SOME BENEFICIAL STRATEGIES FOR DISTANCE INTERACTIVE TEACHING THE LANGUAGE THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Abstract. The article covers the issues connected with challenges and hardship which arise in the process of remote teaching. When both lecturers and students are deprived of the opportunity of live communication, due to the pandemic restrictions they are urged to look into the methods to create new ways to implement the communicative approach techniques in their lessons/classes. A lot of things which were considered to be routine ones and thus taken for granted by both lecturers and students now have to become the cause of emotional crises. In search of new efficient online instruments aimed at assisting in the process of remote teaching, lecturers have conducted a research on students of linguistics department of the National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”.

There is a strong planning focus to see how the classes on the page translated best to the screen. In order for students to achieve the goal of acquiring a set of skills/competences, they must be adequately acquired regardless of the lessons using the screen.

Another crucial challenge is technical issue, namely, internet connectivity/accessibility, which certainly contributes to the list of challenges, connected with distance education. Online teaching requires from lecturers basic understanding of modern digital technologies, which can be challenging too as the lecturers are to find new ways of optimizing their teaching, and thus, search for new tools.

On-line education allows students to join lessons from any location. This factor affects students’ attendance of the classes. One more advantage of distance learning for students is reducing their costs for transportation, meals and accommodation.
The article presents new beneficial teaching strategies based on the combination of well-proved methods and new techniques that can optimize the communicative part of teaching process. The work also results in obtaining grounded conclusions suggesting that the approach can be used to give urgent alternative or supplementary activities acting as compliments up-to-minute useful to the functional core textbooks for e-teaching and e-learning.

**Keywords:** Teaching language, e-teaching and e-learning, foreign language acquisition, web-based classroom, distance education, online education tools, a communication-oriented classroom, pandemic influence on education, beneficial strategies for online teaching, blended teaching, blended education, combination of on-line and off-line classes.

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**СТРАТЕГІЇ ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕРАКТИВНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ В УМОВАХ ПАНДЕМІЇ**

**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена розгляду проблем, що пов’язані з викликами і труднощами процесу дистанційного навчання. В умовах пандемії і викладачі, і студенти позбавлені можливості живого спілкування через запроваджені обмеження. Відбувається перехід від традиційних форм навчання та напрацьовується теоретична основа та методичне забезпечення для створення нових способів та підходів для запровадження техніки комунікативного підходу на заняттях. Звичні рутинні завдання, що виконувалися систематично стали ритмом причиною емоційних криз як для студентів, так і для викладачів. У статті представлені нові стратегії навчання, засновані на поєднанні методів, що добре себе зарекомендували та нових прийомів, які дозволяють оптимізувати комунікативну частину навчального процесу. У пошуках нових ефективних онлайн-інструментів, у процесі дистанційного навчання, викладачі провели дослідження у групах студентів факультету лінгвістики Національного технічного університету України «Київський політехнічний інститут імені Ігоря Сікорського».

Ця стаття, заснована на останніх дослідженнях вивчення іноземної мови, спрямована на те, щоб представити аргументи щодо нового перспективного
напрямку, такого як дистанційне навчання. Метою статті є формування області методології щодо інтерактивного електронного /дистанційного навчання та представити основні типи завдань та підходів цього навчання, а також прийоми та процедури, які в результаті дають можливість розробити певні стратегії та абсолютно новий підхід для більш продуктивного, орієнтованого на діяльність та інтерактивність веб-класу в умовах пандемії.

Планування занять набуває особливої ваги, що уможливлює бачення того, як заняття на сторінці найкраще транслюються на екран. Для того, щоб учні досягли мети набуття набору навичок/ компетенцій, вони повинні бути адекватно набуті незалежно від уроків з екрану.

Новизна та актуальність проведенного дослідження випливає з необхідності проникнення в суть овладіння/опанування іноземної мови з мовленнєвою комунікацією як спільного робочого процесу та продиктована практичними потребами дистанційного викладання та навчання в умовах пандемії COVID-19 та пост пандемії.

Результатом роботи є також обґрунтовані висновки, які свідчать про те, що підхід може бути використаний для надання невідкладних альтернатив або недостатніх заходів для електронного викладання та електронного навчання. Змішана освіта – систематичне поєднання он-лайн і офлайн-занять – це шлях вперед.

