

MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION AS A STRATEGY OF TEACHING SPEAKING

Tatiana Bochina, Juliya Ageeva, Victoria Vlasicheva

Kazan Federal University (RUSSIA)

Abstract

The article considers multimedia presentations as forms of support in teaching speaking foreign languages. The following types of supports are described: verbal support, verbal-pictorial support, graphic support. As a result of using presentations in teaching speaking, a student should obtain a skill of public speech in which the visual image (presentation) does not coincide with the audio image (speech).

Keywords: Foreign language education, multimedia presentation, communicative skills, support for speaking.

1 INTRODUCTION

Modern Linguodidactics has expanded the range of strategies for teaching foreign languages due to emergence of computer technologies. Presentations generated with the help of Microsoft Office PowerPoint play a significant role in this area.

The use of multimedia presentations in teaching evokes special academic interest. Thereby, this issue has been consistently regarded by scholars, methodologists and practicing teachers. Most papers specify technical design, versions of Microsoft Power Point, technological features, volume and layout of texts. Didactic capacity of multimedia presentations such as methodological principles of their creation and employment [1]; development of creative potential [2], conception and visual thinking of teachers and students [3]; forming of informative competence [4] and vocational orientation [5]; educational conditions for implementation of multimedia technologies at universities [6], et cetera are sufficiently revealed.

In regard to teaching, research is mainly focused: a) on efficient combination of lecture and oral material with continuous slide show during a lecture, and b) benefits of presentations as student assignments.

The following aspects were described in terms of multimedia presentations in teaching foreign languages: conditions for the use of information technologies [7], quality in teaching speaking [8], multimedia complex as an aid for teaching vocabulary [9], teaching methods of vocationally-orientated foreign language communication [10] and understanding texts [11].

It should be emphasized that increase in popularity of electronic presentations in education attracts both supporters and opponents. For instance, John Sweller (Australia), an educational psychologist and a founder of cognitive load theory comes to a conclusion that the incompetent use of slide show programs is dangerous [12]. An acknowledged expert in information design Edward Taffe in his work *"The Cognitive Style of Power Point"* criticizes the use of Power Point, in particular, in education for a variety of reasons [13].

Considering apparent value of the present research in the use and application of computer presentations as visual aids it is important to note that the educative function of multimedia presentations in teaching speaking foreign languages seems to be understudied up to the present moment.

Most papers devoted to educational multimedia presentations mention their informative and illustrative functions. It is no doubt that the use of the visual aids improves their perception: the more channels of perception are used (optic, mechanical (tactile), auditory and emotional ones), the higher the indicator of the perception is. Consequently, quality of the acquired knowledge is improving, too.

However, educational potential of presentations does not only make classes more interesting and increase motivation for students. Substantial prospects are to be found in the use of multimedia presentations to teach speech habits and skills.

At present acquisition of oral monologue speech skills is particularly important. Almost every person who is keen to turn professional, find a good job and make a successful career has a strategic need in mastering the skill of public speech. In most cases modern society requires presentations to go along with speech performance: students prepare reports, make presentations, projects, defend term and diploma papers; representatives of various professions speak at meetings, seminars, conferences, etc.

Teachers of foreign languages can not disregard this fact. Besides, many learners have a lack of public speech experience even in the native language. At an advanced stage specific oral monologue speech skills (management of speech expressiveness (tempo, loudness, intonation of the utterance), diverse preparation techniques (planning, drafting work materials, proceedings, written texts); composition of various speech patterns) should be acquired in inextricable connection with the development of these skills through the use of new technologies including multimedia presentations.

Therefore, importance of implementation of new information technologies in teaching foreign languages, on one hand, and insufficient studies of the use of computer presentations as verbal supports, on the other hand, determine timeliness of the present paper.

The novelty of the paper is conveyed by consideration of multimedia presentations as tools for development of communicative skills with the help of verbal supports in slides.

The goal of the study is to identify features of multimedia presentations application as an auxiliary aid within communicative foreign language education.

2 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Computer Presentations as Verbal Support

It has been a while since the communicative approach has taken the central place in teaching practices as all the aspects of teaching foreign language (phonetics, grammar, reading, listening, etc.) have one common feature – the use of the acquired skills and abilities directly in the process of communication.

