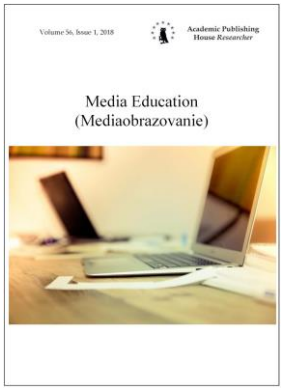
Published in the Slovak Republic
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Has been issued since 2005
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2018, 58(3): 129-139

DOI: 10.13187/me.2018.3.129
www.ejournal53.com



The use of media educational environment for teaching master students effective cross-cultural communication in professional sphere (case study of the english language)

Tatiana Vepreva [a], Olga Pechinkina [a, *]

[a] Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, Russian Federation

Abstract

Nowadays there is a growing necessity of highly qualified and flexible professionals. They have to possess a good knowledge of foreign languages to be able to communicate with colleagues from different countries. Thus, teachers of foreign language are in constant search for the most effective ways of training. In this paper, the authors analyze the process of teaching foreign (English) language to Master students and identify the most effective ways of teaching communication in professional sphere. The study use a critical analysis of the literature on the problem, monitoring of the process of teaching foreign language, generalization of the authors' own experience of teaching. The authors define an important role of modern media in the foreign language teaching and develop a programme of teaching the English language to Master students using media educational environment.

Keywords: foreign language, Master students, Master's programme, media educational environment, media competence, professional communication.

1. Introduction

Our society is experiencing an increasing need for skilled professionals who can quickly adapt to the changing conditions of the modern world. The objective of universities is to train and educate graduates who can easily perform their professional duties in any country and in any international team. Such specialists can successfully work on joint projects with representatives of other cultures due to their knowledge of foreign languages and traditions and customs of different countries.

The main aim of the discipline "Foreign Language in Professional Sphere" is to increase the existing level of foreign language proficiency of graduates achieved at the previous stages of education and the formation of foreign-language communicative competence, allowing them to use foreign language in the process of oral and written cross-cultural communication for solving professional problems.

At Northern (Arctic) Federal University (NArFU) the workload of this discipline is 216 academic hours or 6 credits. Laboratory works consist of 64 hours and all the rest belongs to individual work. At the same time, the University has Master programmes consisting of 108 academic hours with only 32 hours of laboratory works.

* Corresponding author
E-mail address: o.pechinkina@narfu.ru (O.V. Pechinkina)

Thus, the process of teaching Master students becomes complicated by conditions and factors quite obvious to participants of educational process: insufficient level of school training, insufficient number of hours, allocated to the study of this discipline at the University, the traditional teaching methods, necessity to cover all the components of professional and language training such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, professional communication at the same time.

The teacher, therefore, has to organize the training of Master students in such a way that they have the opportunity to practise recently taught material and revise the acquired knowledge and skills independently.

The rapid development of technology has resulted in a large number of multimedia resources available to foreign language teachers to facilitate learning. For example, websites Ozdic.com (http://www.ozdic.com/collocation-dictionary), OneLook.com (https://onelook.com) are widely used to learn about vocabulary and to update lexical skills. British Council website (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-and-vocabulary) helps to form grammar skills, website UEfAP (http://www.uefap.com/index.htm) masters academic skills.

However, these websites train separate skills and do not develop foreign-language communicative competence of Master students. In our opinion one should not deprive them of communication with the teacher completely, therefore the most effective model of teaching is blended.

2. Materials and methods

The object of the research was the process of training Master students of non-linguistic specialties of NArFU for effective professional communication in a foreign language using media-educational environment.

The aim of the research is theoretical substantiation and practical development of a mixed model of foreign language teaching for Master students with the use of media educational environment.

In connection with the proposed aim we put the following objectives:

• to study and analyze the process of teaching foreign (English) language to Master students of non-linguistic specialties;

• to identify the most effective ways of teaching foreign language communication in professional sphere;

• to develop a programme of foreign (English) language training for Master students on the basis of media educational environment.

In solving the above objectives, we used a critical analysis of the literature on the problem, monitored the process of teaching a foreign language and generalized our own teaching experience.

3. Discussion

The process of teaching is constantly changing and improving due to the altering requirements of society and employers.

