USING VIDEO BLOGS AS AN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE INITIAL PHASE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Olga Dragomyretska
Language department, Odessa State Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Odessa, Ukraine
olgaalexa010@gmail.com

Abstract

The goal of the research consists in showing that application of a video blog as an extracurricular activity is a very effective interactive method that improves the process of the learning of a new language. The main research method was modeling the process of organizing extracurricular activity using a video blog for students at preparatory department of a non-language-centered university. A group of international students that was studying a foreign language created a video blog under the supervision of a teacher. The objective of this blog was preparation and uploading topical videos about different places in Odessa (Ukraine). Analyzing this project - the implementation of a video blog at the initial phase of foreign language learning – shows us that integration of topical video blogs into the learning process as an extracurricular activity enhances the students' education in many ways: primarily, it cultivates communication skills, trains oral perception, improve understanding of native speakers and interest in a foreign language learning. We can conclude that the future development and implementation of blog-technology as an interactive method of extracurricular activity will be an important and useful tool.

Keywords

Video Blog, Extracurricular Activity, Foreign Language Learning, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Communication Skills Improvement

1. Introduction

The research of facilities and methods for improving and modernizing foreign language teaching in higher education institution using ICT (information and communication technologies) is relevant because of exigency of adaptation of education to the new world of information technology. One of such technologies is a blog technology. In the last decade, many teachers have begun to look for methods of application of it in teaching foreign languages.

Didactic features of blog technology and methodical tasks of on-line blog for educational purpose (in the process of teaching Russian language) have been analyzed based on extensive bibliographic material (Prikhodko, 2013).

An experimental training blog was conducted in V.I. Vernadsky Taurida National University in Ukraine. The project was initiated by teachers and provided an opportunity for students to publish messages, upload video and audio files. After the experiment it was revealed that the motivation for a deeper study of a foreign language has been improved (Beloventseva & Trunchenkova, 2014). Enhancement of motivation for language learning and improvement of speaking skills after using podcasts have been detected by teachers in State University of Malang in Indonesia (Wulan, 2018).

A blog with students' involvement in it was created by teachers of the Amur State Medical Academy in Russia. It was elicited that video blogs can be an interactive platform for the implementation of methodological, pedagogical and educational goals and contribute to preparation of competitive specialists at universities (Bibik & Gritsenko 2014.).

At the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" the blog technology was used to train in business correspondence, to compile resumes and reports. Video materials were used to prepare students for listening comprehension (Lavrish, 2014).

The analysis of the world experience has shown that mostly teachers use video blogs to upload tasks for specific lessons (Rakhmanina & Kusumaningrum, 2017). Other teachers assigned their students to film videos about their education process, upload on the blog, and then

write in a special journal comments on their own video and on other students' videos (Tiarina & Rozimela, 2017).

There was an experience of combining a video blog and a role-playing game within one lesson at the University of MaeFahLuang in Thailand. Educational videos, questions and tasks were posted on the blog and everyone had an opportunity to make comments (Bunjan & Suppasetseree, 2017).

During English learning at Bengkulu University, Indonesia, students were given the opportunity to film their video on their own without creating a blog. It turned out that the team work motivated students to learn the language (Puspa & Syahrial, 2017).

At Jimei University, China, an English teacher tried to use a mobile phone to arouse interest of students in his subject. As hometasks he asked to film a spontaneous conversation of students on any topic they want using the camera of their phone. However, they lost interest in this activity (Abonales, 2016). Apparently, they could not cope with that assignments by themselves, due to the lack of detailed planning of students' actions and of control by the teacher.

Thus we see that the experience of colleagues from foreign countries that is mostly based on English language undeniably demonstrates that this method of education is promising in long term.

For the time being unified methods of using video blogs as elements of language learning do not exist. The experience of each teacher at the stage of implementation a new teaching method is priceless.

Nowadays the education system in Ukraine is in a constant development, therefore it undergoes annual changes. The educational programs are designed to master large information content and at the same time they head for independent study of many parts of the disciplines. Because of the fact that it is difficult for students to handle this task on their own the tendency for worsening of their learning motivation has been revealed. During the classroom activities interactive teaching methods often do not find their implementation due to the lack of time for their conduction, so extracurricular activities of students and teachers are highly needed.

Stimulation students' interest is especially important in the initial phase of the acquisition of a new language. That is why, in our opinion, it is necessary to use digital devices that are well-known to students, such digital device is a mobile phone. Nowadays among youth one of the most watched types of videos on mobile phone is a video blog, so it is suggested to use it in the learning process.

The goal of the research consists in showing that application of a video blog as an extracurricular activity is a very effective interactive method that improves the process of the independent learning of a new language.

The main research method was modeling the process of organizing extracurricular activity using a video blog for students at preparatory department of a non-language-centered university.

2. Description of Experience of Implementation of a Video Blog at Odessa State Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture

A group of international students that was studying a foreign language at the initial phase created a video blog under the supervision of a teacher. The objective of this blog was preparation and uploading topical videos about different places in Odessa.

