SOCIAL MEDIA AS MEANS OF INDIVIDUALIZATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR STUDENTS MAJORING IN PHILOLOGY

A. O. Tomilina*, M. V. Maloivan**

The phenomenon of virtual reality is being separated and defined with reference to the notion of personal educational space in the virtual reality. It can be justified by the fact that social media has revolutionized young people's interests and become an essential part of their everyday lives. Modern education requires engaging students in the learning process. Therefore, social media serves as effective means of learning in general, as well as in the process of English language acquisition, moreover, being significantly productive due to the fact that it is connected with learners' emotions. The process of learning English can be considerably intensified and improved via the use of social media. Taking into account existing social media sites it has been decided to use Twitter.com owing to its popularity and wider options it suggests for English language learners. The research paper will report on the fundamentals of the use of social media to assist in the learning process of ELLs and practices of its use implemented in the Ukrainian educational institution among students majoring in English philology.

Twitter.com is used as extracurricular type of activity in the process of English knowledge acquisition. Having Twitter accounts ELLs have possibilities to share content they are interested in, to leave comments and in such a way to interact with each other. Such options definitely contribute to the formation of language competence which is essential for students majoring in English philology. The topics they cover in their posts correspond to the syllabus. With the help of social tools, they can act independently, express their points of view on different issues and find a solution to them. Meanwhile a lecturer plays a role of an observer so it implies that a learner-centered approach is provided. Thus, the implementation of social media in the process of learning English does not serve just as a source of information dissemination, but effective means of knowledge improvement and individualization of the process of the English knowledge acquisition at all levels.

* Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (PhD in Pedagogy), Senior Educator
(Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University)
anna.tomilina.anna@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-8529-4882
** Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (PhD in Pedagogy), Senior Educator
(Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University)
marina.maloivan@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0003-3330-1312

НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТІВ-ФІЛОЛОГІВ

А. О. Томіліна, М. В. Малоіван

Явище віртуальної реальності відокремлюється та визначається з посиланням на поняття особистого освітнього простору у віртуальній реальності. Це можна виправдати тим, що соціальні медіа зробили революцію в зацікавленості молоді, їх інтересах та стали важливою частиною їх повсякденного життя. Навчальний процес вимагає залучення студентів до процесу навчання. Соціальні медіа служать ефективним засобом навчання в цілому, а також в аудиторії, яка вивчає англійську як іноземну, зокрема, і, крім того, є значно продуктивними завдяки тому, що пов'язані з емоціями студентів. Процес вивчення англійської мови може бути значно інтенсифікований та вдосконалений за допомогою використання соціальних медіа. Враховуючи наявні сайти соціальних медіа, було прийнято рішення використовувати в навчанні Twitter.com завдяки його популярності та більш широким можливостям, які він пропонує студентам, які опановують англійську мову. У статті висвітлено основи використання соціальних медіа для сприяння процесу вивчення англійської мови та досвід використання їх в українському закладі освіти для підготовки студентів із спеціалізацією "англійська філологія".

Твітер використовується як соціальна мережа для позааудиторної діяльності в процесі засвоєння англійської мови. Маючи твітер-акаунти, студенти, які вивчають англійську мову як іноземну, мають можливість ділитися змістом того, що їх цікавить, залишати коментарі в постах і таким чином взаємодіяти. Такі варіанти, безумовно, сприяють формуванню мовної компетентності, яка є особливо важливою для студентів англійської філології. Теми, які вони висвітлюють у своїх публікаціях, відповідають навчальній програмі з предмета. За допомогою інструментів соціальних мереж студенти можуть діяти самостійно, висловлювати свою думку з різних питань та знаходити шляхи розв'язання проблем. Тим часом викладач відіграє роль спостерігача, це означає, що передбачено насамперед орієнтований на студента підхід у вивченні мови. Отже, впровадження соціальних медіа у процес вивчення англійської мови служить не просто джерелом поширення інформації, а й ефективним засобом удосконалення знань та індивідуалізації процесу засвоєння англійської мови на всіх рівнях.

