I. O. BILETSKA
Uman, Ukraine

COMPUTER PROGRAMS IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE USA

In recent decades, most American higher education institutions that train foreign language teachers have become familiar with information and communication technologies. Analyzing the changes that have taken place in recent years in the theory and practice of foreign language learning, one can state that information technology, distance learning forms ceased to be just fashionable words and went to the category of real cases. The effectiveness and the final results of foreign language learning depend on the level of development of learning resources and the rational organization of their use.

It should be emphasized that the first attempts to use a computer in language learning were made in the United States. It happened at the beginning of the 60s of the XX century at two universities: Stanford – during the application of the Russian language teaching program and New York – German. The "PLATO project", which began in 1960 at the University of Illinois, played a key role in the development of computer technology in language learning and demonstrated the importance of the problem.

Today, the use of a computer in language study at American universities goes beyond the traditional functions (tutorial and stimulating). First of all, it becomes an international means of communication and a source of information necessary for training in professional foreign language communication. In addition, it helps for scientific research, the processing of external newly created actions at the level of motives and needs, as well as a means of creating interactivity to teach the real conditions in which foreign communication takes place.

Researchers in the field of using electronic media for foreign languages teaching have noted the effectiveness of such tasks as work in the electronic network of their own country and abroad, between students and teachers, communication in small groups by the computer and others.

In our opinion, the Computer-assistant language learning system (CALL), developed in the 1980s, is popular in today's American foreign-language professional education system. This is an approach to language teaching that involves using a computer as an auxiliary tool for material presentation and evaluation. American researcher M. Levy defines CALL as a search and study of computer use techniques in language learning. In 1985, the first CALL conference was held where teachers discussed the issues of the introduction of computer technologies and stimulated the activation of activities in this area.

According to D. Zaika, American scientists distinguish three directions in CALL development: behavioral, communicative, and integration. So, proposed

by R. Taylor, the behavioral trend considers the computer as a tutor and a means of transporting educational material to students. In this case, the CALL activity is based on the stimulation of such types of interactivity as «student – computer», «student – student» [1].

Researchers D. Healey and N. Johnson have developed programs aimed at practicing professional communication in a particular language and include reading, text rebuilding and language games. In this case, the functions of the computer as a tutor become a bit wider: the process of finding the right answer involves a large number of its options, as well as monitoring and interaction systems. The task of learning is not to stimulate the search for the correct answer, but to create a discussion of certain events and phenomena [1, p. 199].

J. Underwood is a founder of the communicative direction. He highlights the following CALL principles: the focus should be on language teaching, and grammar is considered an auxiliary; stimulating the student's creative activity; to teach to analyze; to use appropriate speech styles according to different conditions and situations; not to reproduce the material of the textbook, but to investigate it and make certain conclusions [2].

As for the third, integration direction, it is based on multimedia technologies, which become of top priority in the language training of future teachers of a foreign language. Almost all American universities, starting in the 1960s, introduced media courses.

Multimedia means are sets of visual, audio and other means of displaying information integrated in an interactive software environment. Here, in our opinion, it is necessary to consider the concept of «media education» – a direction in pedagogy, which studies mass communication. Its main task is to prepare a new generation for the life in the modern «information» environment, to perceive the flow of various knowledge, to teach them to understand, to realized the effects of their influence on the psyche, to master the ways of communication on the basis of non-verbal forms of communication with the help of technical means.

According to O. Zhukova, the concept of media education began to form in the late 60's of the XX century when two relatively independent lines arose – the so-called «critical literacy» and «visual literacy» [3]. Regarding «critical literacy», she saw the main goal in «the critical thinking formation» of a man in terms of mass communication. It was more widespread in European countries. «Visual literacy» stressed on the development of non-verbal communication skills (perception, understanding, use and creation of visual and audiovisual information) and, importantly, prevailed in the United States.

In 1973, the International Council for Cinema and Television first identified media education as theory and practical skills teaching for mastering modern means of mass communication as part of a specific and autonomous field of knowledge in pedagogical theory and practice. Such training should be distinguished from the use of mass communication as an auxiliary element in

different disciplines teaching. In 1990s two main approaches to the organization of media education were identified: integrated (the study of mass communication in the course of traditional subjects) and special (introduction of a new discipline). In the mid-80s of the XX century, the idea to combine «media literacy» with computer literacy was proclaimed, because the computer can be regarded as a communication tool. Since then, the process of combining media education and computer disciplines has begun.

Thus, such a direction as visual literacy in education is laid down in the development of multimedia learning means. The International Visual Literacy Association, the Center for communication between education and mass communication, and other organizations operate in the United States of America.

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