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NEW ASPECTS OF DISTANT LEARNING AT A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING UNIVERSITY TODAY

Abstract. The article deals with the analysis of Internet and online instruments provided by the urgent format of the current demand of the system of high education in general, and foreign language teacher training establishment particularly. The author describes new aspects of distant learning that has once already proved its universality during the year of world pandemic wave when there appeared the necessity to save educational process at the lockdown. It is the present times when new crises provoked the urgency of distant format again. Distant learning helps obtaining education without leaving work or residence. It is usually held with implementing different technical equipment that provide live communication between educational process participators. Advantages, obstacles and negative outcomes of its implementation have been described. In the system of high pedagogical education, teachers and professor staff become a driving force of providing students with new knowledge, skills and abilities that is very important at a foreign language teacher training university.

The article describes some new aspects of distant learning today including networking, gamification and the online services. Practical realization of new approaches of distant learning with the use of innovative instruments and technologies for more effective attracting and motivating of students is explained as an optimal opportunity for knowledge activating of high education applicants.

Keywords: distant learning, foreign language teacher training university, high education, innovative methods, Internet technologies, social networks, online services.

Problem solving. The present global economic and geopolitical situation presents dynamic progress for the implementation of innovative information and digital technologies in social life and relations. It results into new challenges of education in general and distant learning and teaching in particular and proves new

methodologies and organizational methods for adopting and improving teacher training process at a pedagogical university. Thus, the use of platforms, technologies and courses design for online learning makes the organization of educational process completely different. It is distant learning that shows a full coincidence with the present requirements.

Distant learning instruments provide the significant role in education system improving. Both the world and native methodologists support the implementation of distant learning system into the organization of educational process of teacher training universities using modern telecommunication technologies, mass media, Internet instruments and social networking.

Analysis of recent researches. Foreign and native studies of the problem mentioned supports the idea that the future of the native educational system is definitely connected with and depends on distant learning. Effective realization of its advantages is possible only when the principals of systematicity, controllability and predictability are realized within the educational process. The study of the principals, technology, logics and validity of distant learning, its effectiveness and knowledge control is rather urgent and actual issue for the scientists [1].

In the article we refer to the present scientists whose works are on the issues of distant learning content (M. Karpenko, S. Lytvynova, E. Polat), scientific support of professional distant education (V. Bykov, M. Nezhurina, S. Nesterenko), distant learning organization abroad and in Ukraine (V. Oliinyk, N. Korsunska), prospects of distant learning and teaching (N. Yaremchuk, O. Lavro, I. Ushkalenko, P. Dmytrenko, O. Tretiak). The studies of the following foreign researchers are necessary to admit here: B. Han, G. Daniel, G. Anderson, and O. Peteres.

The provided analysis of the literature on the studied aspects proves that the tendencies for the development of distant learning and teaching at higher educational institutions in general and a foreign language teacher training education in particular, are not characterized by a fundamental scientific and pedagogical studies.

The purpose of the article touches theoretical justification and description of the main aspects of distant learning at present foreign language teacher training universities in Ukraine, expediency to use distant learning instruments and methods.

The main material. We start the study with the determination of the concept 'distant learning' that is interpreted as the one to coincide with the general pedagogical tradition and is close to 'learning' and 'education' terms. Thus, the notion 'learning' is considered as a purposeful, systemic and organizing process to master knowledge, skills and abilities [2, p. 7].

Universities that promote distant learning today may be divided into several types:

- 1) distant high education establishments that provide natural studies;



- 2) providers of corporative trainings, promoting and developing courses;
- 3) traditional universities that offer online studying.

More often leading world high education establishments give free access to their educational resources in order to organize distant learning. As an example we may note MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) that is available for students all over the world. For a system of education, it helps reduce costs for institution maintenance, studying quality promotion for the open access of big amount of audiovisual material and online library [3].

Having analyzed the specific features of educational services in general and distant learning in particular, we prove the high growth rate according to the present demands. The all-Ukrainian survey of the use of distant learning technologies at institutions of high education prove that every university is interested in this service [4].

