FOSTERING STUDENTS’ INDEPENDENT WORK WHILE LEARNING ENGLISH ONLINE

Abstract. The rapid development of science and updating of information in the modern world requires a new type of specialist, capable of self-improvement, self-education, and lifelong innovation.

The paper reveals the role of students' independent work in studying the discipline "Foreign Language for Specific Purposes" in the distance learning mode and its role in their foreign language competence formation.

In a higher education institution, the objectives of students' independent work in a foreign language are to develop skills in working with foreign language professionally oriented sources of information, to develop oral communication skills on general and professional topics and to achieve a certain level of foreign language communicative competence; to prepare students for independent work on a foreign language after graduation.

Students' independent work is successful only when definite topics are studied sequentially, the student is provided with the necessary teaching materials, and the instructor controls the independent work results.

Independent work requires sufficient effort not only from the student but also from the teacher. The teacher thinks over the independent work system, determines its purpose, content and scope, teaches students various self-control methods and monitors the quality of independent work.

Current students have definite motivational difficulties when completing independent work assignments. Internet-connected gadgets, which are integral attributes of modern life, help solve this problem. A wide range of computer-based didactic materials and video tutorials allow you to use information technology in your independent work in a foreign language.
Correctly selected tasks for independent work are performed with the help of information technologies and achieve such goals as deepening and systematizing knowledge on a particular topic, developing skills and abilities of professional foreign language communication, and learning to work independently. Such tasks increase the learning motivation level and stimulate interest in the speciality and learning a foreign language for specific purposes.

Keywords: independent work, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), higher education institution, distance learning, information technology.

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SAMOSTIYNA ROBOTA STUDENTIV PID CHAS VIVCHENNY ANGLIYSKOJ MOVI ONLAIN

Anotaція. Стрімкий розвиток науки та швидке оновлення інформації у сучасному світі зумовлює підготовку фахівця нового типу – здатного до самовдосконалення, самосвіти, інноваційної діяльності протягом усього життя.

У статті розкривається роль самостійної роботи студентів при вивченні дисципліни «Іноземна мова за професійним спрямуванням» при дистанційній формі навчання та її роль у формуванні їх іншомовної компетенції.

У закладі вищої освіти завданнями самостійної роботи студентів з іноземної мови є формування навичок роботи з іншомовними професійно орієнтованими джерелами інформації; формування навичок усного мовлення із загальної та професійної тематики та досягнення певного рівня іншомовної комунікативної компетенції; підготовка студентів до самостійної роботи над іноземною мовою після закінчення університету.

Ефективною самостійна робота студентів є лише тоді, коли певні теми виващаються послідовно, студент забезпечений необхідними методичними матеріалами, а викладач контролює результати самостійної роботи.

Самостійна робота вимагає достатніх зусиль не тільки від студента, але й викладача. Він продумує систему самостійної роботи,
визначає її мету, зміст та обсяг, місце на занятті, навчає студентів різним методам самоконтролю та слідкує за якістю виконання самостійної роботи.

Сучасні студенти мають певні мотиваційні труднощі при виконанні завдань для самостійної роботи. Вирішити таку проблему допомагає використання підключених до мережі Інтернет гаджетів, які є невід’ємними атрибутами сучасного життя. Великий вибір комп’ютерних дидактичних матеріалів та навчальних відеоуроків дозволяють використовувати інформаційні технології у самостійній роботі з іноzemної мови.

Правильно підібрані завдання для самостійної роботи виконуються за допомогою інформаційних технологій та досягають таких цілей, як поглиблення і систематизація знань з певної теми, формування навичок і вмінь професійного іншомовного спілкування, навчання працювати самостійно. Такі завдання підвищують рівень навчальної мотивації та стимулюють інтерес до спеціальності та вивчення іноzemної мови за професійним спрямуванням.

Ключові слова: самостійна робота, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, заклад вищої освіти, дистанційне навчання, інформаційні технології

**Formulation of the problem.** At the present stage of the country's development, the formation of highly professional personnel and specialists in various fields of agriculture, industry and services is impossible without language education. In the context of intensified ties with foreign partners, one of the requirements for future specialists is practical knowledge of foreign languages. Each specialist must be proficient in a foreign language and be able to communicate in another language in their professional field.

