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SÉRIE "Pedagogika"

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TEACHER'S FACILITATING OF THE STUDENTS' LEARNING AUTONOMY DURING THE WAR VIA VIDEO AIDS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH METHODOLOGY TEACHING

Abstract. This article aims to cover the teacher's role as a guide and facilitator for students' learning autonomy development by using video aids. The resources and tools for creating and sharing such aids are described. The methodology includes the research method of a case study to investigate the benefits of video aids usage for teaching English Methodology teaching course during martial law. Investigating this issue, the author used a survey as the main research method which was suggested to students for quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis of the respondents' answers and experience with the video aids use during the war made it possible to answer the research question if this technology is useful and worth implementing in the educational process. The results of the research showed that video aids are helpful and have a number of benefits but they cannot replace live online or traditional offline lessons. The main problem that was defined by students is a lack of communication between students and the teacher. But video aids are very important if such communication is impossible because of war or any other extraordinary reasons.

Keywords: video aids, asynchronous learning, martial law, war, online mode, learner autonomous, delayed interaction.

Formulation of the problem. During the coronavirus epidemic, Ukrainian education adapted to new conditions and teachers learned how to conduct lessons online, how to use different apps, and how to work with the platforms and various online resources that they needed for distance learning. But it is worth mentioning that teachers were not as skillful at the beginning of the quarantine and the synchronous training, which is extremely important for learners, was not

implemented effectively during that period. Teachers posted assignments on university platforms or messengers or sent them by e-mail. Later, teachers changed their ways of teaching and started to use the online mode.

When Russia invaded Ukraine and the war started, we faced the problem of surviving in a direct meaning. After two weeks of holidays which we needed for thinking about what to do with education, we kept teaching at our university. But we had to come to asynchronous distance learning back again. In our opinion, this way of studying can hardly be named effective.

Asynchronous learning is entirely autonomous, the success of which requires a number of factors and only half of them depend on the teacher. Motivation is one of the most important stimuli for studying. During asynchronous learning, it can decrease a lot because intrinsic motivation prevails and only self-motivation can enhance students' studying. We had such a situation at the beginning of the Covid-19 quarantine. Still, in martial law conditions in addition to weak self-motivation, we got psychological tension, the real lack of opportunities (the Internet connection and gadgets access), the lack of time for studying, because of the air alerts during the day and the necessity to hide in the air raid shelters, often with a crowd of people. But the main reason for raising weak motivation is the lack of important teacher support when working with educational materials. Students have no possibility to ask questions when they need, and as the result, there is a lack of material understanding and procrastination or even refusal to study it. Another factor of autonomous learning suggests flexibility in choosing the time and place of learning. On the one hand, this is a positive factor, because students can work with the material when the opportunity arises, without the pressure of meeting deadlines. But such freedom of action can stimulate the students' decision to do the task later, which will be repeated every day, making piles of material, it can also negatively influence the motivation for autonomous learning.

Analysis of recent research and publications. A large and growing body of literature has investigated students' autonomy in language learning. A number of studies have investigated the ways of learners' autonomy promoting [1],[2]. Other studies have examined the conditions for students' autonomy promotion in foreign language learning [3] and students' readiness to use it in their studying [4]. But these studies don't include the peculiarities and difficulties of education in martial law. A little amount of literature has been published on challenges to education during the war in Ukraine. Recently, a number of studies have shown different ways of managing the education process during pandemics [5], [6], [7]. Several studies investigating education during the Russian invasion have been carried out. Shevchuk I. & Shevchuk A. [8] investigated challenges and opportunities for high schools in Ukraine through the prism of war. They analyzed the current problems that have worsened and arisen in the system of higher education in Ukraine. Melnyk M. surveyed 501 respondents, the representatives of the pedagogical community,

students and parents in the study about the education in the conditions of martial state. She found, that more than half of the surveyed doubted their own safety at the time of the survey and resumed regular studies. The data that is important for our research is that one-fifth of respondents do not have the necessary material and technical support, and it is difficult for them to focus on the educational process [9]. These investigations together with some others on the same issue show the rapid scientists' reaction to martial law consequences for education and their wish to share the experience.

Formulation of the goals of the article (statement of the task). The purpose of the article is also to share the experience of managing the educational process using video aids for teaching the subject of English methodology at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. One more important aim of this article is to show the results of asynchronous studying with video aids use. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is the extent to which the students consider the technology of video aids application is helpful?

