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SURVEY OF VETERINARY STUDENTS' NEEDS FOR USING E-LEARNING TOOLS FOR LATIN LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

The article deals with a problem of modernization of the Latin language course at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Agrarian higher educational institutions. In particular, the issues of possibility, expedience and needs for using e-learning tools (electronic textbooks, manuals, dictionaries, interactive workbooks, tests) in the study of Latin from the point of view of the target audience – veterinary students – are examined. The results of a survey of students of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine are given in the article. Experimental data have convincingly proved the formed readiness of students to use electronic learning tools in the Latin language study.

Key words: Latin language, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, e-learning tools.

Introduction

An important requirement for successful learning and mastering the disciplines of specialty «Veterinary Medicine» and getting comprehensive training by students is their terminological competence, foundation of which is laid down by the Latin language course. In the educational standard for specialty «Veterinary Medicine» for graduates it is required to know Latin language and Latin veterinary terminology. While working with special literature and documentation, writing a research paper or in the process of verbal communication the graduate should be able to understand the special terms used in Latin in all aspects of professional activity; to make prescriptions, write diagnosis and terms in Latin [1].

The aim of the course «Latin language» is to teach students Latin terminology, which functions in veterinary medicine, to help them acquire practical skills in using Latin terminology in educational, scientific and professional activities. Tasks that are presupposed by the aim and content of the discipline can be classified as professional (practical), general and educational.

There are a number of objective problems in higher education at the present stage that require finding constructive ideas for their solutions, such as a redistribution of workload with reduction of hours for auditory work and increasing the proportion of independent work, that leads to incompatibility limited training time and the rate of growth of information; discrepancy between traditional methods of training specialists and informatization of society level; needs for individualization of learning, strengthening the social dimension and removal obstacles to mobility of participants of educational process – on the one hand and outdated teaching methods – on the other [2].

A term «electronic learning tools» is used in the article and it means «learning tools, stored on digital or analog storage media and reproduced in electronic equipment (computer programs for didactic purposes, spreadsheets, digital libraries, slides, tests, virtual laboratories etc.» [3].

Results and discussion

The purpose of the article is to investigate the needs for using e-learning tools for Latin language study by students-veterinarians. A survey method was used for this investigation. The data obtained from survey was analyzed and interpreted.

A questionnaire survey of first-year students of the faculty of veterinary medicine (National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, 2015-2016) was conducted to detect the existence of readiness of students needs for using electronic learning tools in the study of Latin language.

In total 230 students took part in survey; they were proposed to answer questions or express opinion to 20 statements:

Do you think that learning Latin at your university is fully equipped with the necessary literature?

You well understand the theoretical material in the textbook, but you have difficulties with specific examples of the using terms.

Are you satisfied with presentation of educational material in Latin textbooks?

You think it would be better if in the discipline «Latin language» more attention was paid to learning veterinary terminology, not grammar rules.

Translation of veterinary terms from Latin into Ukrainian and backward is the most difficult for you in the study «Latin language».

Learning of the Latin proverbs and winged words is the most difficult for you.

You have to read additional auxiliary publications for learning Latin better.

Do you turn to online resources for consulting on unclear moments in learning of Latin language?

Do you have to use online translators to do tasks on Latin?

Are you satisfied with the quality of existing electronic dictionaries and translators from Latin?

11. Do you know any Ukrainian online resources and electronic publications for Latin language learning?

12. Do you want to have an opportunity to self-test your knowledge of Latin?

13. Do you want to have an additional possibility to train Latin terms translating skills?

14. Do you have experience of using e-learning tools?

15. Which possibilities and properties of electronic textbooks as compared with printed books do you consider most important:

a) compactness;

b) high visibility of educational material provided by using drawings, animation, audio, video etc.;

c) interactivity (possibility of control with feedback, error diagnosis and evaluation of the results of training activities);

d) adaptability.

16. Which possibilities and properties of electronic dictionaries as compared with printed do you consider most important:

a) large volume;

b) speed and convenience of search;

c) detailed comments;

d) large number of examples.

17. What types of books do you prefer to study theoretical questions, read large volumes of textual information: a) printed; b) electronic.