The developers of the last Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education (FSES-HE 3++) identify three universal competences (UC) which have to be formed upon successful completion of any Master's programme. They are: communication (UC-4), cross-cultural interaction (UC-5) and self-organization and self-development (UC-6).

As a result of the formation of UC-4 (communication) Master students should be able to use modern communicative technologies, in a foreign language as well, for academic and professional interaction. This includes:

• knowledge of the system, norms of word usage, grammar, spelling rules of native and foreign languages;

• ability to create oral and written texts of different genres, taking into account the goals, objectives and conditions of communication;

• ability to easily communicate and read original literature on professional topics in a foreign language;

• ability to conduct business correspondence taking into consideration the peculiarities of the style of formal and informal letters, socio-cultural differences in the native and foreign languages;

• ability to present the results of academic and professional activities at various scientific events, including international ones;

• skills necessary for effective participation in academic and professional discussions;

• proficiency in the use of information and communication technologies in the search for the necessary information in the process of solving communication problems in native and foreign languages.

Some researchers speak about science literacy, term introduced by P.d.H. Hurd (Airey et al., 2008: 151). There is no common understanding of this term. In order to make it more precise D. Roberts added two visions of scientific literacy: Vision I – coming to understand the content of science itself, and Vision II – coming to understand the implications and applications of science, particularly in relation to everyday situations (Airey et al., 2008: 151).

The acquired competence UC-5 (cross-cultural interaction) allows Master students to analyze and consider the diversity of cultures in the process of cross-cultural communication. This competence implies:

• knowledge of cultural peculiarities and traditions of different social groups and nationalities;

• knowledge of principles and norms of tolerant attitude to bearers of other religious and political views;

• ability to interact effectively with people taking into account their socio-cultural characteristics in order to successfully perform professional tasks;

• ability to work in a team, interact with experts in subject areas.

As a result of formation of UC-6 (self-organization and self-development) a Master student should be capable to determine and implement the priorities of his own activity and ways to improve them on the basis of self-assessment. For this purpose he or she:

• knows various ways of professional self-improvement;

• is able to find and analyze information sources (websites, forums, periodicals);

• processes the skills of self-education, technologies of acquisition, use and updating of his/her professional knowledge.

Thus, we see that the role of education has shifted, no longer focusing on decontextualized subject content, but rather on defining and inviting situations in which students can train and develop their competences or fundamental human qualities, that is, building, modifying and reformulating their knowledge, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and skills through a critical and creative approach (Cruz-Diaz, 2015: 33). Many researchers are sure that in spite of the fact that students benefit from enormous access to all kinds of media sources they still lack the ability to critically analyse information they find and gather (Storksdieck, 2016: 170).

The reason why is that media nature has changed. We were used to conceptualize them as tools, or as environments: nowadays media area disappearing as tools, they are embedded in our lives and migrating into the things around us. This means they are no more something we can take care of or not, but a natural dimension of our knowledge, jobs and relationships (Rivoltella, 2015).

Speaking about media education, Ukrainian researchers distinguish professionally-oriented media education of future specialists in various fields of training as it is necessary «to use professionally-oriented media texts in the training of future specialists most effectively, so that in the future they can successfully apply the skills of working with mass media to improve the professional level and self-education throughout life» (Onkovich, 2015: 19).

What is new in the media age is the awareness of being dependent on the media, of the mediation of our world to us and among us by semiotic systems that invariably have to be coded and decoded. Everything that determines our action is produced by the media and symbolically conveyed – «the mediatization of everything», seen as the epochal awareness and the media practices of today, moves media literacy from the periphery of specialized education into the center of education in general (Rath, 2017: 8569).

According to S. Tarkhov «the main aim of media education is training of a media competent individual able to cope with practical tasks in the information society, proficient in the use of information of all kinds, having a command of communication via various information and communication technologies» (Tarkhov, 2016: 67).

M. Storksdieck speaks about critical information literacy as a part of science learning and suggests implementing it into the existing reform of science education in the US. He mentions the U.S. Next Generation Science Standards in the form of performance expectations defining the students' abilities during their study. These expectations are based on the eight science and

engineering practices and comprise asking questions and defining problems, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematics and computational thinking, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, obtaining, evaluating and communicating information (Storksdieck, 2016: 172).