Introduction of the issue. Tendencies prevailing and conditioning the ways of development of modern education environment imply the shifts in the learning process of students majoring in English philology. The shifts in question suppose the implementation of the use of IT-technologies into practice during classes and extracurricular activities ensuring innovative education of high quality. A lecturer is required to organize and provide future philologists' learning activities. That is why the issue of choosing effective means to implement the task set arises. One of the means of organization of English philology students' learning process, which lecturer's activities are focused on, is their independent work. The paper in question covers the possibilities of educational process organization within extracurricular activities via the means of IT-technologies in order to provide lifelong education. It is next to impossible not to take into account the fact that social networks have become an essential part of young people's life and shape their interests, therefore, a lecturer is to arrange a learning process, in particular of language acquisition,

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

being guided by the advantages and possibilities of social networks. Taking into consideration certain advantages and disadvantages of social networks and target-students' audience engaged in the learning process, a lecturer chooses the most appropriate way of intensifying education.

On analyzing popular social networks, which are of particular interest for young people, Twitter.com has been preferred as the most appropriate choice. The services provided by this site have a potential of tools and possibilities to benefit from their use in the process of English language acquisition at different stages.

Current state of the issue. Theoretical aspects and practical possibilities of IT-technologies use in the process of learning English are under consideration in the works of the following scientists and science practitioners: S. Titova [14], P. Sysoev [13], D. Klemm [7], R. Clark [9], D. Gonzalez [5] and others. They all emphasize the necessity and perspectiveness of IT-technologies implementation into the process of English language acquisition. Speaking in terms of the fundamental aspects of English learning via the use of Twitter.com, they are covered in the works of T. Barret [1], G. Grosseek & C. Holotescu [6], D. Silver [12] etc.

Though currently in Ukrainian pedagogic studies there is no detailed study of the possibilities of the implementation of English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology via the platform Twitter.com within classes and extracurricular activities, it has been considered as effective means of intensifying and individualizing the learning process to meet the interests and demands of modern society and innovative education.

The outline of unresolved issues brought up in the paper. Despite a considerable amount of works which deal with the potential of IT-technologies use in general and social networks respectively in the learning process in order to optimize it the scope of the use of social networks, Twitter.com in particular, during English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology has not been thoroughly covered yet.

Aim of research is to justify the potential of social networks use, namely the service of the website Twitter.com, while arranging the learning process of English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology within extracurricular activities in order to organize effective independent work.

Results and discussion. During the integration into Western European educational environment the system of Ukrainian higher education is experiencing significant changes, the requirements relating to the preparation of future specialists are being reviewed as well. According to modern requirements for education, learning process is built on the basis of implementation of IT-technologies. The possibilities of the IT-technologies are not restricted to a certain group of subjects. Therefore, their use is as well possible during the process of English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology. Defining a phenomenon "humanities" M. Bahtin points out that the objective of humanities is expressive and meaningful being; this being never coincides with itself and hence it is inexhaustible in its understanding and meaning [2]. The expression of attitude to a certain issue is a key component of education in humanities. The essential aspect of humanities is the expression of attitude to the issue. The implementation of the key aspect into humanities is possible due to the use of IT-technologies and social networks.

Students' extracurricular activities should rely on the motivational basis and should be aimed at a student that is a learner-centered approach of education is being realized due to

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

differentiation and individualization of education, which enable to take into account students' individual peculiarities, their interests and preferences. It implies that a lecturer uses methods, which assist in the effective implementation of individual routes of the learning process of students majoring in philology via the choice of a particular social network.

According to the statistical data released by the website Omnicoreagency as at 09.05.19, 330 million amounts for users who use the platform Twitter.com daily and their social activity amounts 500 millions of tweets a day, 80 % of them use it via their mobile devices [10]. The specified data serve as a confirmation of the popularity of the platform and the possibility of its convenient use exactly via mobile devices thus being always in handy which is a considerable argument in favour of young people's choice. Thus, the implementation of the platform in question into the process of English language acquisition opens up new opportunities for English language learners and lecturer.

