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Using online learning platforms for remote foreign language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic

LESIA GRYTSIAK, VALERIIA KHLOPCHYK. **Using online learning platforms for remote foreign language teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic.** *The changes that have taken place in the world and in particular in Ukraine have led education to the global informatization of the educational process in educational institutions. One of the priorities today is the creation of a single educational e-environment and platformed learning, which is seen as one of the conditions for achieving a new quality of education. The author of the article analyzes the experience of using online platforms to ensure effective learning of foreign languages remotely, identifies the benefits of using such platforms, and highlights the possibilities of integrating online platforms into the learning process.*

Key words: education, remote learning, online learning process, educational process organization.

Introduction. COVID-19 has led to fundamental changes in many areas of life in countries around the world. The pandemic has also impacted the higher education sector as the lockdowns imposed in most countries resulted in the immediate closure of universities and schools and the move to remote delivery of all academic activities. Neither the students nor the teachers were ready that their constant pace of life and the way of teaching, tested over the years, could be changed in one day. Teachers had to master new methods and structures, adjust the program, and study modern platforms for comfortable and high-quality teaching. Based on online language teaching experience, it is defined that online platforms are one of the most effective tools for ensuring distance learning. An online learning platform is an integrated set of interactive online services that provide trainers, learners, and others involved in education with information, tools and resources to support and enhance education delivery and management. It is webspace for educational content and resources that offers a student everything they need in one place: lectures, resources, opportunities to meet and chat with other students, and more. Platform is also an excellent way for the student and the teacher to monitor student progress. Advantages of online teaching platforms are:

- possibility to choose from hundreds of teaching methods using digital tools — interactive videos, quizzes, online dictionaries, etc.;
- eliminating geographical handicaps as both teachers and students can do their jobs as long as they have an internet connection;
- easier tracking on a platform because all activities of students and teachers become trackable and reportable;
- provide flexibility of studying self-paced learning;
- improvement of virtual communication and collaboration; refining technical skills.

The aim of the article. The improvement of the education system is due to the dominant role of new information technologies, especially today, when humanity is facing the COVID-19 pandemic and the problem of introducing distance learning, its constant refinement and improvement comes to the fore. That is why the purpose of the article is to study the specifics of using different forms, methods and techniques of distance learning; studying the possibilities of using both traditional and innovative technologies of foreign language teaching in distance learning. Particular attention is paid to the study of the possibilities of using online educational platforms.

The main part. The specifics of the subject "foreign language" provides students mastering the foreign language experience that provides they have the formation of foreign language communicative competence. Priority in foreign language teaching belongs to implementation oral exercises. This is the feature and the main the difficulty of teaching foreign languages. Distance learning of a foreign language using computer and telecommunication technologies should ensure the implementation of the following tasks:

- formation and development of reading skills with the direct use of materials from the Internet;
- Improving listening skills based on adapted and authentic sound texts;
- formation and development of skills of monologue and dialogic speech;
- expansion of active and passive dictionaries, acquaintance with the vocabulary of modern language;
- formation of stable motivation of cognitive activity,
- the need to use a foreign language in real communication;
- formation of a culture of communication.

Distance learning can be implemented in the context of video conferencing, provision of materials, collaboration on documents, provision and evaluation of tasks. Teachers provide an online classroom that actually combines tasks, files, and conversations on a single platform and can be accessed through a mobile device, tablet, PC, or browser. It is possible to have interactive discussions with the group by sharing a screen to present the topic, encouraging students to ask questions using the chat function.

In a remote situation is where online learning platforms really come to the fore, as platforms for education make the most of modern technology. That is not to say traditional means of education are about to be extinct, but academic institutions and businesses have identified that we can achieve plenty more through tech, such as smartphones and other internet-connected devices which can facilitate learning from any location. [1]

Main digital learning tools for teaching of foreign languages are:

- video-conferencing
- content creation and presentation software
- quiz creators
- online gaming platforms
- cloud storage and file sharing providers.