2. What are the main benefits and drawbacks of using video aids during asynchronous studying?

Presentation of the main material. During the two-week holidays at the beginning of the war, it was necessary to find new forms of work for autonomous training of students that could be as effective as, at least, online classes. I have been teaching English language teaching methodology for 4 years and have experience with different learning modes. This subject is the result of the program "New Generation School Teacher" that was organized by the British Council in Ukraine and was successfully tested from 2013 to 2019. The main form of Methodology is an interactive lecture. In fact, it is a practical subject, full of communication course based on a theory. The manual for students and the platform made online learning much easier, but in asynchronous it was understood that it was not enough.

Research design. For this research, the case study approach is used that allows to show the entire picture of producing and using video aids during English Methodology teaching and a survey that gives a possibility to get qualitative, as it contains open-to-answer questions and quantitative data.

The *participants* of the research are 15 second-year students of the Foreign Languages Department. The stages of the research are as follows:

Stage 1 – Preliminary survey data collecting.

Stage 2 – Choosing the technologies and tools for the research.

Stage 3 – The video aids production and sharing.

Stage 4 – Questionnaire design, data collecting and the analysis of the results.

Stage 1: Preliminary survey. After the forced made holidays, in March, the preliminary survey was suggested for students in the Viber messenger with the aim to find out who of my students had the opportunity to study online synchronously. Only

2 out of 38 respondents, reported that they could, but the majority could not, there were also those who did not answer anything because the Internet at that time was already unstable.

Stage 2: Choosing the technologies and tools. Conducting online lessons had to be replaced by another form of work. The flipped classroom technology is good enough for it and I had experience in using it. This technology is used for the inverted classroom where the teacher finds or creates a video with the explanation of a target material and then shares it with students to watch before the class. An important requirement is that 100% of students must watch the video. In the asynchronous mode, we were able to work only with the video without discussion or practising during the lesson, students had to study without the teacher's support, so clear instructions play an extremely important role.

It was necessary to choose a resource that would allow recording the screen and my voice at the same time. At first, I used the Screen Castify application, in the free version I was able to record videos up to 4 minutes long, after which the editing followed with the help of the "Film Studio" program. Later, I mastered the OBS studio, which made it possible to record long videos and greatly simplified the editing process.

The next important step was to find the possibility of video sharing with students. My students and I work with the Google Classroom platform, so I posted the first videos there, but sometimes the system required them to download the video before viewing and the students asked to change the settings somehow because those who used phones did not have enough memory space. I ran up my YouTube channel and uploaded only the links into Google Classroom.

Stage 3: The video aids production and sharing. The order of the video creation process was made according to the following steps:
- revision of topics and tasks, selection of tools for the presentation of materials;
- the adaptation of the Powerpoint presentation to the topic outline with clear instructions on how and what to do;
- opening all necessary windows for screen recording;
- noise reducing;
- direct recording of the presentation of the material;
- editing with the help of Film Studio tool;
- saving the video in mp4 format;
- uploading videos to YouTube;
- creating a task on the platform with a link to the video.

Another advantage of posting videos on YouTube is that you can see how many times these videos have been watched. An interesting fact was that the number of students watched the video immediately after the task was created.

Stage 4. Questionnaire design, data collecting and the analysis of the results.

At this stage, the questionnaire was compiled as feedback on the course. Some questions were about students' experience in using video aids. It is important to mention that the total number of percentages can be more than 100% because some questions are allowed to choose more than one answer. The questionnaire was made in the Google Forms application and suggested to students online after finishing the course.