Different types of support are successfully employed in the communicative technology. They may be divided into universal means of instruction (drawings, tables, charts, movies, etc.) and specific means characteristic for foreign language teaching (functional semantic and lexical-grammar tables, functional schemes of dialogues, logic-syntactic schemes, etc.) [14].

The latest auxiliary aids of teaching are multimedia presentations which can be used in the process of education in two ways: first of all, as a specific form of verbal support; secondly, as independent means of visual aids which accumulate capabilities of various supports.

2.1.1 Advantages of Presentations in Teaching

It is fairly evident that the traditional means of visual aids (graphics, maps, symbols and signs, schemes, tables, etc.) can be presented to the students with the help of new information technologies, including multimedia presentations. This form of presentation has a number of advantages. Here are some of them:

- Technical qualities:
 - a) adequate size for comfortable perception by all students simultaneously as opposed to, for example, pictures/graphics of small size; a possibility of optimal control of colour, contrast ratio and other visual characteristics of the given supports (this only refers to presentations which take into account the stylistic and image requirements to slides; the typical design mistakes are not discussed in the present paper);
 - b) rapidity and ease of reproduction, versatility (Power Point is included into Microsoft Office application), possibility of using presentations on any computer;
- Social and psychological attractiveness, especially for young people who can not live without computer technologies;
- Opportunity of optimal class management through time efficiency;
- Prompt renewal of visual aids and improving their informative value along with relative simplicity for a teacher who can design the aids at his/her own will;

- Multimedia attributes and interactive features of supports.

The last advantage of computer presentations is considered as the most important. "Interactivity allows a teacher to emphasize necessary fragments of the studied material, proceed to consideration of separate elements and pursue different "virtual" actions thus transforming "passive visual aids" (I.V. Robert) to methodically active ones" [15].

The following study case is the use of MS Power Point on presentation of logical-syntactical schemes, i.e. frequent collocations which provide integrity of utterance, its consistence and syntactical cohesion [16].

By applying animation effects (e.g., "fly in") you can demonstrate that it is possible to use the beginnings of the phrases in bold in different contexts:

I wanted to go to the theatre.

Unfortunately, all tickets were sold **because** it was the first night.

I wanted to visit my grandmother on Sunday.

Unfortunately, I could not **because** my dog was ill and I had to stay at home.

Moreover, a teacher can have a possibility to instantly transfer a speech sample to a logical-syntactical scheme or, vice versa, "hide" the support (for example, when advanced students are answering) and show it if necessary.

Let us give another example. Hypertext transitions make it possible to pay special attention to different fragments of lexical-grammar tables as well as to present them integrally. Thus they help to optimize the use of the support.

2.1.2 Multimedia presentations in Development of Monologue Speech

Multimedia presentations are used as an auxiliary aid for the development of monologue speech. It is known that many foreign language learners (school students, students, businessmen, scholars, teachers, etc.) have a strategic need in mastering a skill of public speech. The crucial factor of its effectiveness is the competent use of visual aids, primarily, computer presentations (conference report, defense of term paper, business project, etc.) Therefore, teaching monologue speech accompanied by presentations is feasible within the communicative approach.

The outcomes of this type of work are most clearly seen at a final stage of studying conversational topics, for example, at role-playing games like "City of the Future" (topic "Environmental problems of major cities"), "Sportsman of Century" (topic "Sports"), "Name of Russia". At such competitions students have to defend their project and persuade others that his/her "candidate" is the most dignified. The students themselves often refer to this task as to contest of presentations, although here slides play only a supporting role. Quality of the multimedia demonstration is not evaluated as much as a communicative strategy chosen by a student and its speech manifestation.

It should be taken into account by teachers who employ innovative technologies that the prepared slide show in some cases, unfortunately, is a distraction factor as the presenter is reading information from the "screen" rather than making comments on visual material. It is obvious that students relax by relying on "help of presentation" which contains the main information. Hence the numerous phonetic errors, poor understanding of spoken text, blind follow to the downloaded material. In addition, when working outside the classroom a student is "seduced" to follow the Internet links that (if misused) may draw his/her attention away from mainstream of the performed task. The big information scope presented by multimedia applications may also distract the student.

