УПРАВЛІННЯ ОСВІТОЮ

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TRANSFORMING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE AT AN ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY INTO A COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE FORMAT

The article is devoted to the study of the possibilities and effectiveness of using distance learning and information and communication technologies (ICT) in the process of teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions. The paper examines in detail various forms of distance learning, including webinars, practical online seminars, interactive tasks on educational platforms, thematic discussions, group projects, virtual language clubs, and excursions. The advantages of using such technologies for the development of all types of speech activities (speaking, listening, reading, writing) and the formation of students' communicative competence are described. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of educational platforms (Moodle, Google Classroom), mobile applications (Duolingo, Memrise), video conferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams) and gamification technologies that help to increase student motivation and make the learning process more flexible and accessible.

The article discusses both the positive aspects of distance learning - individualization of the learning process, the ability to work at one's own pace, access to a variety of educational resources and materials - and the limitations, such as the need for a high level of self-organization among students, dependence on a stable technical infrastructure, and difficulties in controlling independent work. The authors offer a number of recommendations for adapting a foreign language course to a distance format and conclude that, given an adequate technical base and competent organization of the educational process, distance technologies can significantly increase the effectiveness of foreign language learning, allowing for the creation of a virtually complete foreign language environment and improving students' practical skills. Thus, distance learning and the use of ICTs open up new horizons for improving foreign language teaching methods in higher education institutions. An important condition for the successful application of these technologies is the continuous professional development of teachers and the integration of the latest educational solutions into the educational process. The authors emphasize that it is the combination of traditional and modern teaching methods that can ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of teaching.

KEY WORDS: *foreign language, distance learning, communicative competence, videoconference, online seminar, interactive tasks.*

Problem statement

The challenge of learning English in a virtual environment format is particularly pressing due to the unique characteristics of this subject area, which heavily relies on interpersonal communication. The absence of face-to-face interaction with both teachers and peers often diminishes motivation and complicates opportunities for meaningful language practice. Many students struggle with self-discipline. Without a schedule and external motivators, it's hard for them to attend lessons regularly. It's important to understand that not all online resources provide the same quality of education. The effectiveness of learning depends on the platform and teaching methods, which may not meet the diverse needs of every student. To keep learners engaged, it's essential to identify appropriate materials and employ interactive components, and a lack of speaking practice in a virtual atmosphere can instill a fear of using the language, hindering skill development. To effectively tackle these issues, there must be a concerted effort to leverage technology in creating virtual language communities that enable learners to connect with each other and engage in informal language practice.

Thus, although online English learning offers many opportunities, it is important to consider the above aspects and actively seek ways to overcome them in order to make the learning process more effective and engaging. For this reason, it is necessary to organize distance learning in such a way that it is built around all the features characteristic of this discipline. These communities can foster a sense of belonging and encouragement, which are crucial for language acquisition. By participating in group discussions, video calls, and collaborative projects, students can build their confidence and proficiency in real-time conversations.

Literature review

Foreign studies examine the role of distance learning and ICT in learning foreign languages. Blake discusses how online language learning has evolved, highlighting that modern technologies like virtual classrooms and online platforms have transformed foreign language learning. Moodle and other learning management systems (LMS) offer instructors tools for interactive engagement with students and easy integration of multimedia, improving the quality of learning [1]. Hampel, R., & Stickler, U. emphasize the development of effective pedagogical approaches for online language learning. Their work emphasizes the importance of interactivity and creating a language environment through video conferencing, chat rooms, and forums. Research shows that students who engage in online discussions and language clubs learn languages more effectively [2].

Garrison, D. R., & Anderson, T. in their work discuss educational models and approaches to e-learning, paying attention to the role of communication technologies in the learning process. The model of "social, cognitive, and pedagogical presence" is essential for effective distance learning, including language learning. The authors also emphasize the importance of online interaction for the development of communicative competence [3].

