SECTION 11. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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11.1 Pedagogical and methodological aspects of distance learning in the system of teaching foreign languages to university students

Constant changes occurring in the world contribute to the accelerated modernisation of educational approaches and the learning system as a whole, the development of an integrative set of methods for teaching foreign languages and, as a consequence, the emergence of the terms "distance learning" (DL) and "online learning" (OL) or "eLearning". Although the terms are clearly related, it is advisable to differentiate between them in certain contexts when this is appropriate. In the context of OL, students can be physically present in a classroom with an instructor while simultaneously engaging with digital lessons and assessments. In DL, students work online at home while the teacher assigns work and monitors progress digitally. In their general meaning and in most situations when the aforementioned nuances are not specified, in the common practice the terms OL and DL are frequently used interchangeably and should be understood as an improved form of far-away, non-face-to-face learning involving the use of technologies allowing long-distance communication and data exchange between teachers and students. The tools have been evolving with time and their application varies depending on educational goals and specific purposes emerging from the situation. Thus, DL may make use of various technological resources, including Google Meet, Zoom, Power Point presentations, testing programmes and the development of distance courses or e-courses on different platforms like Moodle, Brightspace, Oncourse or SeeSaw. In the process of training, the functions of DL as a tool of the educational process were expanded, which made it possible for teachers to take into account the different level of knowledge of students when conducting online lectures and practical lessons, focusing on the results achieved by students on the educational platform Moodle or MyEnglishLab. Thus, it is possible to observe that there is a change of priorities in assessing the role of DL in the educational process. DL ceases to fulfil an auxiliary function and gradually begins to

play a leading role in the modern education system. Another important task of DL is to preserve and increase students' motivation for learning a foreign language in the current situation. To realise this, it should be suggested optimising the work when using existing educational platforms with language students in DL.

In the conditions of intense development of information society, along with traditional forms of education, modern methods are increasingly used, which are based on such technologies as DL with the use of distance courses (DC), oriented to the individual needs of the student and the level of his knowledge, which makes it possible to make the educational process more flexible, universal and personality-oriented. With the development of information technologies and local networks, new learning opportunities have emerged that allow maintaining the educational process at the proper level.

The formation of an educated personality requires the development and organisation of innovative psychological, pedagogical, methodological, educational, and training processes in pedagogy. In the context of digitalization, modern pedagogy pays attention to the search for new teaching technologies. One of the promising areas in teaching a foreign language is DL. The organisation of the educational process with the use of distance technologies is based on the use of distance electronic learning courses on subjects / educational components, which allow for improving the quality of the university's educational service, promote access to higher education for young people by the conditions prevailing in the market of educational services in Ukraine, and accelerate the entry of Ukrainian higher education into the European educational space.

Digital technologies in education, OL and DC, in particular in foreign language teaching, have recently become a prevalent object of study of many researchers: Jacqueline Stephen [221, 222], Christopher Lee [223], Chukwu James [224], Faridi Bushra [225], Jaclyn Broadbent [226], Whitney Zimmerman [227], and others. The improvement of OL methods is an actual topic of modern methodologists and researchers specializing in linguodidactics. For example, Luis Miguel Dos Santos [228] draws attention to the fact that the search for optimal and effective teaching

methods and strategies is an integral part of teaching foreign languages, focusing mainly on the importance of the implementation of communicative approaches. Reni Puspitasari Dwi Lestariyana and Handoyo Puji Widodo [229] point out that in the advent of the digital age, today's students have a great experience of active use of digital technologies through resources such as social networks and messengers. Since for learners the online environment is habitual, OL is becoming increasingly popular nowadays [230]. That is why researchers are paying attention to OL issues these days. For instance, Murdoch Matthew [231] observed that humanity is currently experiencing the dawn of learning built on modern technology. This type of learning is an affordable means of spreading ideas, innovation, and education to the world. According to the researcher, the abundance of information retrieval options has stimulated the movement of an explosive learning wave toward virtual classrooms and other similar OL platforms [231]. Nowadays, there is a continuous improvement of existing DL tools. The new forms have several advantages that, according to William G. Bowen, have led to significant improvements in academic infrastructure and have saved considerable time in acquiring new information [232, 233].

