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Consecutive Interpreting Training in Groups of Foreign Students by Means of LCT and ICT Technologies

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Abstract

This paper focuses on teaching consecutive interpreting to foreign students (in Chinese-English language pair), by means of the use of new linguistic computer technologies (LCT) and information and communication technologies (ICT). These include: Moodle, MOOC, Flipped classroom, Tag cloud, Scratch, which have the potential to train and develop skills not only directly in the process of education, but also over the further professional life, regardless of the location of future linguists and interpreters.

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Keywords: Film texts; film dialogues; subtitle; the Chinese language.

1. Introduction

Foreign economic and political development of the People's Republic of China induces worldwide distribution of the Chinese language. This has led to a growing demand for highly skilled professionals in different training areas to supply joint projects between China and other countries. Therefore, learning the Chinese language and translation are relevant to professionals in different countries not only in the course of training, but also throughout life. In this regard, there is a contradiction between the urgent need to establish a continuing professional linguistic training and development of a competitive professional from a perspective of a multidisciplinary approach. The aim is to ensure intercultural communication in today's rapidly changing world and to address the lack of appropriate scientifically grounded and experimentally proven techniques for teaching Chinese as a foreign language, as well as consecutive

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interpreting. This has spurred an ongoing integration of linguistic computer technologies (LCT) and information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching both Chinese language and translation (Tikhonova, Tereshkova).

2. Methodology

2.1. The learning environment

According to the social services commissioning in the sphere of humanities, natural sciences, physical and mathematical training fields of a classical university, the future linguist-translator must be able to tackle a number of tasks in accordance with the professional activities existing in the areas of organization and communication, research and information, research and development. The convergence of educational and occupational standards has altered the definition of the purpose of higher education. The principal educational program now serves to form both the major subject-specific and cross-curricular competences, as well as to set the individual course for a flexible system of continuous lifetime language leaning. The use of LCT and ICT in teaching oral bilingual discourse provides conditions for mastering a foreign language and cultural particularities within the Internet environment in the process of intercultural and professional interaction.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study comprised the seminal works by leading experts in the following areas:

- theories of intercultural communication and foreign language discourse (Gural, Harris and others);
- ICT in teaching foreign languages and linguistics (Evstigneev, Privorotskaya, Sysoev and others);
- Systematic, activity- and student-centered, and developmental approaches to foreign language education (Baker, Gural, Zimnyaya, Millrood and others);
- conscious comparative, communicative and cognitive approaches to teaching foreign languages (Gural, Polyakov, Serova and others).

It appears that the novelty of the methodological principles should lie within the revision of the classical concepts of educational technologies based on a multidisciplinary approach regarding knowledge of the nature of language in which languages, environment, linguistic identity constitute an open, complex, self-sustaining system.

The study uses *communicative-cognitive approach*, which allows to consider students' individual characteristics and cognitive preferences. Communicative-cognitive approach to teaching consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair involves learning foreign languages in a virtual environment (conditions most closely resembling the actual functioning of the language) regarding its communicative and cognitive components, namely: communicative aspects in terms of their relationship with cognitive processes (thinking, memory, emotions, perception of reality, imagination, etc.). In addition, it enables to develop accurate knowledge about the target language system (studied languages) and the ability to perform communication in another language in a virtual environment. Orientation of activities on communication forms a number of competences (linguistic, discursive, social and cultural, strategic, etc.).

The *cognitive approach* to teaching a foreign language contributes to the accumulation and collation of theoretical, linguoculturological knowledge and the development of cognitive abilities of a student. Communicative-cognitive orientation of the education process requires attention to the foreign student's identity and to the conditions in which the process of education is implemented. Combining communicative and cognitive approach in foreign language teaching methodology strengthens it.

Psycholinguistic approach appears to be particularly effective in the framework of such research. It is becoming evident that better understanding of some of the features of language development and the processes of language acquisition require going beyond the scope of linguistics and considering the individual's mental processes. This approach enables to organize linguistic material in the mental lexicon, and makes it available at the right time (Aitchison). When analyzing the phenomena from the perspective of psycholinguistics, the focus of the attention is linguistic identity, while the processes of text generation and perception are the result of its (identity's) verbal and

cogitative activity. All psycholinguistic studies emphasize the complexity and diversity of text perception and comprehension processes.

Linguo-philosophical approach to language learning allows describing language as a communicative self-organizing system, which can be compared to a living organism (Gural). Therefore, a more successful language learning is achieved when it relies on the knowledge of the laws of language development and provides the possibility to simulate communication processes in the course of training.

Synergetic approach is also used in this study, since, according to the scientific school of S.K. Gural, only unconventional, lateral thinking allows considering self-organization in the language. Synergistic analysis of the language provides new understanding of the meaning-making, organization of communication processes, as well as language training methods.

Discursive approach (discourse-analysis approach) allows deeper understanding of all the layers of the text.