The first of these questions was to compare offline, and online ELT Methodology lessons and educational videos they were suggested in martial law and which of them they consider more effective. The results are shown in the figure below:
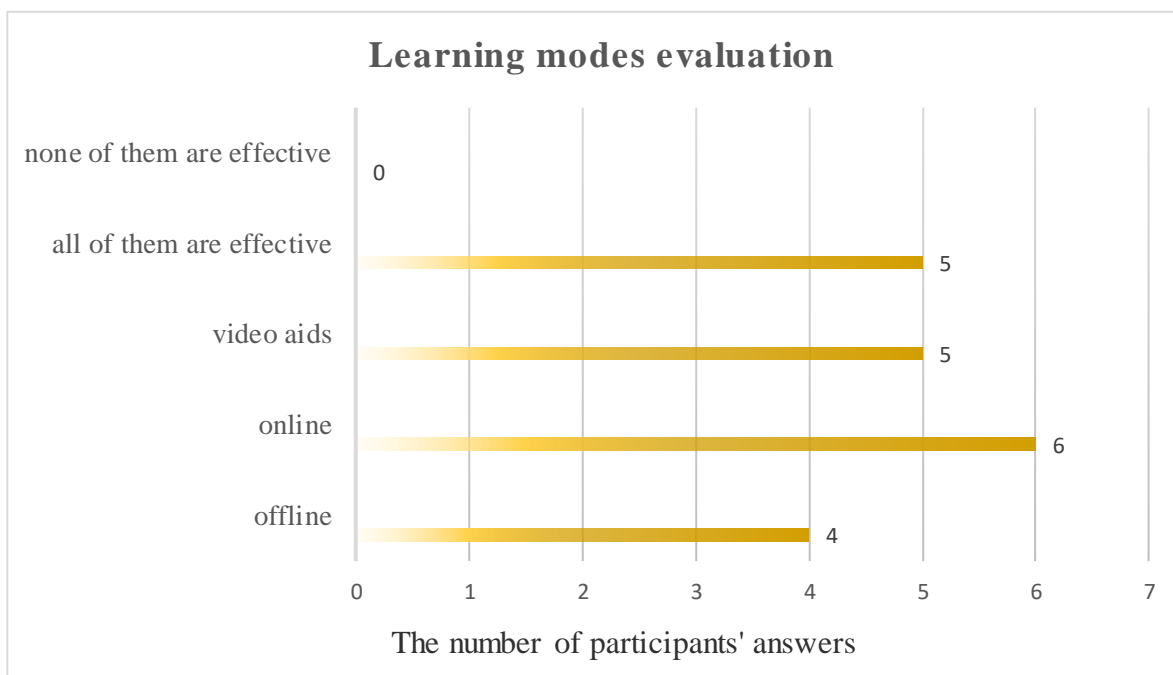
Fig. 1. The results of students' evaluation of different teaching and studying modes of the Methodology course.

From the figure above we can see that 40% of respondents consider the online mode even better than offline (26,7%) and 33% of surveyed participants are sure that videos are effective or chose the variant that all of them are effective for studying this subject. This data shows the level of students' adaptation to any conditions.

In response to the question about the reasons that prevented students from joining online synchronic lessons most of those surveyed indicated the following ones:

- poor preparation;
- fear, as a psychological reason;
- necessity to hide in the basements or other shelters;
- absence or lack of the Internet connection.

It was interesting to find out what opinions students have about the possibility of replacing online lessons with video aids. When participants were asked to predict such a variant, 69 % of respondents assumed such a possibility with some doubts. See figure 2.
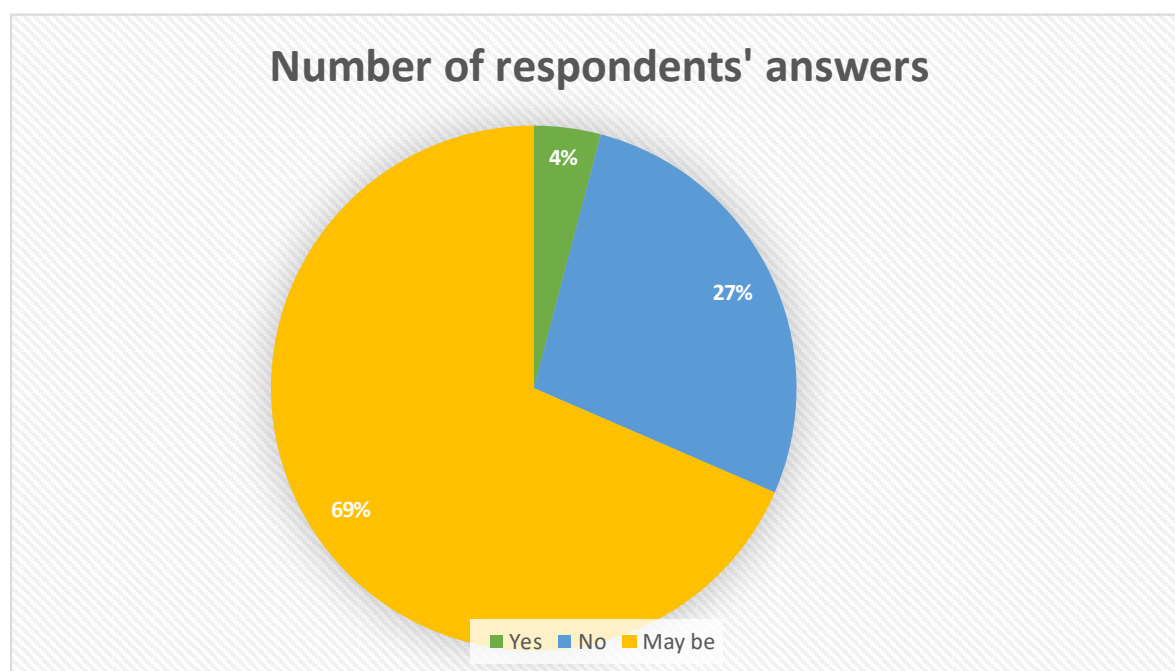
Fig. 2. *Students' prediction of online lessons being replaced by video aids.*