Domestic researchers V.A. Adolf, V.V. Vonog and T.V. Zhavner believe that for a modern specialist an ability «to search and analyze authentic information in the sphere of professional communication» is of fundamental importance for professional and personal growth (Zhavner et al., 2016: 245).

It can be developed in the process of education, when the student is given the opportunity to grasp different obvious and latent potentialities of the new media. In the most general form, teaching interaction with the new media is based on the following elements: educational (acquisition of knowledge about the structure of the media language and development of skills of analytical decoding of the content), edifying (formation of the ability to understand moral and ethical issues in media texts), antiglamorous (elimination of consumerist threat for the student), and practical (development of practical skills for working with the media, which allow students to produce their own media texts) (Nikolaeva et al., 2017: 134).

Russian researcher S. Mindeeva considers media competence of a future engineer as an integral professionally significant quality which defines his/her ability and readiness to interact in the system «engineer – media – society» and facilitates to realize engineering activity effectively (Mindeeva, 2017: 50). This competence incorporates: 1) ability and readiness to use different media educational technologies in professional area; 2) specific knowledge, skills and attitudes in the sphere of media; 3) interrelation with professional activity having its applied character and specificity (Mindeeva, 2017: 50).

In the sphere of media education researchers deal with a great number of terms, concepts and notions. For example, J. Gómez Galán, consideres that the terms «media education», «media pedagogy» and «media literacy» are generally the same. «Media education» appeared together with the mass communication media and is the most widely used term. «Media literacy» is used in the U.S and intended mostly for «education of citizens for the adequate use and consumption of techno-media products and also so that they can reach the capacities to analyze, use, and even express, in different ways, the message produced by them» (Gómez Galán, 2015: 34). Today with the appearance of new multimedia and hypermedia languages and tools for using them the researcher suggests the term «digital literacy». Moreover, he supposes that digital revolution has started a process of convergence that he calls techno-media, in which media «stop existing as separate entities in order to form part of a unique digital media that covers the whole of human communication» (Gómez Galán, 2015: 33).

E-learning and distance educational technologies are increasingly being used in Master's programmes. According to the Law of the Russian Federation on Education (№ 273-FL, dd. 29.12.2012) (ed. from 29.07.2017) (http://sudact.ru/law/federalnyi-zakon-ot-29122012-n-273-fz-ob/glava-2/statia-16), E-learning – is an organization of educational activities with the use of information contained in databases and used in the implementation of educational programmes and providing its processing of information technologies, technical means, as well as information and telecommunication networks that provide transmission of this information over communication lines, interaction of students and teaching staff. The same law treats distance educational technologies as educational technologies implemented mainly with the use of information and telecommunication networks in the indirect (at a distance) interaction of students and teachers.

In accordance with the requirements of Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education (FSES-HE 3++) each student has to be provided with unlimited individual access to the electronic information and educational environment of the organization. The electronic educational environment of the organization has to provide:

• access to curricula, working programmes of disciplines (modules), practices, electronic educational publications and resources specified in working programmes of disciplines and practices;

• formation of electronic portfolios of students, which include their test papers;

• monitoring of the course of educational process, results of the intermediate certification and results of the Master's programme;

• conducting training sessions, procedures for assessing the results of training, implementation of which is provided using e-learning and distant educational technologies;

• interaction between participants of educational process, including the synchronous and (or) asynchronous interaction via Internet.

In addition, students should be provided with access to modern professional databases and information reference systems, which are determined in the programme handbooks and are subject to updating.

The use of information and communication technologies is an integral part of the learning process. According to a number of researchers (Zhavner et al., 2016: 247), we use various resources while teaching a foreign language to students of engineering specialties. They are: 1) Internet resources that are not intended for teaching directly such as social networks, Skype, e-mail, etc.; 2) various professionally-oriented websites, where texts and videos demonstrate the principles of operation of some mechanisms and devices, and contain information about particular phenomena in various scientific fields; 3) e-learning courses (resources, containing a complex of educational materials realized in the information training system).