2.2. Participants

Experimental teaching was organized under the Department of Chinese language of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Tomsk State University. It was implemented in natural conditions within the framework of a profession-oriented course “Consecutive interpreting” The experimental training involved ten third and fourth year English, Chinese, Russian and Turkish students studying Chinese as a first foreign language within “Translation and translation theory” major. The subjects were allocated to one experimental group (6 students) and one control group (4 students).

2.3. Research design

Availability of language education to all specialties of classical university, preserving fundamental knowledge, and supported with linguistic computer technologies (LCT) and information and communication technologies (ICT) enables to establish an environment for learning consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair covering various fields. It also allows humanities students and practitioners, exercising their profession in the territory of the Russian Federation and abroad, to achieve better results in their fields. This also supports talented people with disabilities who are isolated and do not have the opportunity to visit classes on a regular basis, which exacerbates social differentiation and inequality, therefore contradicting the values of a civil society.

The objective of learning consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair lies within formation of interpreter’s professional competency, which includes a number of particular competences and skills, as well as setting individual course for a flexible system of continuous lifetime language leaning. The following issues were addressed in order to develop effective methods in teaching interpreting:

1. Does the use of LCT and ICT in teaching consecutive interpreting provide conditions for mastering a foreign language and cultural particularities within the Internet environment in the process of intercultural and professional interaction in Chinese-English language pair?
2. What are the major challenges encountered by foreign students when implementing consecutive interpreting at the initial stage of training?

In order to determine the effectiveness of teaching methods for consecutive interpreting learning, students were offered tests and assignments at initial and final stages of the training, which included:

1. Shadowing of speaker's statements in Chinese;
2. Translation of precise vocabulary (numbers, names of states, proper names, etc.);
3. Consecutive interpreting of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and texts;
4. Development of interpreter's note-taking skills;
5. Conversation simulation within oral bilingual discourse;
6. Assessment of translations by students and a teacher.

Exercises were worded as follows: formulate a problem regarding translation of the proposed statements into another language in terms of consecutive interpretation, memorize, translate and repeat a set of words that constitute (or do not constitute) a thematic unity, select a statement corresponding to this communicative situation, interpret the sentences, paying particular attention to translation of the highlighted words, etc.

2.4. Teaching Framework

Achieving this goal requires a close relationship of the education system with potential employers, skilled professionals in various fields, as well as the development of vocationally oriented education that is certainly more accessible in a virtual environment. The search for new opportunities when designing linguistic education environment is focused on the formation of information and communication competence, development of skills required to adjust to the new conditions of foreign-language oral activity and to strategies for overcoming communication barriers in intercultural communication situations and within computer-mediated communication.

A significant number of Internet technologies is used in the classroom for teaching consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair, namely, online educational resources, MOOC (massive open online courses), Moodle, scratch, tagcloud, flipped classroom, etc. However, any of these technologies alone is able to supply only some specific tasks, but unable to achieve the target objective (development of skills, abilities and competences required for the implementation of consecutive interpretation). Only combination of all components is able to address this issue. The following additional educational tools were used in this study:

- Moodle (the project of global development that follows the "social constructivist pedagogy", intended to provide computer support for a structural framework of social constructive education system and is able to meet the needs of students within the consecutive interpreting course).
- MOOC (massive open online course, which includes video lectures, presentations, assessment tasks and tests).
- Flipped classroom (provides an opportunity to deliver theoretical and practical material during extracurricular time).
- Tag cloud (provides convenient ubiquitous on-demand access to general content via network).
- Scratch (programming environment that allows creation of interactive stories for students specializing in any field).
- Campus courses (provide additional access to the educational programs of different departments, faculties and institutions, and the possibility of free navigation within an elective part of the educational program in the space of the entire university campus).

The abovementioned ICT and LCT technologies were selected based on the following factors:

- Opportunity for teacher and students to conduct asynchronous (at different time intervals) activity, which plays an important role in the period of excessive teaching and student loads, which is due to introduction of additional disciplines related or unrelated to translation (theory of translation, technical translation, economic translation, etc.).
- Opportunity for teachers and students to manage the contents of certain resources (forums, glossaries and discussions).
- Opportunity to integrate external applications and media (audio, video) in different languages, including students' native languages.
- Opportunity to assess assignments performed by students (for both teachers and other students in the group).

It was suggested to divide the process of teaching consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair into 2 stages.

The first stage of training includes students familiarizing themselves with the text, recognizing their communicative situation, establishing communicants' intentions, acquiring more details on how to work with any given type of information, and familiarizing themselves with the rules and guidelines for working with ICT and LCT technologies. In addition, they must accomplish the following exercises and tasks: Listen to the text and specify a

situation in which the act of communication takes place; identify a statement's communicative objective; specify communicative intention of interlocutors; write down the text using the interpreter's note-taking and share it with classmates; then reinterpret the text based on proposed interpreter's notes; then ask the author of the message clarifying questions on the proposed text, etc.

This stage is intended to give a general understanding of how ICT and LCT technologies work, demonstrate peculiarities of working with them, as well as to familiarize with certain challenges encountered in consecutive interpretation in Chinese-English language pair.