Levy, M., & Stockwell, G. examine computer-based tools used for language learning, including automated testing systems, interactive exercises, and language simulations. They note that mobile applications and language learning programs provide students with opportunities for independent learning, which is particularly effective in a distance format. However, the authors also emphasize the importance of developing individualized approaches for each student. Bax, S. Discusses the use of technology in language learning, where technology becomes an integral part of the educational process rather than a separate element. The author emphasizes that for successful use of technology, such as virtual classrooms and mobile applications, it must be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum and be intuitive for students and teachers [4]. Godwin-Jones, R. examines the role of teachers in the context of technology and distance learning. In his work, he emphasizes that technologies such as artificial intelligence and adaptive learning require new competencies and skills from teachers to use these tools effectively. The author argues that technologies, such as chatbots and language simulators, can

significantly enhance students' practical skills if they are properly integrated into the learning process [5]. Chapelle, C. A. analyzes the impact of ICT on English language learning and emphasizes that technology provides many opportunities to develop all aspects of language - reading, writing, listening and speaking. She notes that computer-based learning programs and feedback systems help students to better consolidate the material and provide instant correction of errors, which makes the learning process more effective [6].

Foreign studies emphasize that distance learning and ICT play an important role in foreign language learning. The advantages of such technologies include flexibility, access to interactive and multimedia resources, increased student motivation and the possibility of independent learning [7,8,9]. At the same time, challenges related to the need for a high level of self-discipline in students, dependence on technological tools and new demands on teachers' qualifications are noted.

Purpose

The purpose of the article is to analyze the possibilities and effectiveness of using distance forms of learning in the process of foreign language learning at the university and to offer recommendations regarding the adaptation of a foreign language course to the distance format.

The statement of the main material

The primary uniqueness of foreign language learning lies in the development of communicative competence, which encompasses not just the ability to speak and understand a language, but also the mastery of it as an essential tool for effective intercultural communication and social interaction. This competence enables individuals to engage meaningfully with others, facilitating a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. Moreover, language serves as a crucial instrument for exploring the world and acquiring knowledge independently, opening up new avenues for personal and intellectual growth. Ultimately, this process equips learners with the skills necessary to navigate and thrive in an increasingly interconnected global community.

To achieve communicative competence, it's essential to enhance speech activities: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In this era, modern ICT tools and the Internet provide diverse methods for presenting and introducing new material. These tools incorporate various formats—verbal and visual, such as graphics, sound, animation, and video—along with effective assessment methods. A plethora of educational resources now available offers extensive functionality and tools that enable students to master new concepts more efficiently and deeply [10]. Additionally, these resources help teachers monitor students' learning progress and the growth of their speech abilities. Ultimately, modern ICT tools not only elevate the quality of education but also make it more engaging and accessible for students:

1. *Videoconferencing* has become an essential tool for communication and education, with platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams leading the way. These applications facilitate real-time interaction between teachers and students, making it easier to engage in discussions and practice language skills actively. By allowing participants to connect from different locations, these platforms dramatically enhance the educational experience and promote practical applications of language use in a dynamic setting. Consequently, learners can improve their speaking and listening abilities through direct engagement and collaboration in a virtual environment.

2. *Online platforms.* Coursera, Udemy, and Duolingo offer a diverse range of structured online courses, featuring comprehensive video lessons, interactive exercises, and assessments that help reinforce learning. This format of learning empowers individuals to tailor their educational experience according to their own schedule and pace, making it easier for them to balance their studies with other commitments. By providing a flexible learning environment, these platforms enable learners to gain knowledge and skills in various subjects, from programming to languages. As a result, they have become popular choices for anyone looking to enhance their personal or

professional development in a convenient manner.

3. *Mobile applications*, such as Memrise and Babbel, offer users the convenience of engaging with interactive activities and entertaining games designed specifically to enhance their vocabulary and grammar skills, making language learning more accessible. With these platforms, learners can practice at their own pace and fit study sessions into their schedules, whether they're at home or on the go. The availability of diverse exercises also helps keep the learning experience fresh and enjoyable. This flexibility empowers users to improve their language abilities anytime and anywhere, ultimately increasing their confidence and proficiency.

4. *Social networks and forums*, including popular platforms like Facebook, Reddit, and various specialized language communities, offer a unique opportunity for individuals to practice a language in a more relaxed and informal environment. These platforms enable users to share their experiences, exchange tips, and connect with others who have similar language-learning goals. Additionally, they create a space where learners can find conversation partners, engage in discussions, and immerse themselves in the language through real-life interactions. Overall, these online communities play a crucial role in enhancing language proficiency and fostering social connections.

5. The Role of *Artificial Intelligence* in Language Learning: Chatbots and AI-based systems such as GPT can help language learning by providing instant answers to questions, practicing conversational skills, and correcting errors.