18. What types of books (dictionaries) do you prefer to translate large volumes of textual information: a) printed; b) electronic.

19. Do you want to use e-learning tools for study of the Latin language?

20. Choose which e-learning tools you would like to use for study of the Latin language at this stage:

a) electronic textbook that includes theoretical and practical material and allow to master the whole course;

b) electronic tools for practicing grammar and translations skills;

- c) electronic tests;
- d) electronic dictionaries with detailed comments.

Respondents were asked to use the following answers: «yes» – in the case of a positive response; «partially» – if you agree, but have some doubts; «no» – in the case of negative answer or if you do not agree with the proposed statement. The survey results are given in the table 1.

Let's turn to the qualitative analysis of the data. Only 26.5% of students believe that learning Latin in their universities is well provided with the necessary literature, 42.2% – indicate partial support, and 31.3% – find it insufficient.

The students are disgruntled with not only the quantity but also the quality of Latin textbooks, namely 41.3% of respondents are completely satisfied by presentation of the material in the existing textbooks, almost the same number (43.5%) are relevantly satisfied and 15.2% – are not satisfied at all. There are more problems with practical using of acquired knowledge – 39.6% of students said, they understand well the theoretical material described in the textbook, but they have difficulty with specific cases of the using terms, and 48.7% of respondents partly agree with them.

29.6% of students have to turn to additional literature for better learning, 32.2% do it time to time. 52.2% of respondents turn to online resources (20.4% use them irregularly).

The survey data indicate that students turn to electronic resources not only for understanding difficult theoretical issues, but also to do practical tasks. In particular, half of the students in any case use online translators and dictionaries for doing Latin tasks, although only 17.4% of respondents are fully satisfied with their quality.

Thus, students actively use electronic resources for learning of Latin language, but mostly foreign editions. The survey results confirm the shortage of Ukrainian e-learning tools for Latin – 70% respondents don't know them.

According to the survey, the majority of students have experience of using electronic learning (e-books, manuals, dictionaries) – 60.4% of the respondents confidently declared it, 20.4% regard their experience as partial.

To find out what properties of electronic educational editions as compared with the printed are considered most important by students, they have been proposed questions with multiple choice (number of responses were not limited).

The data was as follows: students choose a compactness (71.3%) and interactivity (50.4%) as the most important properties of electronic textbooks. Many respondents (40.9% and 39.1% respectively) marked a high level of visibility of educational material and adaptability.

The respondents rated high in electronic dictionaries the speed and convenience of search (82.6%), a large volume (49.1%), a large number of examples (40.9%) and detailed comments (36.5%).

As it turned out, 73.5% of respondents prefer traditional printed books to study theoretical questions, read large volumes of textual information, but for translation large volumes of textual information 58.3% of respondents prefer electronic resources.

When asked whether they would like to use e-learning tools for study of Latin language, 55.7% of respondents answered affirmatively, 27.8% – would like to use them from time to time and 16.5% – rejected such proposition.

A more specific issue, which is e-learning students would use at this stage of the study of Latin and preferences of the respondents was as follows: in the lead with almost equal performance electronic dictionaries (61.3%) and online tutorials (60.4%); 47.8% of respondents noted electronic tests and 41.7% – electronic aids for practicing grammar skills and knowledge translation.

On the specific question, which e-learning tools students would like to use at this stage of studying Latin, respondents preferences was as follows: there are electronic dictionaries (61.3%) and electronic textbooks (60.4%) in the lead with almost equal indices; 47.8% of respondents marked electronic test, 41.7% – electronic tools for practicing grammar and translations skills.

Conclusions

Thus experimental data have convincingly proved the formed readiness of students to use electronic learning tools in the Latin language study. Actual and perspective types of tools for support of modern educational process and optimization of Latin language learning are determined. It was found out that electronic textbooks and dictionaries are preferred by students. New capabilities of electronic tools could create considerable advantages in individualization and organization of interactive dialogue in learning. Data analysis proves the need for further researching and finding constructive ideas to optimize learning Latin by means of electronic learning tools, which would partially took over the functions of a lecturer, provide feedback, contain more elucidation of various examples.

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