Zoom. There are several programs through which students and teachers can communicate, exchange interesting information and discuss various assignments. Conferencing allows students and teachers to meet up for class in real time, whether in a group or one-on-one. Using the phone or video chatting, such as Zoom, students and teachers can engage in live lessons despite distance. [2] The big advantage of Zoom as a video conferencing application is the ability to chat, share screen sharing, the ability to leave comments on the demo screen, use an interactive whiteboard, and the ability to create classes within the conference. In an English lesson, these functions can be actively integrated for group work. For example, a group can be split up during a conference to discuss issues, or teacher can use an interactive whiteboard for a brainstorm. The latest version of Zoom also provides the ability to integrate with various applications, both suggested and custom. In our practice, we use the integration of Zoom with the Pearson and Miro platforms. This format helps not only to organize the educational process, but also saves time switching between applications during the lesson.

Google Classroom. Google Classroom was already a widespread digital learning tool before 2020, but the pandemic has made it even more popular. In 2020, the free platform's active user count doubled to more than 100 million students and educators around the world. Google Classroom can be used on its own or as part of G Suite for Education, a wider set of cloud-based tools that includes apps for videoconferencing, word processing and collaboration.

On its own, Google Classroom offers students a dynamic online learning environment. Teachers can use the platform to post assignments, share announcements, ask questions, conduct online assessments, gather essays and grade papers. And because Google Classroom is cloud-based, it's accessible from any device with an internet connection. [3]

Google classroom makes it possible to create a complete online classroom. The main advantages of this platform are the easy interface and many tools in one application. Google Classroom can be used by students and teachers with vision problems - reading programs are provided for them from the screen. For example, for iOS devices created VoiceOver, and for Android - TalkBack.

So, the advantages of the application:

- the teacher sends the materials to all students at once, remotely;
- collects works online;

- sees performance statistics;
- plans the time of sending tasks;
- establishes invisible to other students individual communication with more shy students, etc.

Moodle. Moodle is a free software, a learning management system providing a platform for e-learning and it helps the various educators considerably in conceptualizing the various courses, course structures and curriculum thus facilitating interaction with online students.

Moodle actually stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment and statistics reveal that about 14 million consumers are engaged in about 1.4 million courses propagated by this learning management system.

Many universities work with the Moodle system even during exams. While Moodle presents certain common features in almost all similar e-learning tools, it also provides certain plug-in options.

As an e-learning platform, Moodle features:

- blogs
- chats
- database activities
- glossaries
- support systems enabling the functioning in multiple languages
- content management
- regular examination and assessment

The current infrastructure facilities adopted by Moodle enable it to support a plethora of plug-in options like graphical themes and content filters, enrolment and authentication processes as well as resource and question patterns.

Any operating system that supports the usage of PHP allows the usage of an e-learning platform like Moodle and some of the systems where Moodle can perform without any alterations include Mac OS X, Windows, Linux, Unix, NetWare etc. [4]

The use of Moodle is appropriate in the context of large educational institutions, or large companies, to meet the needs of which you need to develop a large number of distance learning courses. Moodle can cover all the needs of teachers and students, as its functions are virtually unlimited. Due to the large number of installation plugins Moodle allows you to conduct video conferencing (using BigBlueButton), create a full-fledged distance learning course (using multimedia materials, links to external sources, the ability to download web pages and books), to conduct final

control, as well as to award students with certificates and awards in accordance with the specified requirements of teachers.

Quizlet. Quizlet is an online platform that helps students learn vocabulary and grammar through games, questions, flashcards, tests and many other types of exercises. [9] The teacher creates unique assignments and classrooms where each student can show their level of preparation in an interesting way. It is an exciting and fun way to acquire and improve knowledge.

Miro. Miro makes distance learning and working with classmates and teachers easy and fun. This platform is used by many universities around the world, from America (New York University) to Asia (National University of Singapore). Students always support initiatives to introduce new, modern technologies and interesting programs. Both students and teachers and entire universities can work with this platform. [5]

Miro allows teachers to present material while students can be interacting and contributing in the same shared space. It is a perfect platform for language practice as students can work together to write dialogues and texts, make stories or videos. Miro can be used to play board games virtually or even submit homework assignments and receive detailed feedback.

