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Teaching foreign languages in terms of distance learning

Викладання іноземних мов в умовах дистанційного навчання

Summary. *Over the last few decades, the use of technology and multimedia for distance learning of foreign languages has expanded rapidly. Distance learning was an attempt to solve the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional personal learning. Learning online has been the result of the full adoption of technology as part of our lives. This article is devoted to an analytical review of the current state of electronic means of distance learning of a foreign language. The terminology of the concept of “distance education” is considered. It is determined that the distance learning process is carried out using a combination of*

synchronous and asynchronous tools. To conduct the analysis, a number of the most popular modern distance learning platforms (Moodle, Zoom, Google Classroom) are identified. A careful analysis of the main functions and features of these distance learning platforms revealed that each of them is suitable for learning a foreign language, as they have all the functions necessary to ensure the effective development of reading and speaking, speaking, listening, writing skills.

The choice of one of them will depend entirely on the personal preferences of each individual teacher. The teacher must manage and regulate the learning activities of students. To learn a foreign language using multimedia technology, students must be independent and use new strategies. Because language learning in the traditional way usually takes place in live communication, and distance learning through online communication. It is established that distance learning makes new demands on teachers, including improving professionalism, increasing the level of professional competence, mastery of modern technologies, the ability to use them in the educational process. As well as distance learning provides an opportunity to communicate with native speakers of foreign languages from different countries.

Key words: distance education, distance learning platforms, foreign language learning.

Анотація. Протягом останніх декількох десятиліть використання технологій та мультимедіа для дистанційного навчання іноземних мов швидко розширилося. Дистанційне навчання було спробою вирішити часові та просторові обмеження традиційного особистого навчання. Навчання онлайн було результатом повного прийняття технології як частини нашого життя. Дана стаття присвячена аналітичному огляду сучасного стану електронних засобів дистанційного навчання іноземної мови. Розглянуто термінологію поняття «дистанційна освіта». Визначено, що дистанційний навчальний процес здійснюється за допомогою комбінації синхронних і асинхронних інструментів. Із метою проведення аналізу виокремлюється ряд найпопулярніших сучасних платформ дистанційного навчання (Moodle, Zoom, Google Classroom). Ретельний аналіз основних функцій та особливостей зазначених платформ дистанційного навчання дозволив встановити, що будь-яка з них підходить для вивчення іноземної мови, оскільки вони мають усі функції, які необхідні для забезпечення ефективного формування навичок та вмінь читання, говоріння, аудіювання та письма. Вибір однієї з них повністю залежатиме скоріше від персональних вподобань кожного окремого викладача. Викладач повинен керувати і регулювати навчальну діяльність студентів. Для вивчення іноземної мови, використовуючи мультимедійні технології, студенти повинні бути самостійними і використовувати нові стратегії. Оскільки вивчення мови традиційним способом зазвичай відбувається за живого спілкування, а дистанційне навчання – за допомогою Інтернет-спілкування. Встановлено, що дистанційна форма навчання висуває нові вимоги до викладачів, серед яких: вдосконалення професіоналізму, підвищення рівня професійної компетентності, володіння сучасними технологіями, вміння використовувати їх у навчальному процесі. А також дистанційне навчання дає можливість спілкуватися з носіями іноземної мови з різних країн.

Ключові слова: дистанційна освіта, платформи дистанційного навчання, навчання іноземної мови.

Technological development, which we observe in every sphere of life, has also found its place in the educational process. For many, knowledge of foreign languages is a prerequisite for a successful career. It is prestigious and in many cases necessary to get an education, participate in programs, conferences and train abroad, have access to foreign websites and publications. Effectively, as practical experience shows, distance learning helps to learn foreign languages. Distance learning is a methodology of learning free from the constraints of place and time. Also important is the individual pace of learning and the ability to learn in a comfortable and convenient environment [5].

Psychologists, teachers, methodologists have constantly paid attention to the problem of distance learning, special courses and programs have been developed that allow to master a foreign language remotely. It is worth noting the contribution to the development of methodological foundations and popularization of distance education of the following researchers: O.O. Andreev, Yu. M. Gorvits, V.M. Kukharenko, N.I. Mulina, V.P. Svyrydyuk, J. E. Adams, F. Bodendorf, H. Dichanz, G. Hoppe, J. Kettunen and others.

The aim of the article is to theoretically substantiate the importance and necessity of distance learning in the education of modern youth on the basis of highlighting the main advantages of using modern technologies.

In accordance with the purpose, the following tasks were identified: 1) to consider various concepts of the term “distance learning”; 2) to review technological platforms for distance learning of a foreign language.

