



Article

Implementation of mobile-assisted language learning in the educational process



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Abstract: Introduction. Digitalisation is a process of transformation covering all spheres of society. The introduction of digital technologies significantly changes approaches to learning, opening new opportunities for building a flexible educational process. Mobile learning, as a form of digital education, plays an important role in this transformation, giving learners access to materials anytime and anywhere, making the educational process more accessible and adapted to the requirements of modern society. *The theoretical analysis* consists in examining the digitalisation of education in order to define the concept of mobility in the context of digital pedagogy, paying special attention to the concept of mobile-assisted language learning and its key components. The role of the teacher in the educational process is considered, which is done through the analysis of pedagogical behaviours in the classroom. *The empirical analysis* of the study consists of a pedagogical experiment based on the analysis conducted, which investigates the use of mobile blogging as a means of completing written foreign language assignments. *In conclusion*, the possibilities of adapting mobile language learning in different educational contexts are discussed and the prospects for effective integration of mobile blogging into the practice of foreign language teaching in higher education are positively evaluated.

Keywords: digital pedagogy, mobile-assisted language learning, mobile blogging, foreign languages, teaching methodology

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Научная статья

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Внедрение мобильных средств обучения иностранным языкам в учебный процесс

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Аннотация. Введение. Цифровизация представляет собой процесс трансформации, охватывающий все сферы жизни общества. Внедрение цифровых технологий существенно меняет подходы к обучению, открывая новые возможности для построения гибкого образовательного процесса. Мобильное обучение, как одна из форм цифрового образования, играет важную роль в этой трансформации, предоставляя обучающимся доступ к материалам в любое время и в любом месте, что делает образовательный процесс более доступным и адаптированным к требованиям современного общества. *Теоретический анализ* заключается в рассмотрении цифровизации образования с целью определения понятия «мобильность» в контексте цифровой педагогики, особое внимание концепции мобильного обучения языкам и ее ключевым компонентам (Mobile-assisted language learning). Рассматривается роль преподавателя в образовательном процессе, что осуществляется через анализ моделей педагогического поведения в рамках аудиторных занятий. *Эмпирический анализ.* Исследование состоит из проведения педагогического эксперимента, в ходе которого изучается использование мобильного блоггинга как средства выполнения письменных заданий по иностранному языку. *В заключении* рассматриваются возможности адаптации мобильного обучения иностранным языкам в различных образовательных контекстах, а также положительно оцениваются перспективы эффективной интеграции мобильного блоггинга в практику преподавания иностранных языков в системе высшего образования.

Ключевые слова: цифровая педагогика, мобильное обучение языку, мобильные блоги, иностранные языки, методика преподавания

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Introduction

Intensification of the educational process triggered by social challenges and the needs of the state pose new challenges for pedagogy.

Computerization of education is a key trend in Russia. Notably, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, digital education is now a ubiquitous aspect of modern education, enhancing accessibility by enabling instant access to information worldwide [1].

Theoretical analysis

The integration of digital platforms in education creates new concepts, forming digital pedagogy, which employs various digital technologies to improve the education process [2]. Foreign researchers consider digital pedagogy not as a new medium but a part of the system of education, defining it as “the exploration of the optimal utilization of digital technologies in the realms of teaching and learning” where software and devices are the necessary medium [3]. Thus, “digital pedagogy” is more about digitalization of the learning process rather than pedagogy itself. However, the term of this educational process exists on its own, providing researchers with a completely new approach to rethinking pedagogy.

A. A. Skulkin describes digital pedagogy as a sphere within pedagogical understanding with the focus on integrating and establishing innovative educational norms that meet modern conditions. It involves development of the techniques for introducing these forms into educational practice while simultaneously improving the skills of teachers [4].

Numerous interpretations for this term exist. According to I. V. Sergeeva, the essence of digital pedagogy lies in utilization of digital tools through the critical pedagogy framework rather than in their straightforward application for learning [5]. The emergence of the concept of “digital pedagogy” is naturally consistent with government initiatives in education, exemplified by projects such as “Modern Digital Educational Environment in the Russian Federation” [6]. Thus, the need to use electronic educational resources becomes obvious.

O. S. Kryukova believes that digital pedagogy is often associated with higher education, while online learning is employed both at universities and in secondary schools [7]. I. O. Petrushev em-

phasizes how digital pedagogy can simplify the work both for teachers and students, for example, by allowing students to complete their tasks at home and send them by e-mail [2].

Digital pedagogy facilitates learner’s mobility to access educational resources through wireless connections and portable devices. By the “mobility”, we understand learners’ accessibility to educational resources at their fingertips. This accessibility is a result of technological progress, as technologies are becoming increasingly widespread, even in the areas where traditional educational infrastructure is scarce [8]. As the modern technologies provide ubiquity and flexibility [9], we may speak about their mobility.