According to T.V. Zhavner, V.V. Vonog, V.A. Adolf, the use of e-learning courses has a number of undoubted advantages: it makes it possible to carry out effective distance and correspondence learning, as well as to increase the motivation of full-time students through unusual and creative work; the learning process can be performed at any time convenient for the teacher and student; with the help of various e-learning tools it is possible to develop almost any skills of foreign language communication (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, reading, writing, listening), with the exception of speaking skills, which can not be fully developed (Zhavner et al., 2016: 248).

J.L. Jensen et al. consider flipped learning as one of the most popular modern learning technology. It has many advantages such as independence and self-organisation of students, more free time for face-to-face study in comparison to traditional lecture learning (Jensen et al., 2018). Moreover, the use of learning management system (LMS) in the academic process was studied by many researchers and the following advantages were highlighted: – storage of a huge amount of authentic information; – redistribution of class and out-of-class hours; – creation of modular learning when every module is a complete unit; - use of various forms of control; – increase of students' interest and motivation to foreign language acquisition with the help of diverse unconventional learning materials; - individual set of training materials); – possibility of interactive cooperation between a teacher and a student» (Vonog et al., 2015: 27). S. Tarkhov adds one more advantage of LMS, which is personalized interactive learning on the basis on educational resources integrated into the global media space (Tarkhov, 2016: 70).

According to A. Nemirich, media educational environment is «a specially organized environment aimed at the acquisition of certain knowledge and skills in which the goals, content, methods and organizational forms of education become mobile and available for change within a particular educational institution» (Nemirich, 2011: 25-31).

I.A. Fateeva believes that media educational environment is «objectively existing set of socio-political, technical, pedagogical and other conditions in which media educational activity of people take place» (Fateeva, 2007: 3).

V.V. Gura defines media educational environment as a cultural and educational environment where the main carrier of information for an individual is an electronic educational resource in the form of text, image, sound or video. Media educational environment, in turn, is divided into «natural» and designed environments. «Natural» environment is considered to be an information aspect of the modern cultural environment and is represented by electronic media, periodicals, computer information networks, etc. From the author's point of view, the designed media educational environment is «a modern pedagogical system aimed at organizing conditions for humane purposeful interaction of individuals with electronic information and educational resources and media for the benefit of their personal and cultural development and professional socialization». Further, the author introduces the concept of Personality-centered media educational environment, which he defines as a pedagogical system that implements the content information support of the educational process and takes into account the personal characteristics

of the interaction of subjects of educational process with electronic educational resources (Gura, 2007: 199).

L.A. Ivanova suggests considering media and educational spaces as complementary, creating in turn media educational space on the basis of integration of education and information map of the world (Ivanova, 2010: 67).

The purpose of educational media environment functioning is to provide remote interactive access to information and educational resources of higher education institution and information openness in accordance with the requirements of the current legislation of the Russian Federation in the field of education (Albekov et al., 2017: 88).

In this work we support the view held by A.V. Fedorov and accept the following definition of media educational environment: «Media educational environment is multifaceted holistic, psychosocial media reality, providing a set of necessary pedagogical conditions of modern learning technologies and software and methodological tools of learning that are based on modern information and media technologies, providing support and cognitive activity access to information and media resources» (Fedorov, 2017: 18).

By psycho-pedagogical learning conditions we understand:

• ability to choose your learning path;
• relaxed, friendly atmosphere;
• training in cooperation;
• acceptance of responsibility for the learning outcomes by undergraduates;
• availability of constant feedback with the teacher.

Modern learning technologies include:

• modular learning technology;
• developing learning technology;
• technology of development of critical thinking and problem learning;
• «inverted» learning technology (flipped learning);
• technology of «mixed» learning (blended learning).

Programme and methodical means of training include:

• a system of remote education (Sakai) ;
• Internet.

Thus, we see that requirements to modern process of learning in general and to learning a foreign language in particular contain the need to combine modern training techniques and e-learning (distance learning technologies). This allows us to assume that for teaching Master students effective cross-cultural communication in the professional sphere it is necessary to use the media educational environment in all its diversity. But here we should consider one more aspect – the use of copyrighted material as this issue is very delicate. One of the solutions is the adherence to the «Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy Education» (2007), reviewed by a team of experts, adopted by several organizations, such as the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME), the Media Education Foundation, etc., and discussed by R. Hobbs in one of her articles (Hobbs, 2016). As the Code states, «educators can, under some circumstances: (1) make copies of newspaper articles, TV shows, and other copyrighted works, and use them and keep them for educational use; (2) create curriculum materials and scholarship with copyrighted materials embedded; and (3) share, sell, and distribute curriculum materials with copyrighted materials embedded. Learners can, under some circumstances (4) use copyrighted works in creating new material; and (5) distribute their works digitally if they meet the transformativeness» (Hobbs, 2016: 52).