Methods and methodology of the research. In the course of the research, we used the methods of descriptive analysis, generalization, synthesis, as well as social, psychological, and cognitive approaches. In addition to the above, comparisons of previous studies and structural-functional analysis were used.

Presenting main material . There are many approaches and interpretations of the term “distance learnin”. For example, according to the “Concept of Distance Education Development in Ukraine” of December 20, 2000, “distance learning is a set of technologies that delivers 7 students, or any learners, the main amount of material and provides interactive interaction between students and teachers during the educational process, the method of providing students to work independently” [1].

According to V. Rybalko, distance education is important because it is a specific organization of the educational and pedagogical process, which is based on the use of distance, information, and telecommunications technologies [2].

According to the Ukrainian Pedagogical Dictionary, “distance learning is a form of learning when communication between teacher and student or teacher and student takes place through correspondence, tape, audio and video cassettes, computer networks, cable and satellite television, telephone or fax, etc.” [4]. An explanation of this term in the English dictionary of pedagogical terms should also be considered: “distance learning – taking classes in locations other than the classroom or places where teachers present the lessons. Distance learning uses various forms of technology, especially television and computers, to provide educational materials and experiences to students” [7].

Thus, analyzing the author’s definitions and definitions from dictionaries, we can conclude that the main components of the concept of “distance learning” are:

- 1) subjects of the process;
- 2) components of the educational process (teaching aids, organizational and control methods).

The use of distance education in foreign language teaching is a breakthrough in the education of students who do not have the opportunity to be present in classrooms for good reasons and gain knowledge in the traditional way or during quarantine. The distance learning process is carried out using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous tools while maintaining flexibility and convenience and expanding the quality and efficiency of both methods of communication. Synchronous mode involves the interaction between the subjects of distance learning, during which all participants in the process are simultaneously in the electronic environment of distance learning (chat, audio-video conferencing, social networks, etc.).

Asynchronous mode means the interaction between the subjects of distance learning, during which participants interact with each other with a certain delay in time, using e-mail, forum, social networks, etc.

Applying a combination of pedagogical knowledge and modern technologies, you can implement a successful course in distance learning a foreign language. The progress made in recent years in the introduction of the latest computer tools in the process of learning foreign languages in higher education requires a deep scientific substantiation of didactic and methodological bases of their use, defining the conceptual basis for electronic manuals for extracurricular (distance) and classroom. Modern distance learning technologies can be divided into three major categories:

- 1) non-interactive (printed materials, audio, video media), characteristics: low communication interactivity, well-known methods of developing educational materials, low cost;

2) computer training tools (electronic textbooks, computer testing and knowledge control, the latest multimedia tools), characteristics: medium degree of interactivity, relatively low cost, well-developed infrastructure in Ukraine;

3) video conferencing – developed means of telecommunications on audio channels, video channels, and computer networks, characteristics: high degree of interactivity, good image quality, high cost.

The following types of training can be distinguished:

1) traditional education. The educational process, during which the teacher conducts classes with a group of students in the classroom. Classes are most often held in an educational institution.

2) synchronous learning. Classes are held in real – time but via the Internet. Teachers and students join the same platform.

3) blended learning. This type of training combines traditional and synchronous teaching methods. Lectures are held remotely, and practical ones take place directly in the premises of the educational institution. This type of education is most common in universities.

Distance learning provides the opportunity for constant and dynamic telecommunications at a distance between student and teacher and students, and the initiative for such communication can come from any of these objects of the educational process. This feature allows making distance learning of foreign languages via the Internet significantly different in form from distance learning and to some extent brings it closer to full-time. It is clear that telecommunication communication is not able to fully replace direct “live” communication.

Learning a foreign language helps to improve the general education level and qualification of specialists and is considered as an integral element of the education system, which is characterized by integrity, autonomy and specificity. Requirements for the training of specialists are reflected in the qualification characteristics of higher school graduates (both bachelors and specialists) and require a high culture and knowledge of a foreign language. A graduate of a higher education institution must have the skills of spoken language, reading, translation, and abstracting texts in the specialty. The motivation for learning foreign languages is the student’s professional need to become a highly qualified specialist with the ability to communicate in a foreign language and obtain information from the latest foreign literature. Therefore, one of the features of this discipline in higher education is its professional-oriented nature.