The rapid changes in the learning process are also highlighted by Ni Putu Linda Nariyati and Astiti Pratiwi Ni Putu [234], who point out that a significant role in the digital age is played by the ever-evolving mobile strategies to continuously improve the learning process through the use of smartphones and instant access to DL resources. R. Chartrand [235] notes that modern technologies provide unlimited access to educational materials for everyone. This fact greatly facilitates the educational process and makes it accessible to a wide range of people. A similar point of view is expressed by Nadıran Tanyeli [236]. The researcher believes that the use of the Internet as a learning tool can make the learning process more interesting, primarily for those who study a foreign language. The author draws attention to the fact that higher education institutions are increasingly involved in the development of online language programmes allowing the use of audio, video, voice recording, vocabulary and grammar correction, etc. The impact of new forms of language learning on students' motivation is also emphasized. Muhammad Dafit Pitoyo and Abdul Asib [237] point

out that in the 21st century, there is a tendency to reduce the role of traditional forms of language learning. In their study, the authors showed that students' level of motivation to learn increased as they began to study more intensively after they took game tests on the free learning platform Quizizz.

The Moodle educational platform has been studied by Rocío Arteaga Sánchez and Ana Duarte Hueros from the University of Huelva [238], Michael Machado and Eric Tao from California State University in Monterey Bay [239], Ruslan Suvorov from the University of Western Ontario [240], and other authors. Carolina Costa, Helena Alvelos, and Leonor Teixeira from the University of Aveiro [241] in their study aimed at analysing the functionalities and tools of the Moodle platform and their use by students. The researchers have noted that this online platform opens endless opportunities for effective learning. Thus, the Moodle platform, adopted at the University of Aveiro, contains modules that allow the creation of educational resources, communication between participants of the educational process, objective evaluation of tests, tasks, and other activities, etc. Ukrainian scholars Volodymyr N. Kukharenko (Kharkiv National Automobile Highway University), Bohdan I. Shunevych (Lviv National Agrarian University), Hennadiy M. Kravtsov (Kherson State University) have also contributed to the study of DL [242]. Their research resulted in the creating a DL program “Distance Learning Examination”, which was designed for the system of professional development of teachers.

The current situation in higher education shows that it has become vital to conduct classes with the use of new information technologies. It should be noted that the introduction of DL into the educational process should not exclude traditional teaching methods, but only complement them. The main goal of DL is to form a sustainable motivation through the active participation of students and teachers in the learning process. It is possible to ensure qualitative improvement of the results of learning activities only with a reasonable combination of accumulated methods, personal experience, and modern technologies. The advantages of DL are clear: it provides the possibility of differentiated and individual training for all students (including those with disabilities, beyond territorial accessibility of training, etc.);

interactivity; quality of tests; visibility; the use of audio, video; the possibility of using this type of training to work with gifted students; remote participation in webinars, contests, competitions, conferences, etc.

The main innovative qualities of DL include the provision of all components of the educational process: information acquisition, practical training, attestation (control of learning outcomes and achievements); interactivity, which provides a considerable expansion of opportunities for individual work through the use of active forms of learning; the possibility of more complete learning outside the classroom.

The emphasis on fullness is not accidental. DL is not about searching and obtaining textual information from remote sources. Fullness in this case implies the implementation of such types of learning activities outside the classroom, which previously could be performed only at the university: learning new material on a subject basis, current knowledge control with evaluation, summarizing and assessment, preparation for exams, collective learning work of remote users and many other possibilities [243].