6. *Virtual Reality* (VR) technologies have the remarkable ability to create deeply immersive language environments that fully engage learners in the process of acquiring a new language. By enabling users to interact with virtual characters and navigate through lifelike settings, VR allows for an experiential learning approach that goes beyond traditional methods. This interactive experience not only enhances language comprehension but also provides valuable cultural context, making the learning process both enjoyable and effective. Ultimately, VR represents a transformative tool that can significantly enrich the language learning journey.

7. *eTextbooks* offer a more engaging learning experience by incorporating interactive elements that include embedded exercises, videos, and other multimedia resources. This interactivity not only enhances comprehension but also caters to different learning styles, making it easier for students to grasp complex concepts. By providing a dynamic platform for education, eTextbooks help to maintain students' interest and motivation throughout their studies. Ultimately, this modern approach transforms traditional learning into an immersive educational experience that adapts to the needs of each learner.

These services can be categorized into two types: platforms for learning and introducing new teaching materials, and applications for assessing student achievements in a subject.

These innovative tools can significantly assist educators in fostering the development of a natural language environment, which is essential for enhancing the overall effectiveness of their teaching methods. This approach creates valuable opportunities for students to strengthen their communicative competence in English. Achieving such competency can often be quite challenging within the confines of traditional teaching systems, particularly when faced with the limitations of time and the number of teaching hours available. Consequently, the integration of these tools can lead to a more engaging and productive learning experience for students. In addition, such informatization of the learning process can have a positive impact on students' motivation to learn a subject area due to its connection with ICT tools and the Internet [11].

The distance learning process usually consists of consecutive and alternating periods of contact and non-contact time, which may vary in length. In some cases, however, there may be no contact period at all. For example, in distance learning the teacher and the learner in the conditions of spatial separation can interact with the help of special methods of building a training course, forms of control via the Internet.

Providing the process of distance learning is based on the use of means of distance learning, which include: specialized textbooks with multimedia accompaniment, electronic educational and methodological

complexes, including electronic textbooks, teaching aids, network training materials, training computer programs, databases and knowledge with remote access, computer laboratory workshops, simulators, control-testing sets, educational videos, audio recordings, Web 2.0 services, other materials, intended for the use of distance learning.

The methods and means of teaching used in DL can ensure quality achievement of the necessary goals during an English lesson if the necessary material and technical base is available and the teacher has the opportunity to choose the organizational side of teaching, for example, the forms of the lesson.

Let us analyze each form of lesson in the distance format in more detail in order to better understand their structure and how they can help in learning a foreign language at an engineering university:

1. *Lectures (webinars)* The instructor delivers the lecture in an online format using video conferencing (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.). A PowerPoint presentation is typically used to help visualize key points of the lecture. The instructor may also show video, audio, or share the screen to show other resources (texts, websites, interactive exercises). Purpose: To give students theoretical knowledge, expand vocabulary, and explain grammar and cultural aspects of the target language. This teaching approach is beneficial because it promotes high interactivity, allowing students to ask questions in real time through chat or verbally, creating a more engaging learning environment. Additionally, the flexibility provided by recorded lectures enables students to revisit the material at their own pace, which is extremely beneficial for reinforcing concepts and understanding. Furthermore, the variety of formats utilized in the instruction—where the instructor can seamlessly alternate between monologic presentations and stimulating discussions—encourages active participation and caters to different learning styles among students.

2. *Online practical seminars.* In a seminar format, students are significantly more involved in the learning process, as this interactive approach allows them to engage in a variety of hands-on activities. They have the opportunity to participate in exercises, role plays, and in-depth discussions, which not only enhance their understanding but also foster collaboration with their peers. Furthermore, students can take an active role in presentations, allowing them to share their insights and perspectives. This dynamic setting promotes a deeper learning experience, encouraging critical thinking and active participation. The instructor can divide students into small groups using Zoom's Breakout Rooms feature, so they can work on assignments together. Purpose: To develop listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills through active interaction with the material and with other students. Benefits: group work (students learn to work in teams, which is important for real-world language learning); foreign language immersion (speaking exercises and discussions allow students to put what they've learned into practice). The use of apps like Kahoot or Quizlet makes the exercises more dynamic and engaging.