4. Results

In NArFU two systems of distance learning are implemented now: Moodle and Sakai. After analyzing these virtual environments for learning and collaboration in the University environment, we have chosen the Sakai platform that is used by many educational institutions around the world. This platform allows:

- organize information support of the educational process with the use of distance educational technologies;
- manage users of all categories;
- store, update and systematize educational and methodical resources;

- interact with all the participants of the distance learning process;
- monitor the distance learning process.

The Sakai platform has the following tools: Homepage, Syllabus, Lectures, Assignments, Tests , Quizzes, Gradebook, Discussion Forums, Webinars, Glossary, Management of the website, Resources, Site Statistics and Help. The Main page contains information about the course, its abstract, keywords, a link to the presentation and information about the teacher who is conducting the course. Here you can set up a calendar, notifications about messages in the forum, mail and read announcements. Master students do not need to learn the schedule and remember the deadlines of individual tasks. All the necessary information related to the course is situated here.

Homepage contains common functionality such as recent announcements, chat messages, discussion forums, shared collaboration spaces and a course site information page.

Syllabus is the working programme of the discipline, it contains guidelines for teachers and students, educational, methodical and information support as well as a set of assessment tasks. Master students can get acquainted with the programme of the studied discipline, basic and additional literature, Internet sources independently. Here they can also get instructions for the performing certain types of tasks.

In the Lectures tool there are materials for obligatory theoretical studying. These materials include authentic texts, the presentations of lectures, scientific articles, audio and video Internet sources.

With the Assignments tool the teacher can create and grade online or offline assignments. The result of these tasks is a text, file or set of files with the previously specified deadlines and the possibility to retake the test.

The Tests , Quizzes tool is used for self-examination before lessons or examinations, for tests and also for surveys and feedback. Teachers can create and manage such tests using closed and open ended questions, matching, question pools, set point value, auto-grading, statistics, timed assessments, high security, audio recording.

The Forums tool is used to support teaching discipline and provide advice. It allows creating, moderating and managing discussion topics and groups within a course and sending private messages to participants. Chat tool engages students in real-time conversations with course or project participants.

The Webinars tool is intended for creation of interactive online conferences in the BigBlueButton web application.

The total workload of «Foreign Language in Professional Sphere» discipline of 216 academic hours was divided into 64 contact and 152 self-study hours. 16 and 52 of them respectively are distant hours when students have to perform tasks on Sakai platform using media environment.

It's worth mentioning that the whole course is divided into four modules: 1) Self-presentation; 2) Professionally oriented media texts; 3) Participating in scientific events, and 4) Academic presentations. Every module comprises assignments for distant work. So, the following tasks can be included in the first module «Self-presentation»:

• To develop critical thinking and evaluation skills students are assigned to watch the video «How to Apply to a Master's Programme at Lund University, Sweden» (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7L7CBBb_cF0) and write an essay (about 300 words) comparing the procedure of applying to a Master's programme at Lund University (Sweden) with the similar procedure at NArFU. Students are asked to highlight merits and drawbacks of the video taking into account different criteria such as the structure of the video, colours, music, etc.

• As students are supposed to take part in conferences, seminars and symposiums they should be capable to introduce themselves effectively. To master this skill they watch a video from TED's Talk (for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1xt7zgnuK0), write a text which should include: 1) some ideas or facts from the video; 2) ways which students believe to be reasonable to introduce themselves in this or that situation, and 3) ways students like to introduce themselves considering the target audience, the aim of the report or a speech, and expected outcomes of the presentation.

• Not only videos but websites as well can help gain this objective. In this case students are assigned to study three media texts «Self Introduction Speech» retrieved from different websites (https://www.best-speech-topics.com/self-introduction-speech.html, https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Speech-Introducing-Yourself, and https://www.free-power-point-templates.com/articles/

examples-of-self-introduction-speeches), to evaluate them and to write their own self introduction speech either for academic, or business activity.