The main problem that can prevent such replacement, according to students' opinions, is lack of communication and other interaction between students and teachers.

Answering the question about students' impressions of videos with instructions on topics and their evaluation of how helpful they were for them; students shared their experience in using the aids. 80% of respondents considered them very helpful and defined the advantages and disadvantages in using the video aids that are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

The list of advantages and disadvantages of using the video aids

Advantages	The number of participants who supported the statement	Disadvantages	The number of participants who supported the statement
The possibility to watch the video at a suitable time and several times	3	The absence of live interaction	1
They helped to understand the material better	3	Some of the videos were too long	1
Clear instructions what task and how to do.	5	Difficult to answer	2

One more important aspect of this study is to find out how deeply the students were involved in the learning process with the help of video aids. The last question was if the students watched all the videos to evaluate this mode objectively. As can be seen in the figure below, 53 % of respondents answered positively. One-third of surveyed gave a negative answer.
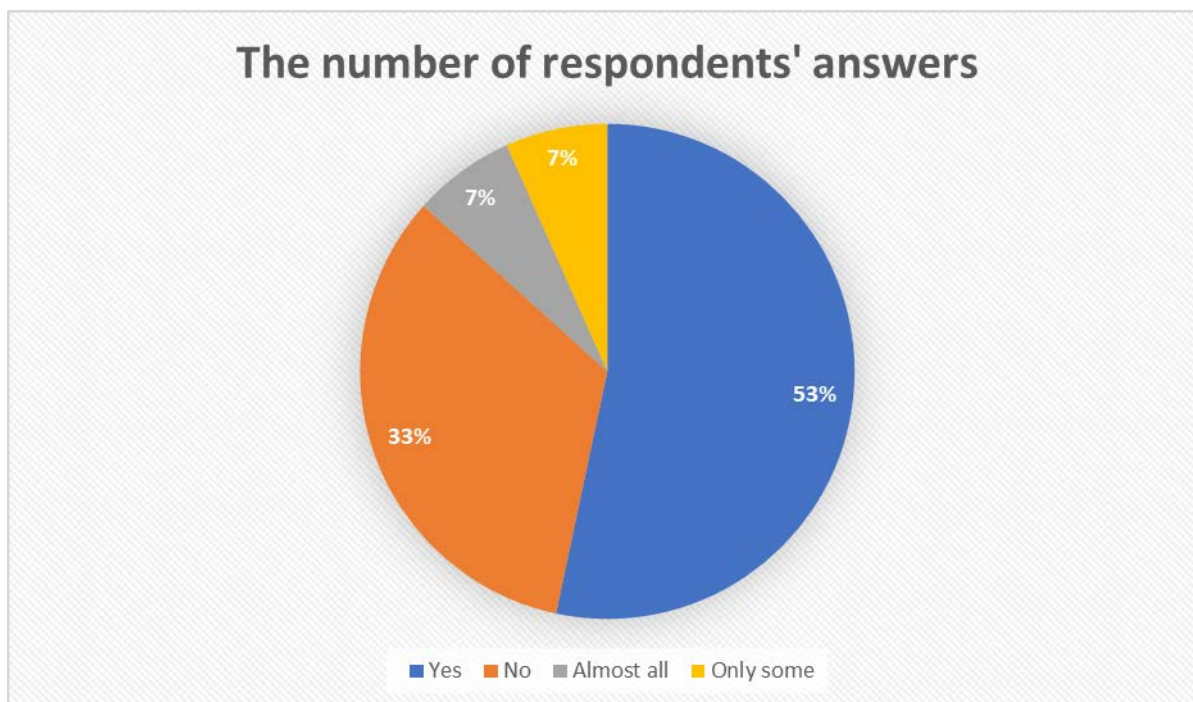

Fig. 3. The number of students who watched all the videos.