There are three types of distant learning available today:

1) correspondence learning – at part-time studying students receive books, text books, reference books, tasks and other methodological materials by mail; they work themselves at their own pace and the time they may spend;

2) electronic learning – provides the access to the course on computer; compact disks, DVD disks and computer programs are used here;

3) online learning is a form of electronic learning that requires your access to the Internet. It is more interactive than the other types of distant type of educational process organization because it provides live communication with a teacher. A student has the possibility to download educational materials from the Internet and teachers send the tasks via online services, conduct online tests, visit webinars and virtual classes [5].

Within the study provided in the article it is urgent to emphasize that today at the time of new challenges we face this year, the high education in general and teacher training in particular is to meet the requirements of distant learning that can be performed both synchronically and asynchronously.

Synchronic form suggests online simultaneous communication between the participants of educational process. The specific programs for audio and visual conference are here to be promoted. Synchronic learning is the closest to the lessons in real time as a teacher can question a student directly and estimate his answer. It gives the best results for mastering material within the forms of distant learning and teaching.

Some disadvantages are provided: poor or broken internet connection, technological limits, lack of possibility for group discussion and work, absence of visual contact with the whole class. Additionally, it is also difficult to control the student whether he uses additional sources while speaking [6].

Asynchronous learning comprises the distant learning procedure including educational process participants cooperation with time delay; they exchange tasks

accomplished with different applications of distant communication (e-mail, forums, social networks etc.). It is more autonomous form of learning that is controlled by a teacher.

Its advantage may comprise flexible schedule, opportunity of convenient daily and working routine at a comfortable pace. Meanwhile the disadvantage is explained by the academic course degradation, socialization reduction, and difficult feedback. Participation in this process is required for students to spend more efforts, properly organize their time, provide more serious attitude towards the tasks accomplishment, and possess self-discipline skills [7].

According to I. Hraschenko and V. Khmurova distant learning is sometimes identified with part-time education. However, distant form of education is defined as a student's constant self-study work, constant contact with a teacher and peers, while the latter is of a short contact with a teacher several times a term [8, p. 136]. Thus, the situation may appear as dangerous because classical education loses its importance.

The fact may be proved with the analysis of distant learning during the time of Covid-19 pandemic. Long-termed distant educating helps scientists reveal some obstacles in its organization:

- technical and methodological (lack of digital skills; lack of teachers theoretical and methodological grounding to adapt their course due to the time requirements; curricular usually is lack for the balance between the practice and theory);
- psychological and personal (lack of pedagogical cooperation between the participants of educational process; lack of students skills for written Internet communication; lack or absence of real time communication; weak official legal support that may provide for rapid distant learning process) [9].

Today it is media services and the Internet that are becoming the center for educational resources as help find many treatments on the methodology of learning and teaching any foreign language. They say teaching English language should be provided and supported with the Internet only, as it also promotes free live communication with a native speaker [10; 11]. The present media services are impossible without social networking even in the sphere of education.

To analyze the aspect we explain the concept 'social networks' as social structures firstly and secondly as online networks organized virtually. It is a complete structure that includes significant elements and connections between them – a social net. It comprises basis to accumulate and spread different information and opportunities to receive that data any moment. It proves both the globality and lack of control.

Social services organize online communities of different interests. Their specific feature is identified with the possibility to fill the content by the users



directly and provides for business, political or educational activity. Here appear different types of social networks: public (with open access) or closed (for the employees of the certain organization or students only). It stimulates high education applicants exchange information and accomplish a task given by the teacher. We also draw another feature – sociability that is outlined as an ease feeling of trust perceived while communicating. A student may ask any question without being baffled or shy.

To prove the fact we refer to the statistics. World famous site for statistical studies reports on the fact that in 2021, over 4.26 billion people were using social media worldwide, a number projected to increase to almost six billion in 2027. In 2019 the number was of 2.77 billion correspondingly. The USA is determined as the leading country among the users. Market leader Facebook was the first social network to surpass one billion registered accounts and currently has 2.7 billion monthly active users, making it the most popular social network worldwide. In June 2020, the top social media apps in the Apple App Store included mobile messaging apps WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, as well as an app version of Facebook [12].