The second module «Professionally oriented media texts» includes such tasks as:

•Not everything you can find on the Internet is true and you cannot trust all the sources. At the first lesson students learn how to evaluate online information. It is usually done by organizing a discussion where students share their previous experience and debate how they find information online, whether everything they read online is true, how they know about it, what consequences of spreading false or inaccurate information are, etc. After that they are given some problems to solve like:

- Suppose you are not sure that some information is correct. How will you double-check it?
- Two sources you trust give different information about the problem. What should you do?
- At home students have to answer a specific question or find some facts with the help of the Internet and justify their source. Such tasks help Master students to develop critical thinking skills.

• Films are more attractive learning media than traditional textbooks. They offer a lot of clues like facial expressions, gestures, authentic accents to understand the content. Using film in language teaching can also offer a wide range of activities suitable for students, stimulating the most able students and supporting the ones with problems to learning. Films place language in context in a unique way. They present aspects of culture in authentic settings, and they provide an accurate presentation of language in use. That is why this media is widely used in Master students' education for developing communicative and cross-cultural communicative competences. For our course we have chosen short films or videos with the time of duration not more than 5 minutes. After watching the film students analyze it answering the following questions:

- What caught your attention?
- Where did the story happen? Did the setting matter, or could it have been set anywhere?
- Was there anything you liked?
- Was there anything you disliked?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Would you like to know more about how the film was made? What would you like to know?
- What would you tell other people about this film?

• At language lessons students get knowledge not only in English but in their profession. They watch two or three videos on the topic and say: What is it about? Is it fact or fiction? Who is it for? Who made it? After discussing these issues they choose the most educative and appropriate video for better understanding of the research problem.

• To practise language skills students are shown a short film without sound and are asked to create subtitles to accompany short sequences of spoken dialogues. Then they watch it with the sound and check whether they guessed the content and used correct language.

• Nowadays all kinds of professionally oriented videos can be retrieved on video hosting «YouTube». For example, for Master students in the programme «Chemical Technology of Wood» we can offer to watch the video «Making of Pulp» (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Uh3XIadm1A,t=39s) and do the following assignments: 1) make the glossary of the media text; 2) make a plan of the video; 3) write a summary of the video; 4) comment on the content of the video (what is new for you, what is done differently in our country, what can be improved, what can be added, etc.).

• Students in the programme «Industrial Ecology» watch the video «Sustainability easily explained» (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5r4loXPyx8) and complete the following assignments: 1) make a glossary for the video; 2) make a plan of the video; 3) write 3-4 key words for every bullet point; 4) choose one bullet point and write an essay discussing it; 5) evaluate the video you've seen.

• Master students have to read scientific articles on their research problems. They cannot avoid using modern media while looking for literature. To find a proper paper for reading they need to evaluate sources and learn the information about the author, his or her qualifications and credibility, date of publication, etc. So, students are to read the excerpt from the article «Industrial ecology: goals and definitions» by Reid Lifset and Thomas E. Graedel (http://booksee.org/book/618603), write the main ideas from the excerpt in their own words, search for some other definitions of industrial ecology (at least two or three definitions), and finally

write an essay analysing the definitions they find and expressing and exemplifying their own understanding of industrial ecology.

• Students of any Master programme are asked to study some online journal (for students in «Chemical Technology of Wood» let it be «Journal of Wood Chemistry and Technology» (http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/lwct20/current) and choose any article they like. After reading the article, they are assigned to make a list of new words corresponding to their specialty, translate an excerpt from this article, and describe the structure of this article emphasizing the main ideas and auxiliary ones.

• Students can search for appropriate articles themselves. In this case they have to retrieve in the Internet two articles in English related to their dissertation, cite the links of the articles or download the articles, and give the overview of these articles synthesizing them in one text, comparing their structures and evaluating the content.

The third module «Participating in scientific events» is represented by the following tasks:

• Master students rather often participate in various mobility or exchange programmes. Here we can work with a great number of websites. So, if you want to study at a foreign university, firstly, you should find a programme suitable for you. To achieve this goal: 1) study the information about different funds and programmes following the link - http://narfu.ru/international/projects/grants or you may refer to other resources as well; 2) choose two or three grants or mobility programmes appropriate to your scientific research and give a short critical overview of the chosen programmes (who can apply, how and when, what s/he will get, what are expected outcomes, etc.); 3) choose a university which is a good fit for you regarding your scientific interests and explain your choice.