The main idea of DL methodology is to create a virtual learning environment, including various Internet sources, to conduct online lectures and consultations, to develop testing. The constituent parts of DL are students and teaching staff, whose interaction is carried out with the help of modern telecommunication means. An important integrated factor of the DL system is a set of pedagogical methods and techniques used in the learning process. These are, first of all, interactive databases; electronic journals; and computer training programmes (e-textbooks, grammar simulators, e-courses for preparation for the foreign language certificate according to the norms, MyEnglishLab platform, etc.). A special role in DL is played by web conferences that allow all participants of the discussion to conduct an active polylogue, which is of great didactic value. For teaching foreign languages, it is suggested to use an integrated approach involving a set of methods since it is impossible to test all the competencies necessary for exam success with the help of a single resource.

DL technologies provide for the interaction between participants in the educational process in both asynchronous and synchronous modes within the

timeframe provided for by the schedule of the educational process for full-time and part-time (extra-mural, correspondence) forms of study. DL technologies can be used at the University to organise the educational process for the purpose of studying educational components; methodological support of all types of classes, independent work, control measures; consultations, surveys, competitions, etc. All lectures and practical classes on compulsory and elective subjects are organised in a synchronous mode in accordance with the educational programme, the curriculum, and the class schedule. Other types of work, such as tasks for individual work, tests on certain topics, and final control, may be organised in asynchronous mode.

The Regulations on the Use of Distance Learning Technologies in the Educational Process at Lviv University of Trade and Economics define several objectives for using DL technologies:

- provision of educational services through the use of modern information and communication technologies for certain educational levels and educational and professional programmes in accordance with state standards of higher education;

- implementation of the principle of student-centredness as one of the most important principles of the educational process;

- possibilities of an individual educational trajectory of applicants in line with their abilities, interests, needs, motivation, capabilities, and experience;

- implementation of the innovative component of studying subjects and ensuring the quality of the educational process;

- ensuring the educational process during emergencies of natural and man-made origin, quarantine, confinement, martial law, and other circumstances that objectively make it impossible to attend the University;

- providing applicants with the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge, and acquire skills and abilities for systematic further professional development depending on the chosen educational programme using modern information and communication technologies at the place of residence or temporary stay [244].

DC is a set of educational and methodological materials on subjects and provides educational services developed for the organisation of individual and group learning

using information, communication, and distance technologies. Distance e-learning courses of educational components can be used as learning tools for full-time and part-time students at all stages of educational activities while studying the relevant subjects. The specific features of a DC are as follows:

- clear structure of educational and methodological materials;

- a system of interactive relationship and interaction between academic staff and students, students among themselves, using the resources of the DC in an organised way throughout the entire period of studying the subject;

- higher education students meet the curriculum requirements as maintained by the schedule of the educational process;

- a system for monitoring the implementation of all types of educational activities.

The common practice at Lviv University of Trade and Economics is that DC are hosted on the University's educational portal (LUTE Web Centre) [245], the functioning of which is organised with the use of the distance learning platform Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Distance Learning Environment). The requirements for the content of the DC are unified for all subjects, although some components may be omitted if non-existent or irrelevant according to the curriculum. The distance e-learning course of the educational component contains educational material created by the teacher of the subject or a group of co-authors (if several teachers teach the educational component at the department). These materials are a part of the methodological support complex of the educational component, and include textbooks or manuals authored by the developers (if available); curriculum of the educational component; work programme of the educational component; syllabus of the educational component; educational content (lecture notes); methodological recommendations (guidelines) for practical (seminar) classes, tasks for laboratory work; didactic support for individual (independent) work; list of topics for course work (if necessary); means of detecting the learning achievements of higher education students; a list of teaching aids, technical textbooks, etc.; information on materials available at the University library for further reading on the educational component.