Today many world, European and native universities and educational institutions, organizations show their accounts on social networks websites. There teachers and students are together engaged in organizing and forming education content for studying, self-work, cognitive and art activities. Social services enable the use of the knowledge in reality, in the sphere of foreign language teacher training particularly. It gives the opportunity for communication with native speakers. The students may apply and promote their skills with Skype meetings with their foreign friends, peers exchanging the latest news and experience [13].

Social networks that are the most effective to be adapted at a teacher training university today include Facebook, Edutopia, Twitter, and Classroom 2.0. They provide unlimited horizons to be used in pedagogics [14]:

- The use of open, free and easily accessed online resources give quick opportunities for great amount of different materials and data that are to be used with educative purpose by both teachers and high institution applicants.
- Independent formation of network educational content – everybody can get an access for digital collections in the sphere.
- Mastering information concepts, knowledge and skills – the environment of social apps open completely new opportunities for different people with no specific experience in informatics. Organization and edition of personal digital objects (texts, images, programs, audio tracks and video clips) create new important digital skills for both participants of educational process.
- Observing the activity of social network members – students may participate in professional scientific communities and organizations; they are stimulated for creativity, broaden mental abilities and the environment for cooperation with others.

- Clear interface of a social network save the time with omitting the step for students adaptation to a new communication space. It promotes informal cooperation between a teacher and a student, personally oriented and continual learning.

The main disadvantages of the use of social networks at foreign language teacher training universities are still indicated by a low level of teachers motivation and ICT competences, high level of labor costs for the organization and support of educational process for a professor staff, the lack of open and free access to social networks from university rooms, the absence of censorship on a social network.

All the technologies and methods described aim at following the urgent demands of the present time but not improving high education applicants motivation greatly. Thus, in the sphere of distant learning there appears a new challenge today – activating students interest to the educational process that is reasoned by a distant form of a communicative component between a teacher and a student at a teacher training university.

When digitalizing all spheres of social life, motivating and promoting digital transformation of education appear to be actual phenomenon and an urgent demand of the present times. New competences of a present would-be teacher include the skill to use modern information technologies, quick and qualitative adaptation of informational sources and cobs – all the factors help educational process to be more flexible, intensive, interactive and productive. Here in the sphere of distant learning they outline one more aspect known as gamification that of no doubt is to promote student motivation greatly and increase educational outcomes.

Specific value of educational process of gamification lays in self-activity of high education applicants when stimulating inner motivated factors. It implies students implementation in better knowledge mastering, feedback improvement in communicating between a lecturer and a student.

Introduction of game studying format at high education establishments includes its main components: educational process participants, educational tasks and purposes, multilevel tasks, estimation of knowledge level based on scores accumulation, users ranging according to their studying results [15, p. 252].

We consider important principle of successful and effective implementation of gamification instrument into education both secondary and high to lay in lecturer's correct choice of ways for its integration in different studying forms. Thus, it is a teacher who organizes and develops the structure and desired final baggage of knowledge from a course into game.

Gamification introduces a game component into a traditional education aimed at interest activating, implementing a creative, extraordinary approach to study academic courses. The analysis of foreign experience in this sphere proves the increased level of education effectiveness thanked to a great number of students

who are interested in games. It captures applicants' attention maximum and engages effective new knowledge mastering, forms their strategic vision, creative approach in work, ability to take risk reasonably, determination in decision-making. Gamification in education activates student's communicative qualities and skills to work in team, intensifies self-discipline and self-organization and forms the skills of targeted searching and information adapting.

Gamification as an innovative educational technology is to follow the next requirements:

- correspondance of the game structure and content to the curriculum;
- possibility to provide knowledge control;
- promotion of students self-study work;
- development of high education applicants professional skills.

Game helps project the experience necessary for the particular group of students. While programing or solving tasks via a game instrument, both participants of educational process follow the general principles for it to give comprehensible and clear information, thoughtful practice, informative feedback, specific features of a target audience.

The risks of intensive gamification are also to be described: students focus their attention not on mastering and developing new information and skills but the quick achieving the final outcomes of the game (it is presented by first prizes, scores and ratings), quick accomplishing as many tasks as possible, lack of computer literacy of teachers and students, increased time spend in front of the computer that is followed by risks and bad influence on their health, etc. [16].