• To achieve the aim of studying at a foreign university, to take part in some joint research programme, or to apply for a grant, students should be able to draft a persuasive curriculum vitae. That's why they have the task to study some websites (for instance, CV Advice Section by Section, retrieved from:

https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/cvs/Pages/sectionbysection.aspx, How to Write a Resume, retrieved from: http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs-careers/applying-for-jobs/how-to-write-a-resume, or How to Write a CV, retrieved from: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv), compare the information offered by these websites, analyze strong and weak points of every sample and create the most effective template.

The fourth module «Academic presentations» can include such task as:

• Study the text «Planning a Scientific Presentation» (for example, https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~van/cpsc590/presentations.pdf, http://www.biomech.uottawa.ca/english/teaching/apa6905/lectures/presentation-style.pdf or http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~hultin/chem7900/Resources/CAPES04_Presentation_Skills.pdf) and using the template try to write the very first draft of your future scientific presentation. Think and write an essay expressing your agreement or disagreement with these rules and add your own ideas about efficient academic presentation (250-300 words).

Teaching English cannot avoid mastering language skills in general and media educational environment offers many resources to do this. For example, the Lecture tool in Sakai platform in addition to theoretical materials includes Useful links, which offer students connections to authentic online dictionaries Macmillan (https://www.macmillandictionary.com) and Oxford (https://www.oxforddictionaries.com). Students are offered a task to find the definition of a term in both dictionaries, compare the definitions and analyze the examples offered in there in order to identify the features of the use of a word. In addition, at the lesson students can discuss the interfaces of both online dictionaries, color scheme, usability and, if possible, offer options for enhancement of resources.

Resources of the British Council (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en) allow teachers to offer students assignments covering all the activities: reading, speaking, listening, writing. We should emphasize that these resources are not used as a technical means of education, but as a media educational environment. For instance, the website Podcasts for Professionals (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/business-and-work) offers a wide range of podcasts, one of them being «Biotechnology: Listen to two friends talking about genetically modified food. Frank is for GM food, but Ann is against it» (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/podcasts-professionals/biotechnology). The first step is pre-listening tasks: 1) Here are some words and

expressions you will hear in the podcast. Match them to their definitions; 2) Frank and Ann are having a conversation about GM foods. Put six words you expect to hear in the conversation in the 'Yes' column. Put the other words in the 'No' column. The next task is to state whether some statements are true or false, which is followed by the task to read the sentences summarizing the conversation between Frank and Ann and choose the correct words. All the tasks can be downloaded and completed in the written from instead of the online one. Two questions are recommended for discussion: What are the laws in your country regarding GM food? Is GM food a threat to the future or is it rather a source of hope, in your opinion? Finally, students are to write some words in «Comments» section where they express their standpoint replying to the previous participants and formulating their own questions.

The «Useful Links» section proposes various services, for example, «News in Levels. World News for Students of English» (https://www.newsinlevels.com/#). Here we can find one and the same news in three variants for students with different level of English, all of them in text and audio formats. News is very actual, let's quote the news from 19.03.2018 about S. Hawking's death who deceased March 13, 2018 (https://www.newsinlevels.com/products/professor-stephen-hawking-level-1/). Students can look through this resource in order to discuss some of the relevant or urgent news during the Warm-up activity at the lesson.

5. Conclusion

In order to be adapted to the rapidly changing world every professional has to constantly improve his/her media literacy. Moreover, English language proficiency in symbiosis with media literacy allows professionals to be highly skilled, self-motivated and work all over the world together with the representatives of different countries and cultures.

One of the most efficient and reasonable ways of teaching foreign language in unison with media education aims is blended learning, as the use of media educational environment in foreign language teaching allows preparing Master students for effective communication in the professional sphere. It helps to: 1) improve knowledge, skills and abilities; 2) study on a part-time basis; 3) study at a convenient time in the convenient place and pace; 4) improve perception of learning material; 5) use the world information resources; 6) get access to a variety of media texts; 7) analyze and evaluate professionally oriented media texts.