To avoid these adverse moments a teacher is to accurately identify the task, give clear guidance on "algorithm" of the task preparation, and require commenting by students at the class instead of reading from the screen. "Rules of the game" should be distinctly marked: maximum amount of slides, time limit of presentation, lack of spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes, limit of text on screen. The main rule is non-coincidence of visual image (presentation) with the speech. In such a case the use of multimedia presentations in teaching foreign languages will be rewarding.

2.2 Types of Presentations-Supports

The slides can be divided according to the following kinds of support:

- 1) Verbal support (precedent statements, a plan, a quote, a text, etc.);
- 2) Verbal-pictorial support (combination of images with the title slide, inscriptions of various kinds, etc.);
- 3) Graphic support (charts, diagrams, dates, pictures, drawings without inscriptions, etc.).

This exact order of support reflects the sequence of support in teaching along with the decrease of clues.

2.2.1 Verbal Support

Slides with verbal support are used to enhance skills of forecasting and expanding information. Verbally information is represented as a text in its absolute sense (both a word and a phrase in which the goal is achieved). When referring to verbal supports it is significant to consider that mastering is not reading the speech material but its independent employment. For this reason even separate words may serve as support being a basis of verbal and cognitive activity [17]. In speaking practice the verbal support in presentations should mainly contain encyclopedic information such as proper names, titles of works of art that are not included in the lexical minimum of the given level. For instance, in studying "Tourism" topic verbal supports may be presented by names of historical sites, places of interest of a particular country.

Verbal supports can be:

a) Precedent units regarded as heritage of the society: proper names (onyms, anthroponyms, toponyms, oikonyms), sayings, names of pieces of work, aphorisms, catch phrases. Sayings arouse particular interest and, consequently, give strong impetus to monologue speech. Sayings convey folk wisdom, features of national character, moral values and traditions of a nation which speaks the studied foreign language, so they seem to be essential supports for utterance. Involvement of sayings and aphorisms allows enhancing such speech skills as interpretation, generalization, explanation and argumentation that is why this type of supports is often included into a learning process at its final stage to complicate the assignment.

For example, speaking about national character, students should explain how each saying reflects moral principles and values of a nation (*When in Rome, do as the Romans; Two heads are better than one; The more haste the less speed; There's no place like home*)

b) Different types of acronyms (abbreviations, shortenings).

c) Word combinations and nominal sentences (names). For instance, the phrase in the slide below (Fig. 1) is a motto of Summer Universiade-2013 which was held in Kazan, Russia. It has two meanings ("You are the world" and "Universiade is the world"). Working with this phrase, students should remember where and when this event took place, what its name is, explain why the motto is presented by this phrase, remember other phrases-mottos/slogans and comment them.

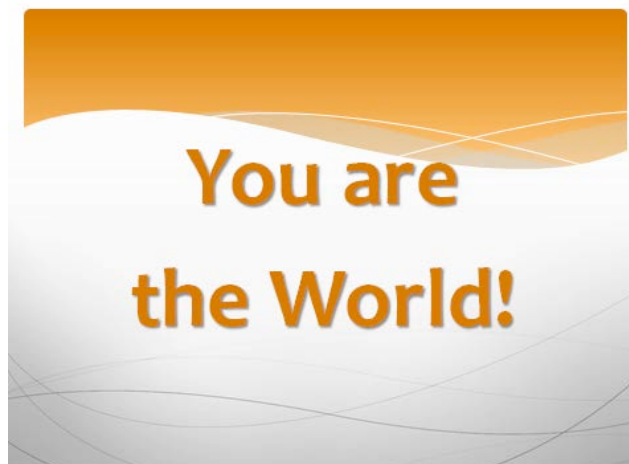


Fig. 1. Slide with Verbal support

d) Standard speech patterns which compose a typical text and correspond to a certain topic-based section (e.g., text-biography, narration about a city/country, etc.)

e) Standard liaison constructions which are used in texts to connect topic-based sections in a logical way. These are so called logical-syntactical schemes we have mentioned above. Sometimes students who can construct separate phrases correctly have difficulty in combining them into textual unity. Pauses between phrases become too long. With this in mind, it is essential not only to teach how to reproduce the necessary information but also how to do it fluently and volubly. It would be enough to introduce these schemes into speech exercises on a periodic basis. It was already mentioned that schemes as supports in slides are especially productive due to animation effects.

f) Plan (denominative, question and thesis). The thesis plan should be short. One slide can contain no more than two-three points in order to avoid its information overload. The choice of a plan type depends on specific tasks set by a teacher during the lesson. It is possible to manage students' statements with the help of plan as support by combining and transforming speech material.

