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THE INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA AS A LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCE ON THE INITIAL LEVEL OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Summary. This paper deals with modern language learning technologies. It reviews software platform designed for developing Bulgarian phonemic awareness.

Keywords: computers in language learning; technology enhanced language learning; CALL.

The adopted European educational framework implies to bringing-up-to-date of school subjects' contents, curricula and syllabuses, and raises the requirement for availability of electronic education resources' in the teaching room, so as to enhance the conventional work by giving students the opportunity for self-training, extra curricula engagements and supplementary education.

In the context of the above stated the addressee of the new programs must be regarded in a new aspect. The children born in the 80s grew surrounded by digital media; they got early accustomed to the high technologies and the unlimited access to information. This generation can find any information instantly through the internet. These young people do not accept the stereotype; they want to be independent and autonomous, and they firmly exercise their right of choice.

Discussions on the views, behavior and value system of that new generation have often been held, but teaching continues as it used to be: students are given the same homework tasks as their parents were; lesson units are taught slowly, linearly, didactically, and consequently teachers are teased by the confronted boredom and lack of interest. In most cases teachers of foreign languages are contented to enter class with a DVD or a tape recorder so that "students can listen to an authentic speech", and they do not realize that one of the effective ways to attract students' attention is to integrate in the teaching process the instruments which students use every day in their private virtual space.

In fact, the potential of electronic education resources is underestimated as a means of dynamically presenting the subject material in the process of language acquisition and for self-studying in class or at home. For the new students the laptops and notebooks are part of their daily life and being such they must be present in the modern teaching room [1].

The foreign language learning requires purposeful work promoting students' phonemic awareness, as a necessary component of speech competence in the early stages of learning a foreign language. This facilitates the development of four types of speech activity – reading, writing, auditing, speaking.

The specific nature of different language phonological systems requires thorough knowledge when adapting phonetic exercises. So far, software products have been adapted basically to languages within one language group or sub-group. The last generation software products concern speech recognition and computer analysis but they clear up the problems connected mainly with the correctness of pronunciation [3].

The formation of sound culture for non-native phonemes as part of foreign language teaching in the Bulgarian schools and universities is not provided with suitable software products of adequate

contents. The review of the digital educational products offered on our market ascertains that to the moment the national education system is not supplied with relevant software applications. The lack of appropriate electronic content indicates that the phonological matters in the foreign language teaching are insufficiently involved, underestimated and limited by nearly all syllabi.

The overall theoretical consideration of the problem of integrating the resources of the application software to intensify the formation of language phonemic awareness prepare empirical confirmation of hypothesis: In selecting the most suitable environment for developing application software and then focused analysis, it was concluded that the most practical should be applicable multimedia web-based learning environment that provides all the possibilities for interactivity, easy and convenient access and comfort at work.

In fact, the development of software products for language teaching starts with the determination of the basic phonological segments. Linguistics regards the phoneme as the basic functional unit of a language on its phonological level. On the other hand, the phoneme is realized via ***different position variations (allophones)***. The determination of the precise number of phonemes and their allophones is one of the most difficult tasks for computational linguistics [2].
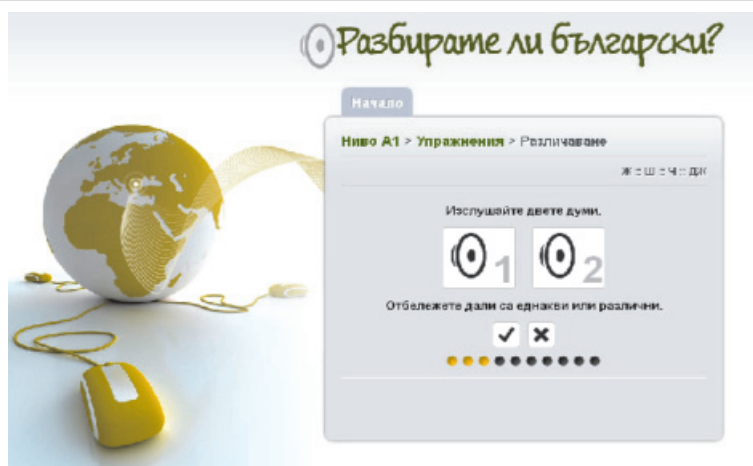
Exercises' interface

We developed software system "Do you understand Bulgarian?" (www.bghearing.eu) as a software application designed for classroom and self-study. It provides a platform to systematically and consistently develop sound awareness of Bulgarian speech – without limit in time and place, so that trainees can practice and experiment at their own pace. The software package has the option to be further developed and enriched with other phonetic exercises that directly correspond to the already made. Used to work on during the learning process or self- textbook software product can contribute to a higher quality and easier learning Bulgarian as a foreign language.

During the formation of language phonemic awareness essential role performs visibility – auditory and visual. The sound

signal should be accompanied by appropriate visual support that makes auditory perception more stable. Verbal visual support necessary tools for reinforcing a phonological material in control of reproduction of speech sounds. Therefore, the proposed web-based software package phonological exercises. "Do you understand Bulgarian?" serious attention is paid to the interface. At each exercise has additional information to indicate the sequence of actions that the user must carry out in order to hear the phonetic material and undertake the necessary analysis and operation on the input data. The keys are also an element of visual support. Navigation is visual, intuitive sound signal . It is consistent with the various computer skills of the trainees.

In conclusion, it is proven that the formed spontaneously hearing foreign language does not reach the required level and often leads to defective speech by holding back the formation of correct articulation habits to distortion of the entire speech process. But new technologies make it possible to study in a modern learning environment with or without a teacher. The main advantage of a multimedia language learning environment that helps focus on learning content, without neglecting language form or learning strategies . This offers the potential to improve the quality of educational content, the ability to perform the tasks.

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