Considering these ideas, the programme «English in Professional Sphere» was worked out at NArFU. It includes four modules that integrate tasks for contact and distant work aimed at improving English level proficiency via media educational environment. The perspective of this issue proposes testing and further improvement of the developed programme based on media educational environment for training Master students of natural sciences.

References

Airey et al., 2008 – *Airey J., Linder C.* (2008). Bilingual Scientific Literacy? The Use of English in Swedish University Science Courses. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, Volume 7, No. 3: 145-161.

Albekov et al., 2017 – *Albekov A.U., Vovchenko N.G., Goloborodko A.Y., Stetsenko I.A., Kamyshanskaya S.S.* (2017). Developing media educational environment of the university. *Media education*. 2: 86-95.

Fateeva, 2007 – *Fateeva I.A.* (2007). Media education: theoretical fundamentals and practice of realization. Chelyabinsk: Chalyabinsk State University.

Fedorov, 2017 – *Fedorov A.* (2017). Media and Information Literacy Education Dictionary. Moscow: ICO "Information for All".

Gómez Galán, 2015 – *Gómez Galán J.* (2015). Media Education as Theoretical and Practical Paradigm for Digital Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Analysis. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 11 (3): 31-44.

Gura, 2007 – *Gura V.V.* (2007). Theoretical fundamentals of pedagogical development of individually oriented electronic educational resources and environments. Rostov: Southern Federal University.

Hobbs, 2016 – *Hobbs R.* (2016). Lessons in Copyright Activism: K-12 Education and the DMCA 1201 Exemption Rulemaking Process. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education,* Volume 12, Issue 1: 50-63.

Ivanova, 2010 – *Ivanova L.A.* (2010). Contemporary higher professional education in the framework of the realization of the strategic programme «Russian Education 2020»: developing media educational environment. *Problems of Higher Education: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, March 17-19, 2010*. Khabarovsk: Pacific Ocean State University: 67-70.

Jensen et al., 2018 – *Jensen J.L., Holt E.A., Sowards J.B., Ogden T.H., West R.E.* (2018). Investigating Strategies for Pre-Class Content Learning in a Flipped Classroom. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 3. URL: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-018-9740-6

Mindeeva, 2017 – *Mindeeva S.V.* (2017). Media competence of a future engineer: structure, criteria and indicators. *Media education*. 3: 45-53.

Nemirich, 2011 – *Nemirich A.* (2011). Contemporary preschool educational institution: media educational environment, media information technologies, media education. *Preschoolers' Upbringing,* 4: 25-31.

Nikolaeva et al., 2017 – *Nikolaeva E.M., Kotliar, P.S.* (2017). Strategy of Media Education: Philosophical and Pedagogical Aspects. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research,* 6: 132-138.

Onkovich, 2015 – *Onkovich A.V.* (2015). Media education: "Journalism for all", "subject" or "professionally oriented"? *Media education*. 1: 18-29.

Rath, 2017 – *Rath M.O.* (2017). Media change and media literacy-ethical implications of media education in the time of mediatization. *ICERI2017: Proceedings*. Sevilla: IATED Academy: 8565-8571.

Rivoltella, 2015 – *Rivoltella P.C.* (2015). Re-thinking media education. *REM – Research on Education and Media,* 1, Vol. 7. DOI: 10.1515/rem-2015-0001

Storksdieck, 2016 – *Storksdieck M.* (2016).Critical information literacy as core skill for lifelong STEM learning in the 21st century: reflections on the desirability and feasibility for widespread science media education. *Cultural Studies of Science Education,* 11: 167-182.

Tarkhov, 2016 – *Tarkhov S.V.* (2016). Media competence and electronic education: problems, tasks, solutions. *Media education,* 4: 66-80.

Vonog et al., 2015 – *Vonog V.V., Prokhorova O.A.* (2015). The use of LMS Moodle in foreign language teaching in the postgraduate course within the frameworks of blended and distant education. *Vestnik of Kemerovo State University,* 2: 27-30.

Zhavner et al., 2016 – *Zhavner T.V., Vonog V.V., Adolf V.A.* (2016). The role of innovative technologies in the formation of professional foreign language competence of future engineers. *Vestnik of Bryansk State University,* 2: 245-249.