The content of non-philology training of higher education institutions students in foreign languages is determined by the object of study (a foreign language) and the professional activity of a specialist in a particular field.

The rapid development of science and the swift updating of information in the modern world require a new type of specialist - capable of self-improvement, self-education, and lifelong innovation.

In this context, the teacher's task is to transform the student from a passive consumer of knowledge into an active learner who can formulate a problem, analyze ways to solve it, and obtain the best result. Thus, the role of students' independent work in their professional training is increasing.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The analysis of pedagogical and methodical literature on the methodology of forming foreign
language communicative competence was studied by Ukrainian and foreign methodologists (V. Buchbinder, V. Hnatkevych, O. Tarnopolskyi, R. Hryshkova, O. Zabolotska, S. Krashen, E. Tarone, J.P. Lantolf, Z. Dornyei et al. The role of independent work in the educational process has been studied by such scholars as V. Buriak, N. Holovko, H. Yermolaeva, L. Klymenko, O. Koroliuk, V. Lutsenko, O. Tymchenko, and others.

However, the problem of the role of students’ independent work while learning a foreign language online has not received sufficient attention yet.

**The purpose of the article** is to study the role of students' independent work in learning a foreign language in distance learning at a higher education institution.

**Presentation of the main material.** The student's workload is divided into the classroom and extracurricular parts. The share of extracurricular work is gradually increasing. Nowadays, in almost all disciplines, the percentage of independent work ranges from one-third to two-thirds of the study time. Such a large share of independent work while studying a particular discipline necessitates changing approaches to the students' independent work organization and developing students' independent skills to improve the quality of learning. In a higher education institution, a student's independent work plays a significant role as a means of forming a future specialist.

Let's consider the role of independent work in the classroom learning of a foreign language. Such work activates students' reserve capabilities, engages them in search activities using a foreign language, and develops skills in finding information, evaluating it, highlighting the main points, and participating in professional communication in a foreign language.

Taking into account the relevance of training specialists with knowledge of a foreign language, some researchers identify such goals of learning activities as the formation of students' self-educational competence, i.e. the ability to acquire knowledge of a foreign language, maintain and improve its level in the process of self-education; intensification of students' search for new knowledge using modern information technologies, thereby gaining access to the latest national and world scientific achievements; development of creative nature of cognitive activity so that students could find the most interesting aspects; improving the quality of learning; optimizing the process of a foreign language learning in terms of saving classroom time. This is due to the lack of a sufficient number of classroom hours and the presence of students with different initial levels of language proficiency, varying degrees of motivation, and different levels of learning skills and abilities.
In a higher education institution, the objectives of students' independent work in a foreign language are to develop skills in working with foreign language professionally oriented sources of information, to develop oral communication skills on general and professional topics and to achieve a definite level of foreign language communicative competence; to prepare students for independent work in a foreign language after graduation.

Students' independent work will be successful if there is a reasonable ratio of classroom and independent work; sequencing of topics; providing students with the necessary teaching materials; and monitoring the results of independent work.

In general, learning a foreign language is a gradual process: first, students go through the stages of correction, generalization and systematization of knowledge acquired in secondary school. It takes place during the first two years of studying the Foreign Language subject, which ends with an exam. After that, they begin to study a foreign language for specific purposes.

This discipline (English) is aimed at preparing higher education students of the first (bachelor's) level of education to navigate in a foreign language environment, to form specialized English-language communicative competencies in various activities (reading, speaking and listening) to ensure communication in the professional sphere through the formation of communicative, linguistic and socio-cultural competencies. It should foster a positive attitude toward mastering both the language and culture of the English-speaking world; develop interpersonal skills necessary for full functioning both in the educational environment and beyond.

The objective of the discipline "English for specific purposes" is to ensure mastery of foreign language speech activity in its main types - speaking, listening, reading and writing - to carry out foreign language interpersonal communication; to form linguistic, socio-cultural and linguistic competence of students; to develop cognitive and intellectual abilities of students, their speech and creative activity; to develop their ability to autonomously expand their knowledge [1].

