help students to verify and identify their problematic points and thus would give them the possibility to them to improve before doing the final test.

To monitor this section, it would be desirable to engage a group of teachers and volunteers who, could be contacted by any student for additional consultation concerning problematic issue.

In addition, a pre-developed event program calculated for a year and published on the portal in the public domain for students of various faculties and specialties would enhance students' motivation for a more in-depth study of English. Students would have to register in advance so that it would be possible to maintain statistical reporting of student activity as well. The program will include:

- screening foreign films with subtitles (before viewing, students will be given a pre-prepared synopsis of the film and a small word list and phrases most often found in the films with explanation;
- screening BBC and Discovery Channel documentaries, History Channel, etc.
- conversational club events on different topics (or according to the subject of the course book), which would help students both at final exam and improve their conversational skills in general.
- events for the club to improve writing skills;
- an intercultural communication club with a native speaker to help students overcome the complex of communication with foreigners and directly immerse them in a situation of real communication.

It would be helpful to provide special language laboratories for students, which are a prerequisite in Europe for helping students to learn a foreign language. During master's and doctoral studies in France, we had the opportunity of regular classes in these laboratories. They used various modern software not only to improve pronunciation with a graphic image of the voice (for example: Tell Me More), but also different versions of programs for preparing for testing exams, such as TOIEC (Test of English for international communication), IELTS (International English language testing system), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

CONCLUSION. We assume that our proposed concept of creating the learning portal and a language laboratory would contribute to overcome students' difficulties associated with mastering a foreign language, increase their motivation, self-assessment and self-discipline skills, deepen not only linguistic, but also intercultural competence, all this in combination with a personal-oriented approach to study.

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For citation:

Diasamidze, L. (2021) Using learning portal in English language teaching // International Scientific-Pedagogical Organization of Philologists “WEST-EAST” (ISPOP). Scientific Journal “WEST-EAST”. Vol. 5, N1 (March, 2021). pp. 108-112. <https://doi.org/10.33739/2587-5434-2021-3-1-107-112>

Для цитирования:

Диасамидзе, Л. Я. (2021) Использование обучающего портала в преподавании английского языка // International Scientific-Pedagogical Organization of Philologists “WEST-EAST” (ISPOP). Scientific Journal “WEST-EAST”. Vol. 5, N1 (October, 2021). С. 108-112. <https://doi.org/10.33739/2587-5434-2021-3-1-107-112>

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Manuscript received: 12/01/2021
Accepted for publication: 14 /02/2021
Рукопись получена: 12/01/2021
Принята к печати: 14/02/2021