For instance, when teaching how to produce a text-biography a teacher can cite the life stages of a famous person as support, and then ask to restore the milestones of his biography and, by analogy, make a report on another celebrity.

Here is the example of the short thesis plan with information about one of the main landmarks of Kazan city (Fig.2). At first a teacher offers to restore the information according to the plan by expanding and “unwrapping” each plan item and using the phrase “Kazan Kremlin is...”



Fig. 2. Thesis plan as Verbal support

This is followed by setting a task to find and add new and interesting facts to the text (to each item plan correspondingly). The final text should be presented as an advertisement for a tourist website.

g) Microtext – short observations, fragments of texts or articles, letters, notes, labels, tickets, signs, posters, announcements, advertising copies, etc. This list may be permanently enriched based on the stage of a student's speech skills and level of training. As a rule, capacity and clarity of thoughts are characteristic for microtexts because they support teaching skills of reasoning, explanation, expression of personal opinion.

Here we have an example: in one of the lessons of foreign language students are offered to express agreement or disagreement with the given opinions (Fig.3). Concurrently, effects of animation separating certain lexical items let emphasize those words which may become semantic kernel of the produced utterance:

In the future – *I think in a different way. Although there are many computer programs-translators nowadays, they can not replace humans;*

Quickly – *Of course, computers translate faster than humans, but the quality of machine translation is worse. So, I think that computers will not substitute for people;*

No need – *I do not agree that people won't need to learn foreign languages. Knowledge of language is not only necessary to translate the texts. It is also essential for live communication, etc.*

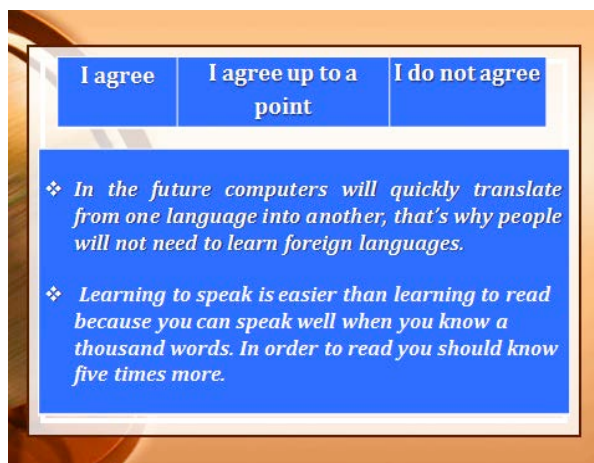


Fig.3. Microtext as Verbal support

2.2.2 Verbal-Pictorial Support

Slides with verbal and pictorial support are combination of images with the title slide, inscriptions of various kinds, etc. This type is the most popular because it has an effect on imagination, feelings and it allows combining verbal and visual image. It is obligatory to consider some technical details: written instruction should be placed under the drawing (picture, diagram, or scheme). The images are better to be placed left of center: we read horizontally across and glance initially goes to the left part of the slide.

For example, a slide with the picture of Yuri Gagarin (Fig.4) may be used in classroom on different topics with various communicative directives:

- Report (the topic "Space"): the task is "Tell what you know about the person in this slide; how is the date in the slide connected with this person".
"On 12 April, 1961 there was the first human journey into space. The first cosmonaut in the world was Yuri Gagarin";
- Persuasion (Contest "Person who changed the world"): – the task is "Prove that this person is worthy the title "Person of the century".

"Since ancient times people dreamed of flying like birds. They wanted to fly into the outer space and visit other planets. On April 12, 1961 the whole world learned that this dream made truth. On that day Yuri Gagarin flew into the space and fulfilled the dream of mankind. More than 50 years have passed since then. Astronauts from many countries were in space, people went to the Moon. However, there will always remain the name of Yuri Gagarin. I think that the Gagarin's flight is one of the main events of XX century which changed the world. Hence, Gagarin is a person of the century".