3. Engaging tasks on *digital platforms*. Teachers can use educational platforms like Moodle or Google Classroom to create and distribute assignments to students. For example, these can be grammar exercises, listening exercises, or translation assignments. In addition, language apps (Duolingo, Memrise) that offer interactive tests and assignments with automatic checking can be used for self-study. Objective: To reinforce theoretical knowledge by engaging in practical assignments. Advantages: autonomous work (students can complete assignments at their convenience); instant feedback (many platforms provide automatic checking, which helps students to see their mistakes at a glance); gamification (some platforms turn the learning process into a game (e.g. levels and rewards in Duolingo), which makes it more fun).

4. *Thematic discussions* (forums and chats). The teacher starts a discussion topic on forums like Google Classroom or Moodle, or uses messengers such as Telegram or Discord. Students write their responses and comments and discuss each other's opinions. Purpose: To develop writing and critical thinking skills through discussion of current topics in a foreign language. The advantages of asynchronous work are numerous and can greatly enhance the learning experience. It lets students discuss at their convenience, helping those with different schedules, which is great for diverse student groups. Additionally, the format encourages in-depth discussions, as

students have the opportunity to think critically and structure their responses thoughtfully before contributing. This method allows students to explore various topics, such as cultural, social, or linguistic themes, presented by the instructor. By incorporating such a variety of subjects, this approach helps to broaden students' perspectives significantly. This broader knowledge enhances their understanding, making the learning experience more thorough and significant. Such an inclusive educational framework not only enhances knowledge but also promotes a deeper appreciation for different viewpoints and experiences.

5. *Group projects and case-studies.* The instructor asks students to work on a project or solve a case (e.g., creating a presentation about the cultural characteristics of the country of the target language, conducting an interview in a foreign language). Students can work together in Google Docs, Trello, Miro, and other online collaboration tools. Goal: Develop teamwork skills, use language in real-life situations, deepen knowledge through researching a topic. Benefits: teamwork (developing cooperation and communication skills); practical orientation (students learn to apply foreign languages to solve real-life problems); creativity (projects often require creativity, which increases students' interest in learning a foreign language).

6. *Clubs for learning languages virtually*. Regular meetings are organized for informal communication in a foreign language (most often in Zoom or similar platforms). It can be a discussion of movies, books, news, or just a free conversation on any topic. Goal: Practice speaking in a free, informal setting. Benefits: oral practice (in an informal setting, students are less afraid of making mistakes, which encourages them to use the language more); confidence development (constant use of the language in conversation practice helps improve communication skills); cultural immersion (discussing current topics and cultural background of the country of the target language).

7. *Testing and knowledge control.* The teacher creates tests on Google Forms, Moodle or other similar systems. These can be multiple choice tests, essays, translation or listening exercises. Purpose: to assess students' knowledge and monitor their learning. Advantages: instant results: (some tests can be checked automatically); variety of formats (possibility to create different types of tasks to assess different aspects of knowledge (writing, listening, grammar, etc.)); progress monitoring (instructor can track students' progress in real time) [12].

8. *Virtual tours and cultural activities.* Teachers organize virtual tours of museums, historical places, or conduct viewing of movies/documentary programs in a foreign language followed by discussion. For example, students can take a virtual tour of the Louvre and then discuss what they see in the language they are studying. Purpose: To familiarize students with the culture and history of the target language country and to increase their vocabulary and cultural knowledge. Advantages: Cultural enrichment (students learn more about the culture and traditions of the target language country); interactivity (virtual tours allow students to be active participants in the process, not just spectators); variety of materials (videos, texts, photos can be used to immerse them in the cultural context).

Innovative distance learning formats engage students in various ways, helping them immerse themselves in the learning process. By offering diverse opportunities for interaction with the language, these programs not only enhance students' academic knowledge but also significantly improve their practical foreign language abilities. This dual focus ensures that learners can effectively navigate real-world situations where they may need to use their language skills [13]. As a result, students are better equipped to achieve fluency and confidence in their foreign language proficiency.

The analysis of methodological literature [14,15] and our own practice of adapting the "Foreign Language" course to the distance format allows us to highlight both advantages and disadvantages of using distance learning in the subject area. The advantages include: individualization and personalization of the learning process due to the flexibility of the schedule and the chance of learning at an individual pace; lack of geographical attachment; formation of information competence among students; accessibility for students with disabilities; comfortable learning environment; possible increase in motivation through the use of ICT and Internet capabilities; wide access to a

variety of information and educational resources; interactivity; conducting virtual training sessions; and the use of the Internet.