Ключові слова: викладання мови, дистанційне викладання та навчання, засвоєння іноземних мов, веб-клас, дистанційна освіта, інструменти онлайн-освіти, комунікаційний клас, вплив пандемії на освіту, стратегії для дистанційного викладання, змішане навчання, поєднання дистанційних занять з занятьми в аудиторії.

Formulation of the problem. The topicality of the article is dictated by the learning goals and vision of the students involved in an e-learning process full of genuine challenges. Thus, in order to accomplish the above mentioned, not only the students, but mostly the lecturers must be more independent, flexible, creative, innovative and ready to solve complex problems that arise practically on the spot. In addition, the lecturers and students must have the same skills that are usually associated with computers and computer networks: find, sort and analyze a huge amount of information from various sources in order to deliver it to the classroom via the Internet, not just text and data, but also audio, video and graphic information, as well as achieving the vision of a globally connected classroom.

Speaking is one of the most common work processes for students studying foreign languages in a communication-oriented classroom. With distance learning, educators feel they need more time and support in preparing and delivering classes, and educators need to understand what works, what is useful and enjoyable in online classrooms. [1]. Many things were commonplace for lecturers and students in the
traditional classrooms, but now facing the screen we also daily withstand emotional challenges together with our students. The lecturers need to gain additional e-practice in the teaching and learning network environment that shapes the world in which we all interact.

The novelty and urgency of the investigation undertaken both follows from the necessity to penetrate into the core of gaining/obtaining a foreign language with speech communication as a common work process and is dictated by practical needs of e-teaching and e-learning through the pandemic of Covid-19 and post pandemic.

**An analysis of recent research.** Many recent foreign and domestic scientific studies have been focused on the problem of teaching languages online. The works of such researchers as J.Underwood, V. Bykov, S.Goncharenko, V. Lugovyi, N.Morse, O.Spivakovskyyi and others are devoted to the study of distance learning. Theoretical and methodological principles of distance learning in higher education were considered by the Ukrainian scholars O.Verenych, P.Stefanenko, T.Koicheva, L.Romanynshyna, etc.. Issues of theory and methods of teaching foreign languages were covered by both foreign and and domestic authors such as J. Bertin, I. Bim, P. Gray, E. Dolynskyi, O. Oliynyk, E. Passova. The use of information technologies in teaching and learning a foreign language is considered in the works of V. Krasnopolskyi, L. Morskaia, P. Serdiukova and others. Although the concept of distance learning is sometimes interpreted differently by the researches they all agree that in combination with traditional forms of learning it becomes quite effective and efficient. A thorough review of the literature revealed many outcomes concerning the benefits and drawbacks of distance teaching the language. Dealing with these hot issues is regarded to be a research gap that is studied in the article pointing out to something far more worthwhile with substantially different focus on speaking. It is offered to look broadly and critically at the communication process within socio-cultural-political context. From this point of view the approach already has a considerable contribution for ongoing development of the curriculum.

**The purpose of the article.** The purpose of the article is to constitute the domain of methodology in interactive e-teaching with the help of which to encompass the main types of e-learning tasks and activities, and techniques and procedures that as a result give the opportunity to develop some strategies and design a completely new approach as a resource for the more productive activity-oriented web-based classroom through pandemic.

This article, based on recent research on foreign language acquisition, aims at presenting the case for a promising new direction such as e-teaching and e-learning. This research outcome presents a language teaching approach based on this study. We need to worry for a while about the technical reliability and technical excellence of the tools, but too little to worry about their suitability for the purpose. It should be
noted that there is a very strong planning focus to see how the classes on the page translated best to the screen.

**Method.** The research was carried out on a practical basis in the process of online learning at the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". The study involved ten groups of students of the faculty of linguistics. We teach general English and practice of translation for future interpreters and translators. The research focused on technological advances, online tools and methods that help integrate students remotely into the educational process. The study used methods of observation, comparison, survey and evaluation. [3]. As a result, a structure was created that proved to be successful for both sides of the process. Using this approach, lecturers felt more confident in their new role in the network, and the students became more willing to attend their online classes. Almost all students worked in groups of three or four. Thus we made use of breakout rooms during our e-lessons/classes: one of the endless possibilities of the computer which allows the lecturer to split meeting participants into separate, smaller rooms. There may be exceptions if students, for example, participate in a presentation where they need to be shown and told. The proposed actions within the approach should be based on the integrity or combination of both visual and verbal methods, as well as detailed explanation or instruction of any content-based activity for easy execution.