For example, the DC of the educational component "Foreign Language (English)" is structured and contains three blocks: the methodological part, the topical block, and the block of final control [246]. The first block includes: methodological recommendations for the use of the DC; summary of the educational component; documents for planning the study of the educational component (curriculum, academic course work programme, syllabus, class schedules, etc.); published textbooks or manuals in pdf format; published lecture notes in pdf format; published methodological recommendations (instructions) and tasks for practical classes in pdf format; published methodological recommendations (instructions) and tasks for individual / independent work in pdf format; published methodological recommendations (instructions), tasks and tests for current and final control in pdf format; criteria for assessing the results of current and final control; list of recommended literature and information sources; additional learning materials (electronic textbooks, manuals; audio and video materials, topics of term papers or presentations and guidelines for their implementation; topics of essays, reports; individual research tasks, etc.); information for connecting to online sessions on ZOOM platform, etc.

Thematic blocks correspond to each topic of the educational component in the syllabus (e.g., Topic 1. The role of foreign languages in the life of a modern specialist. Personal identification and life values. Topic 2. Multilingualism as a phenomenon of modern civilisation. Relationships in society. Topic 3. The art of storytelling. Mass media and their role in society). Each topical section includes lesson plans; materials for study on the topic during practical lessons in the classroom, multimedia materials, and video and audio recordings); tasks for individual work, questions for self-control on the topic; tests for the current control of knowledge and acquired skills on the topic. Other methodological materials on the topic may be uploaded by the teacher: group activities, situational tasks, business games, role-playing games, case study tasks; links to popular open training courses, and other online educational resources. The DC offers students the option of uploading their completed tasks in the form of PDF documents.

The block of final control includes tests at the end of each semester, tests at the end of the school year, and examination tests. When preparing tests that will be

uploaded to the server of the LUTE Web Centre, it is necessary to prepare uniform test questions (one test should contain four optional answers, only one of which is correct); determine the number of attempts allowed; define the time range in which testing is allowed; specify whether feedback and the correct answer will be shown to the test takers.

The use of DC as an integral part of DL contributes to the formation of a high level of cognitive activity in students, stimulates aspiration to dynamic practical activity, evokes interest in the surrounding world, strengthens interest to own personality, and enhances self-esteem. Besides, tendencies to independent management of knowledge assimilation and formation of skills and abilities are strengthened. In general, the use of DL technologies in learning a foreign language improves and updates the organisation of the learning process.

Among the advantages of DL are worth mentioning the following: mobility; universality; continuality of education despite confinement, martial law, or other restrictions; training students with disabilities; teaching international students without leaving their home country; the possibility of multiple viewing of lectures and webinar sessions; the possibility of creating a "worldwide" online university in the future. However, this method of learning is not devoid of disadvantages, the most important being: the lack of face-to-face communication between teachers and students; different time zones; unbalanced workload with increased homework for students; the need for strict adherence to class schedules; the need to possess a laptop and high-speed Internet.

In view of the above, when organising the process of learning, it is recommended not to transfer absolutely all subjects to OL format. For students with a low level of language preparation, it is advisable to transfer a part of classes to DL with obligatory grammar practice using electronic textbooks or the MyEnglishLab platform, while online language training may be applied for students with B1-B2 language skills, which will free up additional time for other language-related extracurricular activities, like participation in conferences, student scientific societies, language clubs. For advanced students, teachers may record lectures or explanatory video guides and make them available to students so that they can prepare for online classes in advance. At the same

time, it is necessary to draw up a lesson plan for the semester and familiarise students with it as well as to introduce counselling hours into the workload where students can ask questions and discuss the process of language learning. Another requirement in the context of DL is to develop within the DC an e-office online service, which will contain electronic journals, examination reports, and a chatroom between the teacher and the student.

DL is a modern reality, without which education of the XXI century is unthinkable, but it should be noted that it can only be a part of or a supplement to the traditional form of education of a modern student. Despite the popularity and general approval of this type of learning, all students agree that OL cannot replace "live" communication between a teacher and a student in a foreign language, create an atmosphere of the academic environment, replace the team and friendly communication between students. The task of DL is only to complement and expand the possibilities of classical university education.