In synchronous mode, Miro is a powerful tool for presentation of new material. You can upload videos, grids, images into your board before the synchronous session and during the session easily interact with the material adding any drawings, handwritten comments, or anything else you might need from the toolbar features. If you are planning on merely presenting the material, you can just share your screen without asking the students to access the board. If you want students to collaborate, you will ask them to sign in, so you will immediately see their initials in the top right corner, and when they are performing any actions, you will see the cursor with their name next to it moving over the canvas.

Prezi. Prezi is an application for presentations in the form of thought maps or mind maps that are more modern and have more features where text, images, other presentation media videos are placed on the presentation canvas and can be grouped in frames. Prezi is also a relatively new application that has a fresh, unique, and attractive appearance. [6] Prezi presentation media has several advantages as follows:

- Online learning media design based on the Prezi application can be developed in two versions, namely offline and online.
- Prezi has a diverse and entertaining slide show.

- It can combine images, sounds, text, and videos in one view.
- It has a zoom in and zoom out facility.
- There is no need to move from one slide to another because everything is on one screen and if you want to move you only need to press the large canvas button in the display according to the sound sequence.

From the advantages described above, Prezi's presentation media still has disadvantages including:

- it is an online software program whose manufacturing process must be online with electric conductivity;
- if you use the Desktop Prezi offline, the front and color options are limited;
- The presentation cannot be printed;
- the more attractive and innovative is subject to tariff when making a Prezi account to access Prezi in addition to the type.

Prezi allows to effectively use such a method of learning foreign languages as creating thematic presentations. Using this type of training activity allows you to intensify learning educational material. The presentation allows affect several types of memory at once: visual, auditory, emotional, and sometimes motor. When organizing an online lesson using a presentation, the training material is presented clearly and available. In the process of speaking the applicant has the ability to use keywords, schemes, tables, pictures. This allows you to build statements consistently, comprehensively, confidently and clearly. The use of thematic presentations is considered completely justified in the process teaching both general and business and professionally oriented English.

It should be noted that, performing a visual-illustrative function, multimedia presentations can be successfully used by the teacher at any stage of the learning process: the introduction and consolidation of lexical and grammatical material, control of the studied material and more. Creating presentations is an integral part of the independent work of students. Can be used for listening, translating texts, composing dialogues. The development of presentations helps to increase the information culture, motivation and self-esteem of students. Experience shows a high level of efficiency in the use of presentations in distance learning of a foreign language.

ClassDojo. ClassDojo is a simple tool for evaluating the performance of a class in real time. A comfortable incentive system has been created

here with different roles and levels of access. ClassDojo registers a teacher and enrolls students in their class. A personal code to access your own profile is sent to students. There is an opportunity for students to communicate on the class page: after the teacher has created the post, students can comment. Each student receives an avatar in the form of a monster. The task of the monster - to collect points for task. For each task the teacher assigns to the students a certain number of points.

Padlet. Padlet.com is a virtual board on which you can place individual message tiles with text information, hyperlinks, images, attach files, audio and video recordings. You can enable commenting mode, in which students can even add completed work. It is worth noting that such an organization of interaction can be appropriate within the lessons of one class or several classes for a short period, as the available space quickly becomes cluttered. Also in the free account only three virtual boards are available for recording. At the same time, it is can be a convenient point for information and online announcements.

One of the efficient ways of using this platform is creating web-quests.

A web-quest should be understood as a type of search activity in which students obtain the necessary information on the Internet at the specified addresses. Quests contribute to the effective use of time of students, the development of critical thinking, evaluation, analysis and synthesis of information. For distance learning of a foreign language, it is advisable to use web-quests of the following types: creating an interactive story, during which students focus on a certain option to continue the study, choosing two or three possible directions; analysis of any created problem and reflection of results in the document; conducting interviews with a virtual image in real time, etc.

There are a large number of tasks for web quests: mystery investigation, analytical or creative task, research, planning, design and much more. Usually, the topics of quests can be varied, and problem tasks are characterized by different levels of difficulty. The presentation of the results of fulfilling the conditions of the web-quest is done by means of an oral report, creation of a presentation, writing an essay, creation of a web-page, etc.

This interactive form of distance learning allows students to expand and improve their knowledge of a foreign language, analyze and synthesize information obtained from the Internet and real knowledge, to demonstrate in an interesting way to the group their understanding of the results of the work.

Considering given above the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning of foreign languages using online platforms are determined.