The platform Twitter.com represents Web 2.0 information technologies. According to A. Goldin among the key principles of Web 2.0 there is interactivity, syndication and socialization [4].

Interactivity of the blog-platform Web 2.0 implies content management of the website i.e. users add certain content or edit the existing one and have a possibility of instant reaction to certain events. As for syndication, it is understood as a possibility of users partially of fully rely on the information obtained from other internet services and integrate them with each other. And socialization is an opportunity to create communities.

The principles which characterize the platform are significant for the process of English language acquisition by students majoring in philology. Due to the interactivity, English language learners are able to develop language skills managing their accounts with the appropriate content. Syndication encourages interpreting information obtained from other resources, thereby motivating its analysis and critical thinking. Socialization is an interaction between students while managing the content of their accounts and between users from all over the world as well who are united due to the fact that they share common interests. Communities are created due to such tools of the website Twitter.com as leaving comments on other users' tweets, sending private messages, possibilities of following accounts of other people, who are of particular interest and also due to the option of retweeting content that is sharing information from other accounts on your one. Moreover, the website Twitter.com is constantly updating to provide their users with more opportunities, which can be considered as an advantage as well. Additional principles of Twitter.com are informative and educational ones. Informativeness is obtaining current news information and following certain communicative users' actions: being informed about their matters and business, study their response to different events and sharing their news, thoughts, ideas [6].

Regarding the educational principles, website Twitter.com is considered to be one of the most popular educational platforms, which is based on Web 2.0 internet technologies. Moreover, public availability of messages which appear in a tweet-feed as a specific peculiarity of the website Twitter.com enhances the capacities of the resource in question [11].

The benefits of the platform Twitter.com include the fact that it is a free platform, which does not require any special computer literacy from students and educators, does not need any special technical equipment, does not take too much space on mobile devices, and is not time consuming

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

while accomplishing assignments in the learning process. A lecturer is only required to give instructions and provide an algorithm of twitter-accounts functioning. But the possibilities of the use of the website Twitter.com in educational activities cannot be limited only to a traditional algorithm of actions, on the contrary, it is flexible enough, thus, it enables its adaptation to the tasks set within the educational process. For instance, traditional question "What's happening?" on Twitter.com can be replaced with any other, which would be relevant to a certain educational task.

The developers of Twitter.com are constantly working on its improvement, updating it, expanding the options of its use in the learning process. There are, as well, certain apps available, which can be synchronized with the website Twitter.com and may serve as additional tools for considerable intensification of the learning process and its adaptation. For instance, tweetdeck is a free application created for the assistance in using different social networks, integrated into the interface of the website Twitter.com.

The algorithm of the possibilities of the educational potential of the platform Twitter.com in the process of English language acquisition by students majoring in philology is the following: the students of the third and fourth years of the department of foreign languages have been requested to use their twitter-accounts during extracurricular activities; they have created a certain community with their classmates and a lecturer in the corresponding social network; in such a way connectivism is being intensified among the participants who are engaged in the process of English language acquisition; the participants of the community are obliged to post on Twitter.com several times a week.

The students majoring in philology get a wide range of assignments, which are to be accomplished via the use of Twitter tools. For instance, studying the module "Travelling" students have a possibility to write short messages specifying their preferences in trips, while their followers (classmates) are supposed to leave comments on the posts. Thus, the interaction between them keeps going on outside their auditorium during extracurricular activities. It assists in developing communicative competence, which is considered to be an essential part of the future philologists' preparation. Also, students are able to share other users' material or from another resource in their feed, but there is an obligatory condition for them, so called "a must", to leave a comment regardless and express their view, as well as to explain why this content is of particular interest for them. This task is comprehensible and manageable even for students with a basic level of English hence the process of education individualization is being carried out. In order to implement education individualization and differentiation, students from time to time are given tasks, which suppose that they are free to express their thoughts without being assigned any specific topic, the ones, which are a timely subject of the moment or the ones which attract their interest. The students are in a habit of creating memes and distributing them among each other, while exchanging texts on Twitter.com, which favours mastering spoken English as the verbal component of memes is very similar to spoken language, because it demonstrates a tolerant attitude to spelling, grammar mistakes, use of contractions, etc.