Before starting to work on a task, the teacher conducted a lesson to provide a list of possible questions and language constructs, to explain the task and the requirements for its implementation, the goals and the expected results. The teacher divided the experimental group into 4 subgroups.

The teacher counted on a different level of technical skills of students, as the goal was not to learn computer programs, but to learn the language and to maintain interest in this type of task. Therefore, the teacher told about an easy way to prepare a video and about a more complicated method with the use of editing software programs and video correction programs, and also explained the nuances of filming to make the video suitable for watching.

There are many platforms for blogging, however, by frequency of use and convenience, it was decided to place a video blog in an existing group of students in the social network Facebook, which is not a specialized blog hosting, what made it more accessible to a wide audience.

This group of students was learning a foreign language (Russian) at the initial phase that is why the teacher needed to start with simple video-tasks. One of such tasks was to ask 10 passers-by "What time is it?" during the learning of the topic "Time". At the same time, students worked out the perception of information and its reproduction in practice. When language skills of students were improved and their language became more fluent, the teacher began to give them more complex topics, for example, to film a video about a part of their day off. Students thought through a script of the video, prepared a story about the place of filming. After

preparatory work students had to schedule a consultation with the teacher and after that proceeded to filming. When the task was finished, teams uploaded videos in the blog, then the teacher analyzed the video and declared a winner. The teams changed before proceeding to a next video.

3. Results of the Experiment

After the first video, we could see the result of this type of task. Mini groups handled the task differently, but in the end it was clear that teamwork gave its positive, effective results, despite the various difficulties that the students encountered during the task accomplishment.

At first, students were instructed to film one video for two students and to distribute roles equally; however, this free choice hampered the evaluation of this activity. The contribution of each participant in the work on the video was obscure that is why the teacher changed his requirements. This time each student had to prepare his own video. In pairs, one student first acted as an operator and the other was a journalist, then they changed roles, so each participant was equally involved in the work.

The first group consisted of Moroccan students, in which there was one strong student (a leader who knew the language better), and the other weak (a follower, with not very good speaking skills) did not have any disagreements. Their work was well co-ordinated and they accomplished their work on time. Also the age of participants, their general culture and abilities affected teamwork. It was revealed that the leader had high language learning abilities, he was able to organize his work, and also helped the younger student. The group leader knew the programs for editing and assembling the video, what simplified the preparation of the video and, as a result, the video turned out to be more qualitative.

The second group consisted of students from Turkey. There were communicative and psychological disagreements between the students; therefore they could not make a video. In this group, students were approximately the same age; however, they had different cultural and psychological levels, so they did not find mutual understanding, which led to the non-fulfillment of the task.

Carrying out the task the students of the third group (Moroccan representatives who were peers and couple in life) faced a certain problem related to communication and the psychological barrier of speaking in a foreign language with strangers and also native speakers. Students could write text to the video, could tell this text in the classroom, but they could not overcome

themselves and tell this text to the mobile phone's camera because of the shyness that was inherent to their character. Due to that they could not totally complete the task. The group worked extremely unstable, their work depended on the mood and their relationships. Thus, we see that character of students, their usual behavior tactics greatly affects the carrying out the task.

The fourth group of students consisted of 3 students (2 Turks, 1 Chinese) of very different levels of language knowledge who, despite a different mentality, got on well with each other. One student studied the language during one month being in his motherland in China, the other student did not have a grammatical base and sufficient lexical stock due to the fact that he was sick for several months and missed a lot of material, the third student attended all classes, but he learned the language toughly. Friendship and willingness to help were predominated in this team, what contributed to fruitful teamwork and led to improvement of their language skills.

In view of the fact that the video had been uploaded on the Internet in a group on Facebook, not only the teacher could evaluate and criticize it, but also students from other groups and any Internet user. Students of the subgroups of the experimental group evaluated each other's work and tried to make their video in the best possible way. The spirit of competition helped to maintain interest in this type of work.

It was revealed that the teamwork on video blog gave positive results: it diversified an educational process, distracted students from the thought and belief about the difficulty of learning a new language, enticed them, motivated them to learn the language and thus involved them in the process of real language use, in the form of playing a blogger and journalist and enjoyed learning. It helped to overcome a barrier of speaking in a foreign language with native speakers and classmates and helped to train oral perception and improved understanding of native speakers.