Thus, the ability to learn and expand one's knowledge on one's own, i.e., independent work of students, is one of the discipline tasks. Let us consider this issue in more detail. Different researchers have studied independent work from different perspectives. Therefore, according to some of them, it plays the role of a means of organizing systematic cognitive activity, acquiring knowledge, developing student's creative activity, organizing students' educational or scientific cognition, managing their activities, obtaining skills and abilities of self-education, implementing
education and self-education; it can be a form of the educational process organization, self-education, control or self-control; a teaching method designed to ensure the formation of a future specialist's need for self-education; a teaching method that is most effective in helping students to consolidate previously acquired knowledge, skills and abilities and to obtain new ones; the result of learning activities; can be a system of pedagogical conditions organization that ensure the students' learning activities management [2].

The performance of the student's independent work is ensured by a balanced ratio of classroom and independent work and methodologically correct organization (in the first year, the teacher plays a major role, but over time it becomes less significant, and the student who seeks self-education becomes more active), providing the student with the necessary teaching materials, and constant monitoring of the student's independent work.

At the initial stage of independent work in English, most students are unable to apply their knowledge in practice, highlight the main points in the text, and activate the knowledge they have already acquired. That is why the role of the teacher in the independent work of first-year students is crucial. Independent work requires efforts not only from the student but also from the teacher in terms of improving the organization of the learning process and independent work as its integral part. The teacher thinks over the independent work system, determines its purpose, content and scope, teaches students various self-control methods and monitors the quality of independent work. Another crucial factor is to study the individual characteristics of students and take them into account when organizing independent work.

It is interesting to explore the role of independent work in distance learning. Distance learning is an individualized process of obtaining education, which takes place mainly through the indirect interaction of participants in the educational process who are remote from each other in a specialized environment that operates based on modern psychological, pedagogical, information and communication technologies [3].

This form of education uses computer and telecommunication technologies that ensure interactive collaboration between teachers and students at different stages of learning as well as independent work of students with the materials of the information network.

It is known that students nowadays have some motivational difficulties when completing independent work tasks. This problem can be solved by using gadgets, which have become ordinary in the lives of young people. Students can use both computers and smartphones, which have evolved into
an indispensable facet of contemporary society and are accessible to individuals across all demographic groups.

Computers and smartphones have undoubted advantages: the ability to implement the principle of individuality, engage in interactive communication, leverage extensive opportunities for visual presentation of language material, and provide an objective assessment of students' actions.

A wide range of computer-based didactic materials (multimedia programs, learning materials from the Internet, electronic communication tools, electronic dictionaries and reference books, and computer-based learning programs developed by the teacher) allow you to use information technology in your independent work on a foreign language. For example, contemporary messaging applications help to satisfy the need for communication, facilitate communication with representatives of different countries and cultures, expand knowledge about people and cultures of other countries, and improve foreign language skills.

Using a computer for self-study in a foreign language is best suited to the principles of individualized learning. The graphical capabilities of a computer help you learn new vocabulary because the image on the monitor allows you to immediately guess the action or object rather than looking up the phrase in your native language. Learning vocabulary online also has advantages: students complete exercises like direct and reverse translation, answer questions, and describe thematic images faster.

As of the present day, there are countless different English language learning activities available on the Internet. A wide range of computer-based didactic materials (learning materials, exercises and tests from the Internet, electronic communication tools (language learning channels in messengers and social networks, electronic dictionaries and reference books, computer-based learning programs developed by the teacher) and video tutorials) allow you to use information technology in your independent work on a foreign language. The students work with their computer/smartphone independently and have the opportunity to control their actions.

A special place is occupied by interactive tasks, which allow students to control themselves and perform tasks many times until they achieve the desired result. The teacher should oversee the student's independent work progress and provide engaging assignments pertinent to their future profession. One of the most gripping tasks for students' independent work is to create educational presentations-demonstrations.

For example, for students majoring in Tourism, an interesting task for independent work in online learning would be to create presentations on the "Shops and Shopping" topic. Based on the materials from online shopping
sites, students choose a definite type of clothing and create a presentation with photos of clothes from different countries, describing each picture with a piece of clothing.

When working on a presentation, the following educational and motivational goals are achieved: deepening and systematizing knowledge on the topic, developing skills and abilities of professional foreign language communication, learning to work independently, increasing the level of learning motivation, forming value orientations (stimulating interest in the profession and the discipline "Foreign language for professional purposes", creating a positive attitude to the learning process and mastering the future speciality [4].