The specificity of the discipline “foreign language” is that the dominant component of the content of foreign language learning is not the basics of science, and methods of learning – learning different types of language and speech activities: speaking, listening, reading, writing. According to

the psychological theory of activity, learning of any type of activity is carried out in the process of its implementation. At the heart of the formation of skills in any type of foreign language, speech activity are auditory-motor skills. Therefore, the priority in teaching foreign languages should be to perform oral exercises. This is both the specifics of the discipline and the main difficulty of teaching foreign languages, especially in the formation of speech skills. To solve such problems should focus on the choice of optimal learning tools, based primarily on their didactic features and functions. The specifics of the discipline “foreign language” – the formation of communicative competence – require the priority of interactive learning tools for individual or group work of students. Distance learning forms are universal in nature, they allow you to use many techniques and methods of learning. It is safe to say that the education system in the future will be characterized by the rapid development and implementation of distance education technologies. Foreign language teachers face difficulties in selecting the content of foreign language teaching, methodological training of teachers themselves to work remotely, as well as modeling the learning process online.

Before talking about the content of education, it should be emphasized that distance educational technologies are educational technologies that are based on the use of information and telecommunications networks during the work of teachers and students at a distance (distance). The content of training depends on the objectives of the study and the specifics of the subject “Foreign Language”. The main content of language learning is learning different types of speech activities.

The purpose of learning a foreign language is the formation of foreign language communicative competence. Of course, distance learning will not be able to completely replace the traditional education system, but it can be an effective complement to traditional methods of work. The best, in this case, would be to use a mixed model of foreign language teaching. Students get acquainted with new educational material on their own, and in practical foreign language classes the acquired knowledge and skills are consolidated in the classroom, unclear points are explained, discussions are held, and creative tasks that require collective discussion are performed. In the conditions of lockdown classroom classes are conducted online. Video conferencing, chats, forums, seminars, business games, round tables, and other forms of training conducted through telecommunications and other Internet opportunities, increase student motivation, increase the volume of speech activities, and expand the scope of communication in a foreign language. When learning different types of speech activities and the formation of relevant skills, each student must be allowed the opportunity to maximize practice in this activity. Distance

learning is able to solve this problem, because each student, working at his computer, must perform all tasks, and he has the opportunity to choose their place of work according to their abilities. The information provided by Internet resources is authentic. Students are interested in reading and analyzing articles by native speakers about the latest developments in the world of sports, culture and politics, as well as movies, videos, and clips. The help of modern communication technologies in the process of distance learning solves the problem of oral practice. It is possible to increase the volume of speech communication with the help of various platforms (ZOOM, Google-meet, Skype). We should not forget that online classes provide more opportunities to develop listening skills. One of the best options to supplement your vocabulary with modern colloquial expressions of a foreign language is to watch movies. Writing skills in online classes can be practiced in different ways depending on the goals. This can be writing essays, written messages, or business letters on various topics.

In addition, the e-learning platform Moodle, which is popular in the educational environment of higher education not only in Ukraine but also in the world, is actively used to organize education in higher education institutions during a global pandemic. Moodle (modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment) – a free learning management system. Moodle is translated into dozens of languages, including Ukrainian, and is used in 197 countries. The advantage of the Moodle platform is the fact that since 1999 (when it appeared), it has repeatedly undergone a process of modification and supplemented with new solutions and tools. The software of the platform is written in PHP using free public databases (MySQL, PostgreSQL). An important feature of the Moodle platform is that it can be installed on any operating system (MS Windows, Unix, Linux) [6]. The Moodle system meets all the basic criteria for e-learning systems. In the system, you can create and store electronic learning materials and set the sequence of their study. Because Moodle is accessed over the Internet or other networks, students are not tied to a specific place or time and can choose their own pace of learning material from anywhere in the world. With all this in mind, we note that the Moodle system can be used not only to organize distance learning but also to diversify and support traditional classroom learning. Moodle can be used in training schoolchildren, and students, in advanced training, business training, both in computer classes of educational institutions, and for independent work at home. It is a free, open – source system. Not only is it free, but it doesn't require any paid software to run. That is, each educational institution can implement not only the free and most advanced but also licensed system, without spending a penny to purchase software. At the same time, he can make changes to the code according to his needs.

Moodle is the most perfect and widespread system of such purpose in Ukraine and the world. Moodle currently has 129 million users worldwide and continues to grow at a much faster pace than its competitors. According to statistics, the use of the Moodle platform in the world exceeded the use of all other platforms combined.