**Result.** Taking into account the definition from the “Concept to the development of distance education in Ukraine” distance learning is a form of learning equivalent to full-time education which is implemented mainly by distance learning technologies. [4]. According to the research, the following results have been found. Until now, some departments and faculties are reluctant to accept that the current reality of allocating time and resources to a foreign language at universities must justify continuing to fully embrace skills and acquire competences. Limit the goal to the subject and courses. In order for students to achieve the goal of acquiring a set of listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, they must be adequately acquired regardless of the lessons using the screen.

A lot of sources outline the weak points of teaching the language via online platforms. First of all, this is students’ inability to focus on screens for a quite long period of time. They often get distracted by social media, chats, etc. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to keep the group of students constantly engaged in doing the tasks, which calls for additional efforts and skills.

Another crucial challenge for both sides of the process is technical issue, namely, internet connectivity. Accessibility to the internet has grown significantly nowadays, yet in small towns, the connection speed remains rather decent, which certainly contributes to the list of challenges, connected with distance education.

One more issue that has to be mentioned is teacher training. Online teaching requires from teachers basic understanding of modern digital technologies, which can be challenging. Not all lecturers are aware of all online tools available, and sometimes they even don’t have necessary resources to conduct their lessons.
Sense of isolation can add up dramatically to the drawbacks of teaching and learning distantly. To solve this problem, universities ought to initiate other forms of communication, i.e. video conferencing, chats, online extra-curricular activities. [5].

Managing screen time is another issue that should be mentioned. Both students and lecturers spend a significant share of time staring at their screens, which can cause eyesight deterioration, bad posture, back and neck problems. In this case, teachers of English should try to combine mental activities with a grain of physical exercises during their lessons.

Despite the challenges that are connected with online education, there are obvious pluses: both lecturers and students broaden their comfort zones, gain more extra experience and enhance their creativity. For instance, due to the circumstances, lecturers are to find new ways of optimizing their teaching, and thus, search for new tools. These tools are podcasts, videos, PDFs which can be used as a part of a lesson plan. By using such powerful instruments as online resources, lecturers go beyond traditional textbook in their lessons, which makes them more efficient.

Besides, online education allows students to join lessons from any location. This factor affects students’ attendance of the lessons. Whereas a slight malaise would prevent them from turning up at the classroom, students are not deprived of the opportunity to join online conference and get involved in the process. Moreover, modern online platforms provide the chances to record the lesson for students to use them at their convenience for further revision.

One more advantage of distance learning for students is reducing their costs for transportation, meals and accommodation. Furthermore, a wide access to online resources cuts the consumption of paper, which is beneficial to the environment.

Discussion. From the outset of a well-planned project, aimed at establishing control over online language learning, educators emphasize the need for a variety of tasks and activities based on competing types of lesson organization with results that can be easily and clearly interpreted. We saw the work of constructing / developing and designing classes and their forms as a collective effort. This is a task-based approach, followed by faculty members, which has become a sign of the great work in the field of modern language teaching over the Internet. [6]. Also, lecturers unite their efforts, because they lack professional communication. The quarantine time proved to be a time for innovative projects and training, combining the latest methodological knowledge with practical application in the classroom.

The next point to consider in an online classroom is student density. To optimize the learning time, it was decided to divide academic groups into smaller groups. When students are ready to complete their tasks, they are encouraged to work and teach each one individually for a portion of the instructional time specified in the timetable. From our perspective, we manage to get more done in a shorter period of time without losing interest or actively engaging students. The duration of the lessons can be 15-20 minutes for 4-5 students in a small group. As a result, 3-4 groups can
deal with different tasks, then they can exchange information, share knowledge, arrange meetings and discussions, receiving and providing help and support.

The division into smaller groups gives lecturers the opportunity to work with the students, addressing the differentiation problem in the Google classroom, paying attention to students’ wants and needs, developing special assignments and activities for strong and weak students on the spot and in advance. The role of the lecturer is to be prepared for targeted support.