Other responses to this question included the reasons why some videos were skipped by students. The main reason is a great number of tasks students have to do and lack of time on it.

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis give the opportunity to answer the research questions of this study. The first question was to find out to what extent students consider the technology of video aids application useful. The response rate was 80% of positive feedback from students who consider them useful.

The findings on the second research question: "What are the main benefits and drawbacks of using video aids during asynchronous studying?" are partially described in table 1. However, it is necessary to determine the extent to which the teacher benefitted and whether the video aids helped in teaching ELT Methodology. First of all, it is worth mentioning, that at the beginning of the war the use of video aids was the only way to explain the material to students. After analysis of my work with video materials I can define the list of benefits for me as for teacher:

- videos can be used many times (I can use them now for my students who missed a lesson or for part-time students);
- videos are possible to change according to new students' needs (the videos are saved as film studio projects and are easy to edit for new aids);
- when using YouTube, I can follow the number of views and monitor my students' autonomy;
- the process of creating videos is interesting and involving;
- I can choose a suitable time for creating video aids (it is especially important as air-alerts can interfere greatly);
- I found new online tools and resources and developed my digital competence;
- I found the possibilities for delayed written interaction (I used online applications Mentimeter, Jam Board and Padlet where students could post their opinions and share ideas);
- I received positive feedback from my students and raised my motivation.

In contrast to benefits, however, I found some drawbacks:
- the video aid creation is a time-consuming process (some videos took me up to 6 hours);
- there is no possibility to discuss any questions;
- I can not see students' reactions to the material presentation;
- I can not monitor who didn't watch the video.

As we see, the list of benefits is long and can be continued. When working with video creation, I defined some useful tips on how to make it good and clear for my students.

1. *The content.* The information should be brief with a focus on the most difficult for understanding points. It is important to use PowerPoint

presentations or PDF readers to show significant aspects of the topic.

2.   *The instructions.* Instructions should be short and clear.

3.   *The use of tools on the bar in PowerPoint and PDF readers.* During the screen recording, I used various tools: pencils, markers, shapes, arrows, etc. When editing the video, I also insert my comments and tips that made the video more dynamic. It is important that the picture is not static, something should move, it keeps attention and focuses it on important details.

4.   *The use of voice and music.* It is important to monitor the voice, it shouldn't be monotonous. Intonation change, and the use of music can improve the video a lot.

5.   *Duration.* Long videos are not good. The content is not entertaining but educative, so the duration shouldn't be more than 15-20 minutes.

6.   *The use of images.* Pictures will add brightness. Schemes, graphs, and charts also work extremely well, because structured information is better remembered.

7.   *Pauses for delayed interaction.* When in real lessons we have discussions, I made a picture with a question for discussion and requested to stop the video and think about possible answers. But later I began to use Jam Board, Mentimeter and Padlet for delayed interaction, when students could write their thoughts and read the posts of others.

Conclusions. This study has shown that even in martial law, caused by war, education can survive. It is possible to find appropriate ways for teaching even asynchronically. This experience assures that students can be motivated and study autonomously if they feel teachers' motivation to work for their sake and help them to study.

In general, therefore, it seems that the use of video aids helped my students not only in studying the ELT Methodology but in promoting their autonomy as well. Interestingly, my students and I defined some similar points about the use of video aids. We indicated the same benefits that there is a possibility to choose the time according to the circumstance and to use/watch videos as many times as we need. As for drawbacks, the main problem is the absence of interaction and live communication. Both research questions were investigated and showed that the use of video aids, made by the teacher, are definitely useful for asynchronous studying mode and can be used in other modes though they don't give the possibility for immediate live interaction.

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, not all my students anticipated this research, second, two of those students who participated gave some answers that were difficult to take into account. Further research in this field would be of great help in teaching other subjects or using this technology for part-time students.

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