The second stage (simulation) comprises simulation of the process of consecutive interpretation in Chinese-English language pair in different communicative situations, and the training aimed at carrying out professional activities (interpretation of audio, video, monologs, dialogs, meetings, conferences). This is followed by exercises and activities: interpret monological/dialogical speech from one language to another (sentence by sentence/paragraph by paragraph); prepare a monological/dialogical speech using studied vocabulary followed by its subsequent interpretation in the classroom; prepare a monological/dialogical speech using studied vocabulary, incorporating a sudden change of the discussion topic followed by its subsequent interpretation in the classroom. It is also necessary to analyze proposed speech-translation based on the following parameters: a) adequacy and equivalence of the target text; b) interpreter's articulation; c) fulfillment of statement's communicative objective; d) compliance of the translation with the communicative situation.

Development of the proposed model of consecutive interpreting teaching in Chinese-English language pair suggests the following guidelines for selection of educational materials: use of authentic materials (audio, video, text); selection of themed material; use of exercises and activities that ensure the formation of competences that underlie the professional objective of a consecutive interpreter; availability of precise vocabulary and terminology, requiring translation at formal sign-oriented level without referring to denotation.

3. Discussion of Results

Peer assessment revealed the extent to which students mastered basic skills, knowledge and competences, as well as teacher's assessment of performed assignments and exercises. Assessment of assignments and exercises by students were conducted asynchronously using ICT and LCT technologies, allowing them to comment on each other's translations, highlighting advantages and disadvantages based on the adequacy and equivalence of translation, as well as the rules and usage of the target language.

The teacher carried out assessment of the tasks and exercises implementation inside and outside the classroom using ICT and LCT technologies. This type of assessment was carried out based on the following criteria: the ability to use means of communication in a situation involving two languages in compliance with the stated objective; the ability to extract key information when working with authentic texts and objective set to an interpreter; the ability to render received information properly and correctly in compliance with the stated communicative objective.

We analyzed the results of the above types of assignments that were performed by foreign students learning Chinese. Quantitative and qualitative indicators were taken into account in assessing the implementation of assignments in the initial and final stages - *qualitative:* accuracy of translation of the message content, accuracy of rendering of the key information; *quantitative:* number of subjects, time allocated for the completion of assignments; and results that served as the basis for drawing conclusions. The results of each task were assessed using a ten-point grading scale; thus, the calculation of the results in each task was carried out using the following formula:

$$K = \frac{x}{n * a} * 10 ,$$

where K is the accomplishment quotient, x is the total number of correct answers, a is the number of students in a group and n is the total number of tasks.

Table 1 presents a comparative table of formative assessment of the future consecutive interpreters, which reflects the performance indicators of students learning by the traditional and author's methods.

Table 1. Level of formation of professional competence of a consecutive interpreter in Chinese-English language pair.

Tasks	Before experimental learning (Average)		After experimental learning (Average)	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Task 1	1,5	1,2	7,5	9,7
Task 2	1,9	2,0	6,0	9,0
Task 3	3,0	3,3	8,1	9,7
Task 4	3,5	3,0	9,4	9,8
Task 5	2,1	2,5	7,0	8,2
Task 6	3,1	2,9	6,9	7,5

Thus, observed differences between the control and experimental groups at the initial and final stages of education are quite significant, and therefore the level of formation of professional competence of a consecutive interpreter in Chinese-English language pair in experimental group of students was significantly higher than that of the control group.

In addition to the assignments, students were offered to complete a survey to identify the problems and difficulties that need to be taken into account in the implementation of further consecutive interpreting training in Chinese-English language pair, as well as to determine the importance of ICT and LCT technologies. Survey findings revealed the following difficulties: insufficient vocabulary when implementing consecutive interpreting in a particular area of communication; underdeveloped mechanism for switching from one language to another due to the fact that English and Chinese languages are not students' mother tongues; inability to use interpreter's notes in consecutive interpreting; lack of emotive-empathic competence, which enables correct interpretation of information regardless of the communicative situation. However, students pointed out the need for further use of ICT and LCT technologies to develop their professional competency, both in the course of university training and future activities.

The course has contributed to the formation of: the ability to independently organize training/interpreting activities; self-regulation; the ability to perform sight translation; the ability to translate precise vocabulary; interpreter's note-taking skills; the ability to immediately pick translation; the ability to predict the speech; precise vocabulary interpreting skills; the ability to interpret different Chinese dialects, the mental lexicon of students, the required volume of thesaurus (via quest game, tests, crossword puzzles, etc.); the additional background knowledge (through a virtual tour), the ability to analyze and use in practice obtained material independently; the ability to find required information at any time; ICT competence of a student; providing an increase of knowledge in all areas of science within the humanities, natural sciences, physical and mathematical fields of the classical university.

4. Conclusion

Combined use of new abovementioned ICT and LCT technologies in teaching consecutive interpreting in Chinese-English language pair enables creating educational environment supporting the development of professional competency of a consecutive interpreter, and the establishment of teacher's professional ICT competency, as well as an open learning environment. The use of virtual classes and electronic workbooks in

junction with linguists training program “Translation and translation theory” makes learning more accessible, interesting and efficient.

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