The users of Twitter.com attach hashtags to their tweets, which are now a must-use to be able to quickly draw other users' attention to their posts or expressed point of view. The possibilities of the use of hashtags on the platform Twitter.com in the process of English language acquisition involve

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

the following assignment accomplishment: the students are to create hashtags, which includes relevant lexical material i.e. idiomatic phrases, abbreviations etc.

The idea presented by George Mayson, a lecturer of the Speech Club, relating to the use of Twitter.com to improve skills of improvised monologue, implies that a speaker within 5 minutes has to combine and link extracts of tweets to convert them into a coherent text for his/her further performance on the stage [11]. Implementing George Mayson's idea into the process of English language acquisition lecturers are able to use Twitter.com within English as a foreign language classroom, but not only during extra-curricular activities in order to assist their students in mastering skills of spontaneous speaking effectively. Accordingly, a student receives extracts from tweets relevant for a certain topic, and has to speak on the issue in topic combining them into a logically arranged story. In such a way resources of Twitter.com assist in overcoming barriers, which in the future English language learners might face in the process of situational conversation.

Except for the possibilities of interactive communication within the created community students have access to find educational information on the processes of English language acquisition which is of particular interest for them and to get practical tips provided by educators from all around the world. For instance, students can subscribe to the following educational communities created on the platform Twitter.com: bbcle, myenglishteache, ellalanguage; or students have an option of searching for information on English language acquisition via key words in hashtags which are relevant to studying the language, for example, *#learnenglish.*

Nowadays among Twitter users it is quite popular to write short film or book reviews. Their characteristic is that they cannot exceed 140 characters. For instance: "One Hundred Years of Solitude –Magical, multi-layered epic of the Buendia family and their town, Macondo; Twilight – Captures the struggle between defying our instincts and satisfying our desires. Better than the movie!" [3]. Hence the platform Twitter.com can be used for enhancing writing skills of students specialized in philology, for example, while writing stories or film and book reviews. The specified message length is limited up to 140 characters on Twitter.com, nevertheless, it does not serve as an obstacle for mastering writing skills, but on the contrary, encourages students in a possibly brief, laconic way and with a careful consideration to use skills of academic writing and narrative techniques.

Another way of using Twitter.com is a story-writing or composition-writing, which is done by the whole community. To accomplish this task, each participant of the community writes a sentence including linking words, phrases and stylistic devices, and which is a logical follow-up of the sentence, initiated by a previous story-teller. As a result of such group work they get a story, created sentence-by-sentence by all of them. It not only favours connectivism, but the development of writing skills as well. That is all the students are engaged synchronously in accomplishing educational activities in the virtual classroom.

Thus, the implementation of Twitter.com in the process of learning English aimed at students majoring in English philology has significant educational possibilities, which are realized via its tools. The use of the platform in question at different stages of English language acquisition enables to intensify students' motivation considerably, carry out principles of individualization and differentiation of education, students' potential sufficiently and contributes to the

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

development of language competence. The platform Twitter.com in the process of learning English meets modern requirements of the educational environment faced by a lecturer, making it possible for him/her to move with the shifts, which are currently taking place in education.

Conclusions and research perspectives. The necessity of the IT-technologies and social networks use in the educational process has been stated in the article; their potential and possibilities in the process of English language acquisition by students of English philology have been considered.

On studying statistical data and determining possibilities, which provide social networks in the educational environment, the site Twitter.com has been given a preference as effective platform of developing students' potential and increasing their motivation.

The structure of the platform Twitter.com, its tools and areas for the use have been examined to determine possibilities, which should be taken into consideration, while implementing it in the process of English learning.