Fig.4. Slide with verbal-pictorial support

2.2.3 Graphic Support

Slides with graphic support are slides with charts, diagrams, dates, pictures, drawings without inscriptions, etc. In some cases graphic supports work a treat as they promote the closest to independent speech communicative skills. Graphic supports are used only at intermediary and final controls to introduce contextuality.

As an example, the presentation “Type of museums” is offered as a step in learning conversational topic “Let’s go to museum” [18]. It is designed for intermediary control and contains slides with visual support only (*Fig.5*) which gives students an opportunity to demonstrate the subject knowledge, culture-oriented knowledge and comprehension level.



Fig.5. Slide with graphic support

Students should describe and discuss what they see, exchange opinions on what they know about the person and the building in the picture by operating the knowledge received earlier in class up to the utmost.

As practice shows, graphic support is typically presented by example photos. Apparently it occurs due to an effect of “immersion to reality”. The picture, an element of hypertext, lets create associative links ensuring appearance of new image and new text as any coherent sign complex.

Teachers who design slides with graphic support should take into consideration danger of excessive semantization and direct description of the perceptual pattern. It is suitable only at the first stage of teaching language in the process of mastering new vocabulary. At later stages students are taught to “comment on...” It is important to teach them see more than it is depicted.

2.3 The Advantages of Presentations as Supports

The advantages of using presentations-supports in speaking classes are obvious, especially in teaching monologues when skills are acquired to solve diverse speaking tasks. It is known that the main speech functions are statement, explanation, reasoning, approval, condemnation. Presentations made either by a teacher or a student can be successfully used in all types of training monologues to produce description of specific and abstract objects; narration about events of current interest for a speaker in all tenses and aspects; reasoning with expression of personal opinion, arguments and conclusion, etc.

As a result of using presentations in teaching speaking, a student should obtain a skill of public speech in which the visual image (presentation) does not coincide with the audio image (speech). For this purpose it is necessary to develop the following communication skills:

- Paraphrasing verbal information;
- Expanding verbal information: composing a text of a larger volume based on a word, a phrase, a sentence, a mini text;
- Minimizing a text: converting a small text to one sentence;
- Generalizing the provided information;
- Commenting on verbal and nonverbal information, etc.

Let us see one slide employed in teaching how to comment on a scheme (Fig.6). The task is: “Tell which stages this project has; at which stages do teachers play a major part, at which stages – students?”

When you do the exercise use the following clichés and word combinations:

(what) consists of (how many) stages

At the initial/first, last, final stage...

At (which) stages/ milestones (who) interact with (whom), functions are equal (whose)

At (which) stage a leading/main part/function is (whose)

Designate the subject; appoint a leader; oversee work; defend the project; evaluate quality.

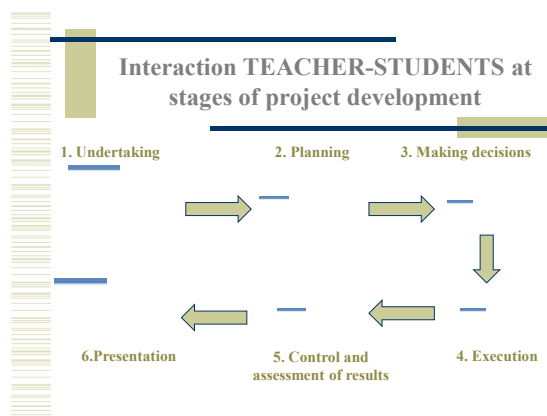


Fig. 6. Verbal-pictorial support to obtain skills of commenting on and producing texts