According to A. A. Skulkin, there are diverse resources of digital pedagogy, including online courses, educational platforms, digital libraries, and video conferencing tools [4].

The diversity of pedagogical tools is one of the advantages of digital pedagogy. This raises the question of the methodological justification of the use of certain resources in the context of the disciplines taught in higher education.

The demand for language learning applications has led to the emergence of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) which was realized through portable electronic devices. At the beginning of the XXI century, the idea of introducing MALL into education which was widespread among western scientists, gradually found its way to the Russian science. Due to the creation of a methodological framework for distance and blended learning, there is a potential for the development of the MALL methodology for teaching foreign languages at different levels [10].

Thus, a number of models of mobile-assisted language learning were offered by various scholars. One of them is a generalized model of N. N. Kasatkina, which reveals five interrelated elements of using MALL in the educational process:

1. Language (as central and ever-changing component);
2. Personality-oriented component;
3. Technical component;
4. Pedagogical and organizational components;
5. Social component [11].

Y. V. Troshina and N. O. Verbitskaya created the following model of mobile learning which consists of four main blocks:

1. Educational component. As a system-forming element, based on the selection of material;



2. Organization of learning component. As a systemic component, which considers mobile learning as a part of the learning process that takes place both in the institution (offline) and outside the institution (online);

3. Communication component. The component which provides interaction and feedback;

4. Technical component. A resource component that creates technical conditions necessary for the learning process [12].

Thus, based on the described models, we can identify key components for successful MALL integration into foreign language classes:

1. Methodology-oriented aspect. The pedagogical component should remain the basis for the use of mobile-assisted language learning;

2. Technical accessibility. Mobile technologies must be user-friendly across various devices and software platforms;

3. Socio-communicative aspect. Learning should be targeted at a certain social group and meet its interests and needs.

Diverse models in MALL and the growing need for information technology competencies prove that MALL technology plays a valuable role in foreign language teaching in higher education.

F. Çakmak, based on the works of A. Kukulska-Hume [13] gives the following roles of the teacher when integrating MALL into classroom teaching:

1. Teacher-driven activity. This involves full control of the learner's activities by the teacher;

2. Teacher-set activity. It is based on teacher-set goals, objectives and intended outcomes, but the process and outcome depend on the ideas and initiative of the learners;

3. Autonomous activity. This role provides full freedom, self-regulated and informal learning based on the learner's personal interests [9].

F. Çakmak asserts that mobile language learning emerged from the broader framework of mobile learning. For instance "Digital Pedagogy" mobile learning is categorized as a method within the discipline [14]. Similarly, in A. V. Golubinskaya's eponymous manual, mobile learning is placed within the realm of online learning methodologies [15, p. 40].

Mobile-assisted language learning expands on mobile learning, offering flexible learning via mobile phones. These devices serve as portals to global networks, resources, and learning platforms. Teachers in higher education can integrate MALL into the established models, fostering the

hybrid approach that combines teacher-led activities with learner autonomy. Thus, we perceive mobile-assisted language learning as an educational digital tool employed by educators to complement foreign language teaching methodologies.

Empirical analysis

Given that we see digital pedagogy as one of the pedagogical tools. It is possible to assume that MALL, when used as we have just outlined, can be part of higher education.

J. Yang in his paper "Mobile Assisted Language Learning: Review of the Recent Applications of Emerging Mobile Technologies" suggests microblogging (mobile blogging) as one of its tools [16].

Considering the hybrid teacher role in MALL technology, balancing "teacher-set activity" and "autonomous" approaches, we expect students to use this technique.

Teachers at the Ural Federal University use the "New Language Leader" textbook for ESL students, incorporating tasks such as, for example, composing travel experience essays (Figure 1). The students were given the task to write posts about their own travels modeled on a simulated blog post in the textbook. To enhance the experience and simulate real-world blogging, the students were encouraged to use Blogger.com (Figure 2), a Google platform accessible via mobile devices. This platform offers various features like photo integration and text structuring, mimicking a genuine blogging experience (Figure 3). In addition to the creative and practical component, the learners can interact and comment on each other's posts using the comment feature of the platform. The group produces a thematic blog comprising the students' posts and comments, with feedback given in class.

Our experience of using mobile blogs is similar to the examples described in J. Yang's article, where researchers studied the effectiveness of audio blogs in language learning. From the teacher's perspective, H. Y. Hsu, S. K. Wang, and L. Comac conducted a series of experiments using audioblogs as a pedagogical tool for English classes. Students submitted assignments via audioblogs, which then were archived on a platform resembling an audioblog. These activities improved communication and facilitated performance assessment between instructors and students [17].