Advantages are:

- maintaining personal contact with students;
- feeling of direct voice contact in distance learning courses;
- spontaneity and insight of speech, similar to the real environment;
- provide timely support voice communication through instant feedback from the audience;
- immediately, operational cooperation and personal contacts;
- opportunity for full participation in the communication process at any time;
- speech rate can be changed, and students with different language skills can be easily involved in the course;
- participants of interaction do not depend on time, place and planning process;
- a sense of comfort when communicating in writing.

Disadvantages of distance learning of foreign languages using online platforms are:

- fragmentation of learning - students may be in situations that distract them;
- communication time is limited, there is little time for reflection;
- the problem of planning may arise for people in different time zones or those who are busy at work;
- they may require additional software

Conclusion. The study indicates that there are broad prospects for the development of distance learning of a foreign language. Thus, working with information in the future will allow you to use the means of automatic preparation of texts obtained directly from the Internet for use in the educational process. Learning activities will be increased through the use of new automated intellectual dialogue systems, which are in the early stages of development, to work with both text and multimedia. The density of communication in the long run can be increased through the use of augmented reality technologies.

It should also be noted that under quarantine restrictions, most types of classroom work - discussions, brainstorming, presentations, business games, etc. are conducted by teachers in cyberspace. Group online classes on various educational platforms are widely used to learn a foreign language.

While using in process of learning a foreign language, all educational platforms provide sufficient opportunities for effective organization distance learning process. So, organizing remote education using online learning platforms can make educational process not only as well qualitative as offline, but also more interesting, exciting, and even beneficial for students.

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Abstracts

ЛЕСЯ ГРИЦЯК, ВАЛЕРІЯ ХЛОПЧИК. Використання онлайн-платформ для дистанційного навчання іноземних мов під час пандемії COVID-19. Зміни, що відбулися у світі і зокрема в Україні, привели освіту до глобальної інформатизації навчального процесу в навчальних закладах. Одним із пріоритетів сьогодні є створення єдиного освітнього електронного середовища та платформного навчання, що розглядається як одна з умов досягнення нової якості освіти. Автори статті аналізують досвід використання онлайн-платформ для забезпечення ефективного дистанційного вивчення іноземних мов, визначає переваги використання таких платформ, а також висвітлює можливості інтеграції онлайн-платформ у навчальний процес.

Ключові слова: освіта, дистанційне навчання, процес онлайн-навчання, організація навчального процесу.

ЛЕСЯ ГРИЦЯК, ВАЛЕРИЯ ХЛОПЧИК. Использование платформ онлайн-обучения для дистанционного обучения иностранным языкам во время пандемии COVID-19. Изменения, которые произошли в мире и в частности в Украине, привели образование к глобальной информатизации образовательного процесса в образовательных учреждениях. Одним из приоритетов сегодня является создание единой образовательной электронной среды и платформенного обучения, что рассматривается как одно из условий достижения нового качества образования. Автор статьи анализирует опыт использования онлайн-платформ для обеспечения эффективного изучения иностранных языков удаленно, определяет преимущества использования таких платформ и выделяет возможности интеграции онлайн-платформ в процесс обучения.

Ключевые слова: образование, дистанционное обучение, процесс онлайн-обучения, организация учебного процесса.

ŁESIA HRYCIAK, WALERIJA CHŁOPCZYK. **Korzystanie z platform internetowych do zdalnej nauki języków obcych podczas pandemii COVID-19.** *Zmiany, jakie zaszły na świecie, a w szczególności w Ukrainie, doprowadziły do globalnej informatyzacji procesu edukacyjnego w placówkach edukacyjnych. Jednym z dzisiejszych priorytetów jest stworzenie jednolitego środowiska edukacyjnego e-learningu i nauczania platformowego, co jest postrzegane jako jeden z warunków osiągnięcia nowej jakości kształcenia. Autorzy artykułu analizują doświadczenia wykorzystania platform internetowych w celu zapewnienia efektywnej nauki języków obcych na odległość, określają korzyści płynące z korzystania z takich platform, a także zwracają uwagę na możliwości integracji platform internetowych w procesie edukacyjnym.*

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, kształcenie na odległość, proces zdalnego nauczania, organizacja procesu edukacyjnego.