Due to the use of the platform Twitter.com in the educational environment, students develop their language competence, on-the-spot situational speaking skills, practice the use of spoken language. Moreover, they get the possibilities to develop and improve their writing skills, ability to express ideas in clear and concise language, use lexical units appropriate for the situation, think critically and perceive certain information.

In order to achieve set goals while using the platform Twitter.com during the process of learning English by students of English philology, a lecturer gives certain instructions to be followed and to be stuck to by students.

On considering the possibilities of the use of the platform Twitter.com while acquiring English knowledge, practical tips of its implementation in the process of learning by students majoring in English philology have been suggested. Generally, the platform Twitter.com is used within extra-curricular activities but the possibilities of its use during classes have been suggested as well. Perspectives of further research imply more detailed preparation of the methodology of the implementation of English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology via the use of the platform Twitter.com during English as a foreign language classroom.

REFERENCES (TRANSLATED & TRANSLITARATED)

1. Barrett, T. (2008). Twitter a Teaching and Learning Tool. *ICT in My Classroom.* Retrieved from http://tbarrett.edublogs.org/2008/Q3/29/twitter-a-teaching-and-learning-tool [in English].

2. Bakhtin, M.M. *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva [Esthetics of Oral Art].* Retrieved from http://teatr-lib.ru/Library/Bahtin/esthetic/ [in Russian].

3. Book Reviews in 140. *twitter.com.* Retrieved from https://twitter.com/books140 [in English].

4. Goldin, A. M. *Obrazovanie: vzglyad pedagoga [Education: from Educator's perspective].* Retrieved from https://old.computerra.ru/readitorial/393364/ [in Russian].

5. Gonzalez, D. Teaching and learning through chat: a taxonomy of educational chat for EFL/ESL. *Teaching English with technology.* 2003, vol. 3, № 4, 57-69 [in English].

6. Grosseek, G., & Holotescu, C. *Can We Use Twitter for Educational Activities?* Retrieved from http://adl.unap.ro/else/ [in English].

7. Klemm, D. *Soczialnye media v obuchenii yazykam – 3 soveta prepodavatelyam [Social Media in Teaching Languages – 3 Tips for Educators].* Retrieved from http://lingwin.ru/-3 [in Russian].

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal. Pedagogical Sciences. Vol. 1 (100)

Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка.
Педагогічні науки. Вип. 1 (100)

8. Markova, U.U. (2011). Metodika razvitiya umenij pismennoy rechi studentov na osnove viki tekhnologiy (angliyskiy yazyk, yazykovoy vuz) [Methodology of Developing Writing Skills of Students Based on Wiki-Technologies (English language, linguistic Higher Educational Establishment)]. *Candidate's thesis.* Moskva: MGGU imeni M. A. Sholokhova [in Russian].

9. McBride, K., & Clark, R.P. Teaching the craft of writing in the age of Twitter. *The College Educator Seminar Series.* Retrieved from http://about.poynter.org/ [in English].

10. Omnicore. A Full-Service Healthcare Marketing Agency. *omnicoreagency.com.* Retrieved from https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/ [in English].

11. Parry, D.H. *Twitter as a tool to expand the classroom conversation.* Retrieved from http://mcpress.media-commons.org/artoflearning/using-twitter-but-not-in-the-classroom/ [in English].

12. Silver, D. *This Replaces Those – Twitter In the Classroom. Teaching and Learning in the City Called San Francisco.* Retrieved from http://silverinsf.blogspot.com/2009/02/this-replaces-those-twitter-in.html [in English].

13. Sysoev, P.V. (2012). *Informatsionnye i kommunikatsionnye tekhnologii v obuchenii inostrannomu yazyku: teoriya i praktika [IT-technologies in Teaching a Foreign Language: Theory and Practice].* Moskva: Izd-vo Glossa – Press [in Russian].

14. Titova, S.V. (2009). *Informaczionno-kommunikaczionnye tekhnologii v gumanitarnom obrazovanii: teoriya i praktika [IT-technologies in Teaching Humanities: Theory and Practice].* Moskva: Izd-vo P-Tsentr [in Russian].