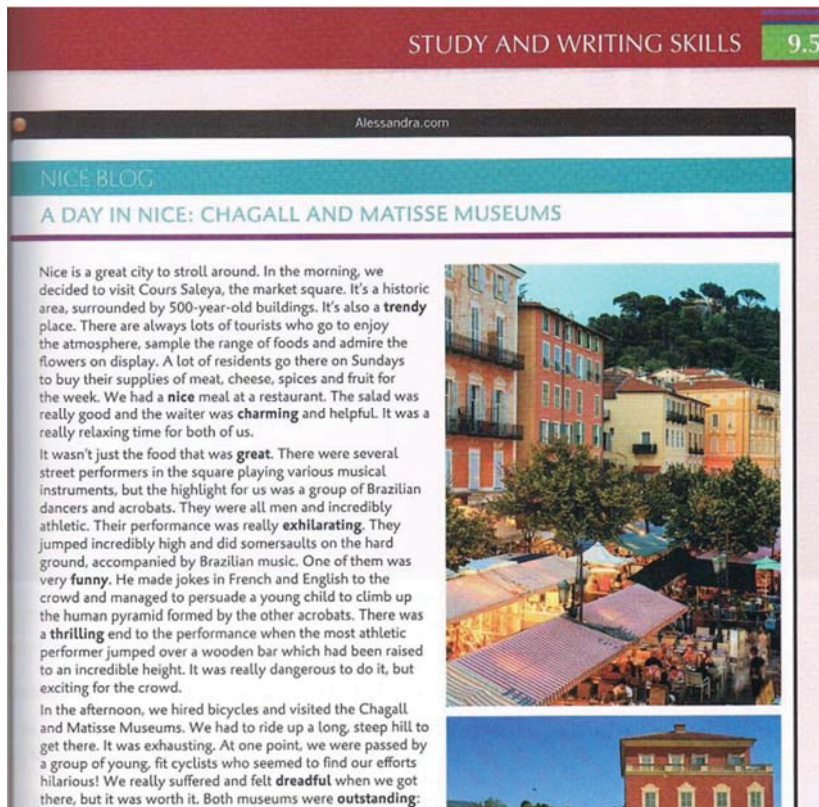


Fig. 1. Writing task example (color online)

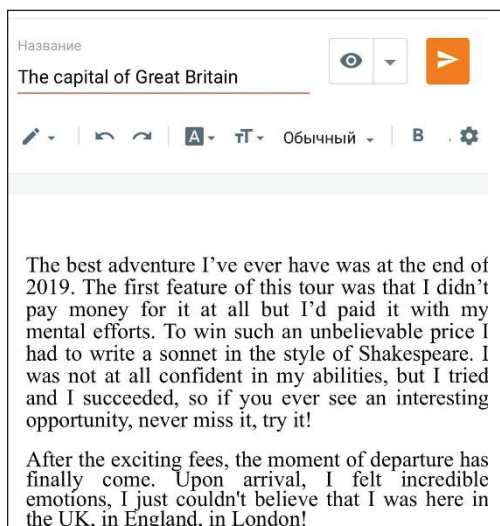


Fig. 2. Example of an essay

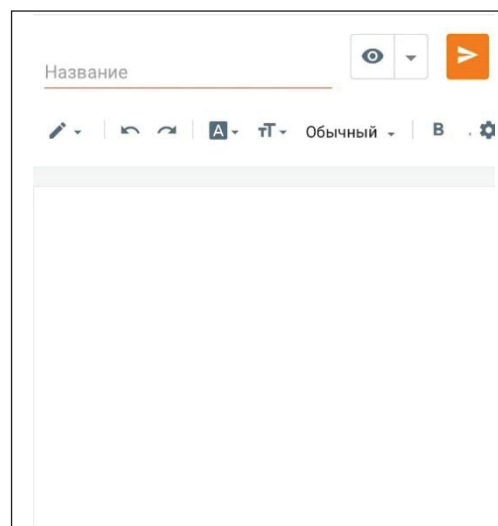


Fig. 3. Blogger.com interface

Results

The increasing digitization of higher education and widespread use of portable devices by learners suggest the potential for integrating mobile-assisted language learning into teaching languages for diverse specialists.

By now, pioneering research in this area has long evolved into more fundamental and widely recognized studies. The accessibility provided by learning tools, particularly mobile language learning, is undeniable. The wide range of options offered by electronic resources and devices in the educational process has the potential to introduce



something new into traditional classes. Ignoring existing digital pedagogy methods is unacceptable because integrating technological practices into the learning process can diversify it. Our experiment with a personal blog demonstrates the convenience and adaptability of any modern platform to educational needs, and support from mobile versions of websites enables learners to complete tasks anytime and anywhere.

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