The next Classroom platform is a new development from Google, which aims to make teachers' work easier and more efficient. Google has developed a service for schools, colleges, universities, and non-profit organizations. There is a necessary minimum for launching online learning: from the course editor to a convenient calendar for planning classes. One of the main drawbacks is that there is no support for the SCORM, Tin Can (xAPI) and cmi5 standards, which allow you to create interactive e-learning courses. We will discuss in more detail what is still missing from Google Classroom below. The service is available for free. To open your virtual classroom, all you need to do is create a Google account. Right after that, you can add students, create a course or test, and host a webinar. If you have bigger plans, you will need to sign up for a G Suite for Education account. It is integrated with Google Docs, Drive and Gmail. With the help of the interactive Classroom service, the teacher will be able to organize communications with students, quickly prepare assignments, and conduct classes. When developing a task, the teacher can: use the option to share a document, or the option to automatically create a copy for each student, see who completed the task and who did not, provide feedback, and ask questions to students in real – time as in the classroom and outside it. Not to mention that Google Classroom has several important advantages over other similar solutions, namely: first, time-tested services are combined within one program, and secondly, a large user audience. Students have the opportunity to view online assignments and materials that appear in folders on Google Drive, as well as notes in test files. Direct communication, both with the teacher and with classmates, is another useful feature of Google Classroom. All these opportunities already indicate in favor of the choice of this system, and its functionality, despite the relatively short life of the platform, is not inferior to existing market leaders [3].

Zoom – a service for video conferencing and online meetings. To do this, you need to create an account. Anyone can join the video conference by following the link or conference ID. Classes can be scheduled in advance, as well as links for regular meetings at certain times. Teachers use foreign languages to conduct online classes Google Meet service, which is considered very convenient for the digital educational environment. Google Meet is a free app to get you started which is enough to have an account. Among the key advantages of the application are:

1. Up to 100 participants can join Google Meet.
2. in the advanced version of G Suite, you can arrange a meeting for 250 users.
3. Google Meet can be used in most browsers, but the best option is to work in Chrome. The application does not have a desktop application (It cannot be installed on a computer). However, users can install applications for their smartphone or tablet.

For comfortable interaction, advise listeners to turn off the sound, turn it on video and select full/partial background blur. However, the organizer can mute the participants yourself. You can also use the conference board – a canvas that can be edited by all participants in the session. To visualize the information during the event, click the “Start” tab presentation now”, select the screen demonstration, and one of the positions: all your screen (demonstration of everything that is currently happening on your device). Window (open on your device, such as a presentation). Chrome tab (for example, thematic site, board, video, etc.).

Despite the difficulties and shortcomings, distance learning has an important advantage: it erases spatial barriers, and gives the opportunity to communicate with foreign speakers from different countries. Students learn tolerance, willingness to seek a compromise solution and respect other people’s opinions, and expand their communicative sphere.

Despite the advantages of distance learning, including the formation of a new educational space, self-organization, the ability to make responsible decisions; increasing motivation for self-education and self-development, etc., students faced such difficulties as the lack of digital opportunities. In addition, distance learning is still unusual and complex, given its psychological features [8].

The advantages of distance learning include the fact that it allows the student to save a lot of money, because you do not have to pay for travel to university, dormitory, etc., such training also gives students more opportunities for part-time work.

Conclusions. From the above, it follows that distance learning, as part of the general education system, has all its components: goals, content, principles, forms, and means of learning. It is focused on the successful implementation of the educational process. As well as distance learning is carried out using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous tools. Applying a combination of pedagogical knowledge and modern technologies, you can implement a successful course in distance learning a foreign language. The teacher must manage and regulate the learning activities of students. Benefits of online training for the organizer:

1. High efficiency due to the use of interactive tools. First of all, we are talking about presentations, tests, videos, chat, screen display and the ability to view the lesson multiple times.

2. It is easy to follow the progress of each student. Because training programs often offer convenient tests and statistics.

3. E-learning saves money and is great for staff training. You can conduct training from almost anywhere.

Disadvantages of online training for the organizer:

1. Most often we hear about experiences related to technical issues. Not every teacher will easily understand all the possibilities of the platform for online learning. At first, even lecturing with seemingly simple programs like Zoom and MyOwnConference proved to be a real challenge and good stress for some.

This is not surprising, given that most of the time teachers had to teach only in the classroom. And now all of a sudden everything has changed, and the curriculum needs to be completely restructured. In addition, teachers find themselves in an environment where students feel freer than they are. Each speaker must learn how to use the e-learning platform; master the techniques of effective online seminars; find ways to keep students' attention; maintain discipline when you are on the other side of the screen; each lesson should be carefully prepared and tested, taking into account the technical aspects. Given the technical aspects, there is a risk of losing experienced teachers. Distance learning makes new demands on teachers, including improving professionalism, increasing the level of professional competence, mastery of modern technologies, the ability to use them in the educational process.

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