Everything changes in and with the e-class. On average, the lecturer and student spend much more time at computers. For the future, schools of all types and levels will face significant pressure to obtain financial support by buying computers, connecting schools and connecting classrooms, providing Internet access, and spending significant amounts on technology.

In today's reality, educators must spend time posting course materials and the sessions they teach online, such as the Sikorsky and Moodle distance learning platforms that are successfully used by lectures and students in the National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. Students turn to them to find out what assignments they should do each week. Some of them they can do on their own (readings, letters, translations, projects, etc.), send or attach their work in the Google class and view them after grading. [7]. In the course of activities, students spend more time studying the information "hanging" in the classroom, and share it with friends or comrades, playing games. All participants in the educational process begin with individual efforts to take advantage of technology, and then become participants in the overall efforts of the campus to increase the flexibility of the curriculum. Under the influence of Covid-19, the lecturer is concerned about the access of lecturers and students to the Internet in Ukraine, the presence of computers and violation of copyright law, as they post materials on various platforms and services. Lecturers should consider visually impaired students and those for whom working on web pages is a kind of distraction.

Another point to consider aiming at achieving working/teaching and learning comfort is time management. Lecturers have less time to complete tasks and activities in an online classroom, and fewer tasks and activities. Some students perform best for short periods of time: activities for them must be changed or interrupted by other activities; other students find it necessary to focus on a specific task for a long time. For some students, reading is indeed time-consuming; for others, the writing activity (typing) takes longer. Students are encouraged to have a curriculum challenge that explains there is no single best timetable for teaching. Students' schedules can be set up daily/weekly to study successfully, manage their time and monitor their own learning, especially during distance learning. Lecturers help students experience reality – text is a very effective way of communication meaning that a significant part of the project's efforts was devoted to ongoing research on the study of the text, as we work with future translators and interpreters. [8]. A more modern field/profession for them might be computational linguistics. When teaching to read, we suggest taking
5-10 minutes lessons to prepare for speaking / translation. Reading topics from textbooks can be reinforced by Internet files found by students and read aloud, paying attention to melody, rhythm, pauses, struggling with the pronunciation of certain words. In the case of translation practice, silent reading of the text may be suggested to focus on the meaning and context for a common understanding as a preparatory step for translation. Through distance learning, we realized the real importance of questions. As such, we can ask students to answer online reading comprehension questions and discussion questions related to online reading, with an emphasis on key vocabulary / key terms. Students practice the different types of questions and skills needed to demonstrate receiving advice from lecturers and group mates. [9]. It is difficult for learners of different levels of language proficiency to share their views. To summarize the reading, students are given the task of transmitting the text as a kind of translation.

The students, as linguists and future translators, may be asked to edit articles and reports as part of inter-faculty collaboration and communication. It should be emphasized that students showed significant improvement in their reading, writing and translation skills and / or competences, depending on the course of study. [10]. Moreover, educators may view progress in the development of editing skills or competences as higher-level intellectual skills or competences.

Thus, translation can be seen as supportive and constructive feedback in an intercultural environment. In addition, the importance of raising awareness of intercultural translation and interpretation should be emphasized as a powerful communication tool between people from different cultures. Future translators need to learn through different cultural patterns of human behavior, and many examples can be found online and shared in the classroom to learn about behaviors: even local characteristics stemming from religion, customs and social habits, the rules of conduct and ethics that make up cultural characteristics of the source language. As a result of this work, students realize their modern role as translators and interpreters. They recognize the need to be attentive to the loss and gain of cultural elements in the source text for a specific purpose, in order to have the same effect in the translation product into the target language. Students feel responsible for their intercultural communication and that experience is new for them. “Learning should be transformational and provide students with the opportunities to explore and reflect upon their assumptions, to critically analyze their beliefs and judgments, and to integrate new thought patterns into personhood. By sharing ideas, personal and professional values, new knowledge can develop and become translation in practice.”[11].