As the result of paraphrasing verbal information in the slide students should produce a text with such possible content: “A project usually has six stages. At the initial stage the project’s topic is defined, then the plan is made, roles are distributed. The team members perform their assignments at the next stage. The fifth stage is devoted to team control and assessment of the results. At the final stage the project is presented and defended. A teacher and students interact at all stages of work. However, the role of the teacher is changing. At the first stage the teacher has a leading role: he/she designates the project’s subject, outlines the problem to be solved, and appoints a leader of the working group. At the later stages the teacher only oversees how students work. At the last stage functions of the teacher and students are equally important. The students defend the project; the teacher is the main expert who evaluates its quality”.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Presentations can be successfully applied as an auxiliary aid of verbal support within the communicative approach. Multimedia presentations are employed, first of all, as the modern form of verbal support and graphic material; secondly, as independent means of support which accumulates capabilities of all visual aids. Presentations as support have a number of advantages in comparison with traditional means. The primary benefits are their multimedia and interactive features. Presentation strategies in teaching should be developed in accordance with the type of support (verbal, verbal-pictorial, graphic) to enhance a particular skill.

REFERENCES

- [1] Klevtsova, N. I. (2003). Didactic Practices in Design and Employment of Multimedia Educational Presentations in Teaching Foreign Languages: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Moscow: Moscow State Pedagogical University.
- [2] Gotovtseva, O.G. (2006). Educational Support of Creative Self-Fulfillment of Students through Multimedia Technologies: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Yakutsk: Yakutsk State Univeristy named after M.K. Ammosov.

- [3] Podkopaev, D. A. (2009). Method of Development of Conceptual and Visual Thinking of Students due to Multimedia Technologies: a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Magnitogorsk: Magnitogorsk State University.
- [4] Utenin, M. V. (2006). Information Competence of Students through Multimedia Technologies: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Moscow: Moscow State University of Management and Technologies.
- [5] Bakanova, M. V. (2007). Formation and Development of Vocational Orientation at Universities by Teaching Foreign Languages with the Use of Information Technologies: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Penza: Penza State Pedagogical University named after V. Belinsky.
- [6] Starikov, D. A. (2009). Educational Conditions of the Use of Multimedia Technologies in Teaching University Students: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Nizhniy Novgorod: Volzhskiy State Engineering-Pedagogical University.
- [7] Abasheva, I. Kh. (2007). Didactic Conditions of the Use of Information Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages at Universities within Jurisdiction of RF Ministry of Interior: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. St Petersburg: St Petersburg University of RF Ministry of Interior.
- [8] Lazareva, A. C. (2007). Use of Multimedia Presentation to Ensure Quality in Teaching Foreign Languages (based on Spanish): a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Tomsk: Tambov State University named after G. Derzhavin.
- [9] Alexandrov, K. V. (2009). Multimedia Complex in Teaching Students-Linguists German Vocabulary: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Nizhniy Novgorod: Nizhniy Novgorod State Linguistic University.
- [10] Kichenko, A. A. (2010). Teaching Effectively with Multimedia Presentations: workbook for teachers of English at universities. Moscow: Moscow State Mining University named after M. Sholokhov.
- [11] Zubov, A.V., Zubova, I.I. (2009). Information Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages: workbook for university students. Moscow: "Academy" Printing House.
- [12] Sweller, J. (2006). Visualisation and Instructional Design. Educational Psychology Review. Vol 10, No. 3 – pp. 1501-1510.
- [13] Tufte, Edward R. (2006). The Cognitive Style of Power Point: Pitching Out Corrupts Within. Second edition. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press LLC.
- [14] Passov, E.I., Kibireva, L.V., Kollarova, E. (2007). Concept of Communicative Foreign Language Education (Theory and its Implementation): guidance manual for teachers of Russian. St Petersburg: Zlatoust, pp.154-197.
- [15] Alexandrova, E. V. (2011). Design and Use of Visual Aids in Teaching Liberal Arts at Secondary School: synopsis of a thesis for a degree of Candidate of Science in Education. Kazan: Kazan Federal University, pp.14-15.
- [16] Passov, E.I., Kibireva, L.V., Kollarova, E. (2007). Concept of Communicative Foreign Language Education (Theory and its Implementation): guidance manual for teachers of Russian. St Petersburg: Zlatoust, p.176.
- [17] Passov, E.I., Kuzovleva, N.E. (2010). Basics of Communicative Theory and Technology of Foreign Language Education. Moscow: Russian Language.
- [18] Bochina, T.G., Ageeva, J.V. (2010). Talk, Discuss, Argue: workbook in Russian for foreign students. Part 2. Kazan: TSUHE, pp.3-12.