A language test was conducted in the experimental group before and after the experiment in order to analyze the impact of this type of work on progress in studies and language knowledge. Four types of skills were evaluated: writing, reading, listening, speaking. The figure shows the average assessment of students' progress in the experimental group on 4 indicators before and after the experiment. (Fig.1) The results revealed that the skills have improved on 4 indicators, especially in listening and speaking. However, weak students were able to improve their knowledge by 2 types of skills (reading and writing), while strong students improved their knowledge by 4 types of skills.
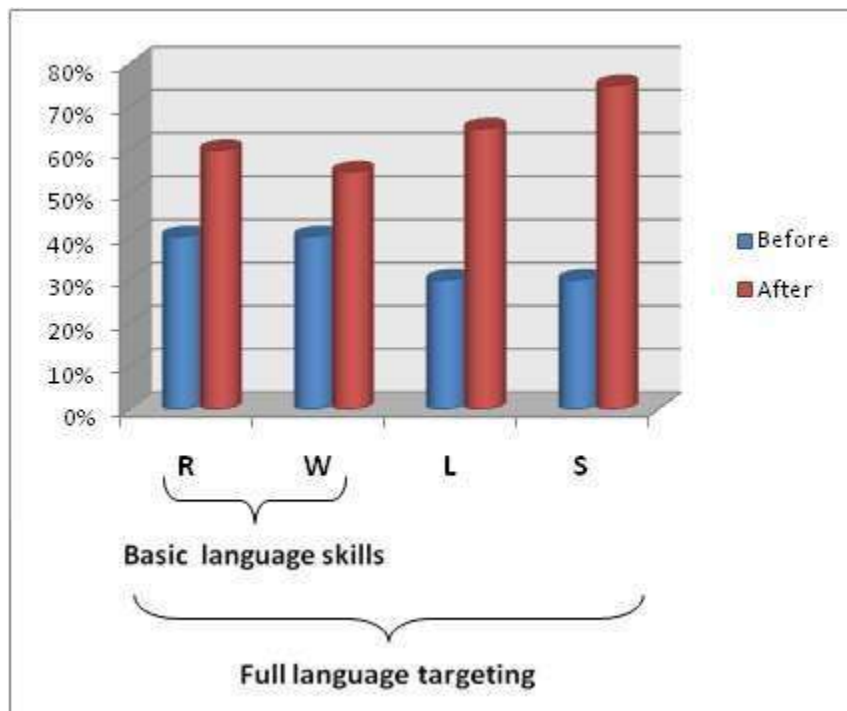
Figure 1: *Video blogging exercise*

R – reading, W – writing, L – listening, S - speaking

4. Conclusions

The analyze of the implementation of video blog technologies at the initial phase of foreign language learning shows us that integration of topical video blogs into the learning process as an extracurricular activity enhances the students' education, primarily, cultivates communication skills in foreign language, improves interest in a foreign language and motivation to learn it, ipso facto it proves the effectiveness of using modern technologies.

Thereby in the future, we hope to make a comparative analysis of video blogs, extend the subject area, to complicate tasks. It was concluded that the future development and implementation of a video blog as an interactive method of extracurricular activity will be an important and useful tool. We are also considering applying this method to the education of students in upper-level courses.

References

Abonales, T.P. (2016). Mobile technology and the creation of an artificial english-language environment outside the chinese classroom. [Special Issue]. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences. 2(1), 444-454.
https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2016.s21.444454

Beloventseva, M.V., Trunchenkova, N.N. (2014). Application of blog technologies in the teaching of a foreign language in a language higher education institution. Researches of young scientists. 82-84. Retrieved from: http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/92719/18-Beloventseva.pdf?sequence=1 (In Russian)

Bibik, I.A., Gritsenko, S.N. (2014). Information and communication Internet technologies in non-linguistic higher education institution as a tool for a competitive university teacher in the training of a competent specialist. Pedagogical sciences. Modern teaching methods. Retrieved from: http://www.rusnauka.com/18_DNI_2011/Pedagogica/5_89880.doc.htm (In Russian)

Bunjan, A., Suppasetseree, S. (2017). The Video Blog Based Role Play Lessons to Enhance English Oral Communication Skills for Tourism Students. International Journal of Educational Administration. 9 (1), 1-16. Retrieved from: http://www.ripublication.com

Lavrish, Y.E. (2014). Integration of blog technology into the teaching of a foreign language. Bulletin of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". Series: Philology. Pedagogy. 4, 107-113. Retrieved from: http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/vntufil_2014_4_14 (In Ukrainian)

Prikhodko, A.M. (2013). The use of blog-technology in the process of teaching Russian as a foreign language. Teaching of languages in higher institutions. 22, 202-208. Retrieved from: http://docplayer.net/42293906-Vikoristannya-blog-tehnologiyi-u-procesi-vikladannya-rosiyskoyi-movi-yak-inozemnoyi-prihodko-a-m-harkiv.html (In Ukrainian)

Puspa, A., Syahrial, S. (2017). The Students' Responses on the Implementation of Student-Made Video Project in ESP Classroom to Train 21st Century Skills. Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT 2017). Retrieved from: https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/iselt-17/25883558, https://doi.org/10.2991/iselt-17.2017.11

Rakhmanina, L., Kusumaningrum, D. (2017). The effectiveness of video blogging in teaching speaking viewed from students' learning motivation. Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT 2017). Retrieved from: http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/selt/article/viewFile/7980/6083

Tiarina, Y., Rozimela, Y. (2017). Reflection on Action: The Use of Reflective Journal Plus Video Recording. Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language

and Teaching (ISELT 2017), Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR). 110, 228-234. Retrieved from: https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/iselt-17/25883587, https://doi.org/10.2991/iselt-17.2017.40

Wulan, O.R.N., (2018). The effect of implementing podcast in enhancing students' speaking achievement in the fully digital era. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 3(3), 1173-1185, https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.33.11731185