Using computer technology to learn a foreign language for specific purposes generates positive emotions in students, enhancing their intrinsic motivation and thereby increasing the effectiveness of learning activities. Such a high positive intrinsic motivation occurs when the process of mastering a foreign language acquires personal significance for the student: it becomes crucial for achieving personal goals or evokes positive emotional experiences.

Watching videos from streaming services is also an engaging task for independent work. The teacher can provide a link to watch the video, or suggest that students find the video themselves on the popular video hosting site YouTube and create presentations or write short messages based on the video. For example, when studying the topic "Sports," students were interested in sports that are unfamiliar to the general public because they are rarely practiced in our country. Students discovered online resources about tetherball, dodge ball, kickball, paragliding, paddle boarding, snorkeling, skydiving, bungee jumping, kite surfing, zip lining, etc. and wrote short essays about them, writing down and learning unfamiliar vocabulary or created presentations.

Due to the generally small amount of hours spent studying a foreign language in higher education institutions, there is a problem with selecting a lexical minimum corresponding to the purpose and content of teaching students of a particular speciality. Therefore, a crucial task for a teacher is to choose vocabulary for independent work.

The study of the language of professional communication determines the thematic relevance of the educational materials used since it is impossible to learn the language of the speciality and develop speech skills separately from the components of the professional competence of the specialist, factual and content data. The criterion for selecting topics is their frequency, importance, accessibility and relevance to the learning objective. It is
recommended to include sections related to the discipline "Introduction to the speciality". In general, the content of educational materials should meet several methodological requirements: be functional, communicative, accessible, consistent and systematic; develop basic language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), as well as teach translating and abstracting.

In distance learning it is essential to integrate watching videos in English into independent work. The teacher should carefully design a series of assignments for the video materials. Up-to-date and gripping video material about the latest achievements in the field of study helps to increase motivation and cognitive activity. Before watching the video, several questions are presented on the topic of the video, then after watching it, students engage in comprehension exercises, undertake assessments, and complete creative writing assignments [5].

For example, students majoring in Hotel, Restaurant and Catering may be assigned to watch videos about national cuisines of the world and customer service in catering establishments; students majoring in Tourism will be interested in watching videos about traveling by plane, by train, by bus, Customs and Passport Control, and checking into hotels around the world. Students majoring in Finance, Banking and Insurance may be interested in videos about banks and banking, insurance companies and interesting cases from their practice, while students majoring in Business, Trade and Exchange can be offered videos from sales areas of stores or success stories of famous businessmen.

After each video assignment, it is necessary to furnish a set of exercises to assess comprehension. These exercises may take the form of multiple-choice tests, True or False questions, and gap filling exercises, or selecting the correct word from the provided options. It is additionally recommended to ask students after watching the video to describe whether they liked/disliked the video and why. Or provide two video excerpts and ask them to answer in the written form which one they fancied more and why.

Conclusions. Students' independent work and the development of self-education skills with the help of information technologies in learning English in a distance learning environment play a significant role in meeting the need for self-realization, mastering the mandatory components of general technical literacy of a modern person (computer and the Internet), increasing the speed of processing large amounts of information and improving the culture of communication in a foreign language. In the present circumstances, where education has been transitioned to the online realm due to the objective reasons, the development of a self-improving and lifelong learning professional becomes unattainable without the inclusion of independent
work. The example of working with students of various specialities shows that to foster independent work in English, motivation can be generated through captivating tasks connected to their prospective careers, meticulous material selection tailored to their specific fields of study, and interactive online exercises that enable real-time assessment of their progress and performance.

Correctly selected tasks for independent work are performed with the help of information technologies and achieve such goals as deepening and systematizing knowledge on a particular topic, developing skills and abilities of professional foreign language communication, learning to work independently. Tasks of such kind enhance the level of motivation for learning and ignite interest not only in the chosen field of study but also in the acquisition of a foreign language for specific purposes.

The perspective and a potential area of focus for current research on this subject could involve evaluating the efficacy of certain exercise types designed for students' independent work in English language study in distance learning, particularly in the context of English for specific purposes.

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