However, distance learning also has a number of disadvantages, such as: the need to form additional motivation and interest in learning for students with low levels of self-control and motivation; high dependence on the availability of material and technical means and their smooth and stable operation; the impossibility to control the independence of the performance of certain tasks by the student; the lack of physical interaction with peers and teachers, etc., as well as the lack of physical interaction with students and teachers.

Conclusion

Thus, modern ICT and online educational platforms significantly expand the opportunities for teaching and learning foreign languages. They enable the creation of multimedia and interactive assignments, making learning more dynamic and improving material comprehension. Videoconferences, language apps, virtual clubs, and group projects help students improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Such forms of learning promote immersion in the language environment, improving practical communication skills. Distance learning offers students the flexibility to select their own pace and timing for completing assignments, which plays a significant role in personalizing the learning experience. This ability to tailor their study schedules empowers learners to engage with the material in ways that best suit their individual needs and circumstances. As a result, students can allocate more time to challenging subjects while speeding through topics they grasp quickly. Overall, this individualized approach enhances motivation and fosters a deeper understanding of the material. In addition, the absence of geographical restrictions makes education accessible to students with disabilities or those in remote regions. Interactive forms of learning, such as gamified assignments or virtual excursions, help to increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process. Information saturation and variety of materials also stimulate students to search for knowledge independently.

Distance technologies possess immense potential to enhance the learning of foreign languages, particularly when faced with time constraints or restricted resources. Nevertheless, for these tools to be effectively implemented, a solid technical foundation, readiness of both teachers and students, and ongoing efforts to maintain student motivation and engagement are essential.

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ТРАНСФОРМУВАННЯ КУРСУ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ В ІНЖЕНЕРНОМУ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ В КОМПЛЕКСНИЙ ДИСТАНЦІЙНИЙ ФОРМАТ

Стаття присвячена вивченню можливостей та ефективності застосування дистанційного навчання та інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій (ІКТ) у процесі викладання іноземних мов у закладах вищої професійної освіти. У роботі детально розглядаються різні форми дистанційних занять, включаючи вебінари, практичні онлайн-семінари, інтерактивні завдання на освітніх платформах, тематичні дискусії, групові проєкти, віртуальні мовні клуби та екскурсії. Описано переваги використання таких технологій для розвитку всіх видів мовленнєвої діяльності (говоріння, аудіювання, читання, письмо) та формування комунікативної компетенції у студентів. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу освітніх платформ (Moodle, Google Classroom), мобільних застосунків (Duolingo, Memrise), відеоконференц-зв'язку (Zoom, Microsoft Teams) і технологій гейміфікації, що сприяють підвищенню мотивації студентів і роблять процес навчання більш гнучким і доступним.

У статті обговорюються як позитивні сторони дистанційного навчання - індивідуалізація навчального процесу, можливість роботи у власному темпі, доступ до різноманітних освітніх ресурсів і матеріалів, так і обмеження, як-от необхідність високого рівня самоорганізації у студентів, залежність від стабільної технічної інфраструктури та складнощі з контролем самостійної роботи. Авторки пропонують низку рекомендацій щодо адаптації курсу іноземної мови до дистанційного формату і роблять висновок про те, що за наявності адекватної технічної бази та грамотної організації навчального процесу дистанційні технології можуть значно підвищити ефективність вивчення іноземних мов, даючи змогу створити практично повноцінне іншомовне середовище і поліпшити практичні навички студентів. Таким чином, дистанційне навчання та використання ІКТ відкривають нові горизонти для вдосконалення методик викладання іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти. Важливою умовою успішного застосування цих технологій є постійне підвищення кваліфікації викладачів та інтеграція новітніх освітніх рішень у навчальний процес. Авторки підкреслюють, що саме комбінування традиційних і сучасних методів викладання здатне забезпечити максимальну ефективність та результативність навчання.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: *іноземна мова, дистанційне навчання, комунікативна компетенція, відеоконференція, онлайн-семінар, інтерактивні завдання.*

Конфлікт інтересів

Автори заявляють, що конфлікту інтересів щодо публікації цього рукопису немає. Крім того, автори повністю дотримувались етичних норм, включаючи плагіат, фальсифікацію даних та подвійну публікацію.