We would like to share some ideas how to facilitate the assessment of the students’ progress showing their advancement and the areas where they need more work providing integrated practice in all the skills/competences as the students work in groups to grade them on group and even class on active learning, involvement and participation; on the quality of the projects, debates, discussions, presentations
and etc. The starting point in foreign language acquisition in both on-line and off-line classrooms is the acquisition of lexis/terminology as the basis for reading comprehension.

It has to be noted that lexical control is essential and necessary; for the purpose of control with different test techniques on the newly-developed Sikorsky Distance Learning Platform and Moodle can be used. Thus test methodology is applied to check different kinds of students’ language achievements. Lecturers managed to develop different kinds of tests based upon recommendations by the Advisory Council and implemented them into the process of teaching. In this way a fundamental base for assessment was created. It embraces different types of projects, reports and other writing assignments. The students are supposed to prepare them on their own and then attach them in the Google classroom for the lecturer to mark. Today’s situation dictates that the students have to take exams on-line in the form of tests. All the year round assessment in the form of on-line testing enables beneficial environment for future on-line exams.

These tests are useful if students are encouraged to concentrate on becoming more successful regarding the tests as an integrated resource of learning with the sequence of assigned tasks or activities to be completed successfully.

Another important challenge for future interpreters and translators is underlined to be fluency in communication. The major active part of the entire learning process is speaking so we are to plan up-to-date on-line/Google classes to be topic based and theme arranged. [12]. Such kind newly-organized classes are aimed at leading students to “cram/stuff” their language with pre-learned vocabulary items in order to produce and practice the foreign language. For this purpose lessons are organized using authentic situations from real life which implies application of authentic language with emphasis on the right meaning and right language means. Recording as a useful technique in e-classroom can allow checking English pronunciation and oral fluency: correct pronunciation, including word and sentence stress, and intonation. By means of such recording the lecturers provide some valuable guidance and focused support in correcting students’ pronunciation and oral fluency. They become gradually used to speak fluently and at the same time clearly and loudly enough as well. To maintain the authentic atmosphere we ask the students to work as journalists, news presenters and record their news and interviews. They can record their news, interviews and send their audio files to be checked and listened in the Google classroom not only by lecturer but by all the students as well. [13].

To polish the study skills video presentations preceding an audio narrative of the information are offered to use. The presentations and recordings in any course enable the students to leverage their technical knowledge and to become visuals catering to the students’ learning style of today. Moreover, presentations put the students’ study skills and competences into practice in a life-like way while completing a set of assigned academic tasks that draw on a wide range of knowledge and interests including reading in combination with the habit of note-taking,
discussion/debate/dilemma, aural comprehension, presentation and writing. The students are driven into conclusion that a great presentation is the one that can be highly assessed if it is professionally presented and well-organized [14].

Analysis is proposed of different types of tasks and activities within the approach and how they protect the lecturers and students from the unexpected, giving them the security and reassurance they need to be able to concentrate on the teaching tailoring it to the students’ needs, current requirements, form, content, and goals of current e-teaching and e-learning practice that results in actual communication practice based on online interaction very close to reality allowing production and monitoring of the language; control and assessment of the language level and its acquisition.

**Conclusions.** In conclusion, the present article positively characterizes its novelty in adoption an active eclectic approach to dealing with extended English in web-based classroom and finding the way ideas/tasks/activities to be connected together. In this light of what has been proposed eclectics is very trendy everywhere even in teaching.

The approach meets modern requirements for collaborative work modifying the education process and classroom practice influencing class or group configuration; planning and time management as the Internet is being used more and more for real-life and real-time communication especially at the pandemic time adapting us to the changing world.

An increase in use of new technology is changing the future of work with unprecedented speed and intensity driving the reinvention of our lives, workplace, and economy. The speed and advancement of technology will require computer competence and new skills and capabilities, but the most valuable is the ability to embrace change.

That is the time for interactions to become deeper and meaning full to pave the way to a fulfilling career.

This modern approach has proved to be successful: the lecturers are driven by learning outcomes and end goals of the students; learning outcomes give us the opportunity to say that the students are eager for the online classes and the classes are worth the time and efforts. Both sides of dwelling within the approach gain a lot improving collaboration and accountability. We are to appreciate distance classes with a sense of their benefits and advantages to think, work and learn in line with these expectations. We are convinced that blended education – the systematic combination of on-line and off-line classes – is the way forward.

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