In the aspect of distant Internet resources in would be foreign language teachers training the platform Moodle is important to denote here. It is used to be one of the prominent services in the system of distant education and today it is still greatly relied on by both students and teachers. The Moodle is explained as 'Modular Object-Oriented Learning Environment' and is presented as an authorized system and based on computer and Internet technologies [17].

The system is widely used in many Ukrainian universities to train would-be foreign language teachers as it provides teachers with the possibility to organize web-sites of academic courses of a foreign language in particular.

Main specific feature of distant learning of a foreign language includes students individual language practice. Proceeding from the studies of modern scientists, it is clear that learning foreign language via electronic educational courses is more effective if to follow the next requirements:

1. While mastering any type of speech activity, it is urgent to rely on auditory skills. The basic for any type of speech activity lays in oral exercises. Therefore, big attention is paid to sound principles in distant courses.

2. Studying a foreign language often means support and analysis of the native language. It provides conscious strong mastering.

3. An experienced teacher can easily control the activity of each student. It describes the principle of interactivity.

4. Students' individual work relies on a systemic feedback while using educational material, working in groups, and direct contacting with a teacher.

Distant work of high education applicants with a course on Moodle platform usually consists of several stages: informing on general rules to use the service and the site visiting (instruction, the platform access, and personal cabinet organization, introduction of the course curriculum, schedule and structure). The instruction is held by the teacher on a lesson or personally; receiving self-study tasks or to be accomplished on an English lesson; student's personal self-study work with the task (a distant course includes different instructions; the system checks whether they are carried out correctly); discussing and estimating learning outcomes. Answers to the tasks that require one's personal view expression or a creative approach to present, are sent with an inner teacher's e-mail. Marks are available for every applicant in the section 'Electronic register' [18].

The use of Moodle platform while would-be foreign languages teachers training introduces the advantages: implementation of different forms to work with students (forums, discussions, personal and distant feedback); the possibility to communicate and cooperate with the teacher indirectly excluding personal physical interaction; development of the course with various visual material (ppt presentations, papers of different formats, etc.) quick access to another online services (YouTube, BBC, online newspapers and journals, etc.); spread and exchange of video and audio information; estimation of every student; free and easy access to the platform any time. The service also provides the disadvantages: the user being multy busy while working on the Internet, diversion to other sites and open information; the lack of possibility for immediate and direct communication with the teacher; the lack of open demonstrative information for better mastering practical lexical and grammatical material; the lack of eye-to-eye contact that reduces the teacher's opportunities for superiorities of team-building, game and role-playing activities on a lesson.

To develop the system of distant learning in Ukraine, a number of legal documents have already been adapted. Though there may be found some obstacles to its successful implementation (lack of necessary teachers desire and financial interest; lack of important digital skills; partial attitude to innovative technologies), teachers and professor staff are trying to change national system of education in accordance with the present standards and the need to integrate into the world educational community; they continue implementing modern technologies of distant learning. This work leads to its perspective tendency in close cooperation of distant studying software developers, distant education methodologists and teachers of high education establishments in order to organize the strategies for information technologies implementation at distant learning.



Today high education establishments of Ukraine may organize distant learning and teaching independently by attracting state and sponsorship funds in the sphere of new technologies and Internet equipment improvement.

Conclusions. Proceeding from the analysis of new aspects of distant learning at a foreign language teacher training university, we may conclude that distant form of pedagogical process organization is explained not just as an urgent challenge and problem-solving method of the present times but a basis for an immense renovation and current changes of forms, methods and principles of high education. It is distant education that influences the character of cooperation between teaching methods, sources of information and educational structures. It also has an impact on the changes of this cooperation between educational objects, learning time, process and place arrangement.

Despite the obstacles and disadvantages, we prove distant learning in general, and in the system of foreign language teacher training in particular, to provide the realization of educational needs and an improved level of high education.

New current aspects of distant learning are a powerful instrument of communication. Its implementation into the system of high pedagogical education is caused by psychological, social and pedagogical reasons. The Internet online technologies can't change the traditional education completely but are able to increase communication opportunities, promote students interest and contribute to their social adaptation and activeness at educational process. Today they appear as an urgent instrument to satisfy the obstacles and demands of the teacher training education it currently faces.

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