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Using Distance Learning Models as Opportunities for Blended Learning for Foreigners

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Abstract: *The relevance of the article is caused by the fact that the established approaches and methods are changing, the needs of today's students and pupils are changing. Distance learning in the era of postmodernism is a type of learning, based on the educational interaction between teachers and students who are distant from each other, implemented with the help of telecommunication technologies and Internet resources. Distance learning is part of blended learning, which has become increasingly common in the education of foreign students. Blended Learning is a fairly new method of learning, which is indispensable for full-time education. It is a learning/teaching system that combines the best aspects and advantages of classroom teaching and interactive or distance learning and creates accessible and motivating courses for students, in which the learning process is a defined system consisting of different parts that function in constant interconnection with each other to form a kind of whole. The main task of this model is to train foreigners for active communicative activity in the socio-cultural, domestic and educational-professional sphere and the ability to use the acquired knowledge in online and offline communication.*

Keywords: *Transformations of the educational space, distance learning platforms, synchronous and dysychronous learning, MS Teams platforms, MS Office 365 services, MS Stream video hosting.*

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Introduction

The pandemic has been the determinant of the transformation of the postmodern global educational space: the replacement of traditional educational formats with digital formats, and the active introduction of the latest information technologies. A postmodern virtual component has been added to the paradigm of the classically constructed educational space. The vast majority of countries, at least temporarily, moved higher education institutions to a distance mode or introduced a blended learning format, that is, the learning process took place online and offline synchronously or dysynchronously. Institutions of higher education received unexpected valuable creative pedagogical and methodological findings, which expanded our ideas about the possibility of optimizing the educational process in today's complex social conditions, received methodological and scientific and practical developments that require the creation and implementation in the educational process HEIs on a permanent basis (not only in extreme) social conditions of a new model of learning (Nerubasska&Maksymchuk, 2020; Nerubasska et al., 2020; Gerasymova et al., 2019; Onishchuk et al., 2020; Bakhmat et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of digital technology in the educational process studied by domestic and foreign experts. The advantages of introducing blended learning in the educational process of universities devoted their works Jahnke (2020), Chaudhry et al. (2021) and Islam (2022), who give in their articles different views on the definition of blended learning. Taraskina & Orbodoyeva (2022) analyze the positive and negative aspects of blended learning in higher education. Duhaney (2004) and Bahji et al., (2015) explore students' attitudes towards blended learning in HEIs. Lee et al., (2013) highlighted the challenges and perspectives of blended learning.

The purpose of our article is, firstly, to explore the role of distance learning as an opportunity for blended learning for foreigners, highlighting the structural and content components of the organization of language training for foreigners within the MS Teams platform; the learning capabilities of MS Office 365 services as a testing platform Forms and MS Stream video hosting in the era of postmodernism; in creating the basis for the creation of an innovative postmodern model for teaching the language of foreigners in non-verbal higher educational institutions in Ukraine, secondly, in outlining the objectives and goals of this model of learning, thirdly, in describing the experience of using cloud services in a blended learning environment and in revealing the features of the virtual learning environment model, fourth, in the analysis and methodological presentation of the possibilities of using MS TEAMS office 365 cloud services as an effective tool for organizing a model

of blended learning of foreign language and, finally, in providing a methodology for teaching the language of foreign students in a new format of the educational process organization - in digital format.

The research methodology helps to study the features and possibilities of using MS TEAMS office 365 cloud services to solve didactic tasks of foreigners' language training, provides an equal combination of traditional methods with the results of creative search, use of innovative educational technologies, special newest didactic ideas and forms of providing educational process of educational space in modeling the learning process of foreigners. Organizational and methodological system offers the use of educational and communicative strategies of formation and development of communicative skill in foreign students, capable of being realized by means of IT technologies in the conditions of pandemic.

To implement the objectives of the study the following methods were used: critical analysis and synthesis of scientific and methodological sources, systematic analysis, the method of generalization of the results - induction and deduction, the traductive method.

Distance learning in the era of postmodernism - opportunities for blended learning for foreigners. Creating new conceptual models of blended learning

Blended learning is a type of educational process that involves the use of different bases of methodology in the organization and management of the learning process. The learning process takes place through combined organizational forms and through integration into a digital communication environment on the most convenient learning platform.

The term "learning platform" is often used to describe the tools and services of a digital environment, examples of which are a learning management system, a virtual learning environment, a management system, and a learning content management system. All of these tools contribute to the management process of learning, its content.

Learning platform is the name of the personal learning environment, which helps students independently join and manage the learning process.

Learning platforms are divided into two types:

1) based on free software;

2) commercial platforms.

The difference is that with a platform based on free software you can perform different variations: use, copy, modify and distribute with minimal license restrictions. The most common examples are Moodle, SAKAI, OLAT, Lotus Learning Space, REDCLASS.

Commercial platforms are platforms based on restrictive licenses and are considered safer and more reliable because they are protected by developers. Commercial platforms should include the following: Blackboard, Desire2Learn, and Pearson LearningStudio (Osguthorpe and Graham, 2003).

An effective platform in foreign language learning is Microsoft Teams, an effective platform that is able to streamline learning materials, makes more opportunities to create space in order to establish reliable and constructive teamwork of students or work in groups of students in foreign language learning.

Online lessons on the platform take place in meeting mode, while offline tools, namely: independent work, final control, homework in MS Teams are integrated into additional services. These services fall into two groups: applications built into Microsoft Office 365 (for example, Forms, Stream, OneNote) and Microsoft applications that are not part of Office 365. These services require additional registration, as they offer a limited set of features or require you to pay an additional fee (Bakhmat et al., 2019).

The advantage of the described model, which helps in organizing blended learning on the MS Teams platform, are the following features: dynamic processes and integration of materials, the possibility of introducing a variety of forms of conducting the educational process, individualization and optimization of the learning process, a significant increase in the use of educational material, the choice of ways to perceive this material (audio, video, graphics, animation, etc.) in accordance with the cognitive abilities of students. It is equally important to create a comfortable learning environment that helps foreign students to feel their achievements and performance in learning the language and not to lose interest in its study throughout the training period. Therefore, it is important to create unified databases of teaching and learning materials and facilitate their placement on common platforms such as Google Docs, Dropbox, Sharepoint, etc.

Structural and content components of organizing language training for foreigners within the MS Teams platform

Thus, let us dwell in more detail on the issue of structural and content components of organizing language training for foreigners within the MS Teams platform.

On-line classes take place in a meeting format. The instructor schedules classes according to the schedule in the "Calendar" app. The peculiarity of scheduling at the pre-university stage of international students' training at our university is that it takes place every day on the next working day.

With the "Channels" option, instructors can create subcategories within each team to hold files, special projects, or oriented topics.

At the beginning of each lesson, students turn on their cameras and microphones, which remain on during the communication training sessions. A video recording of the lesson is mandatory. Videotaping the lesson is a great way to later review and methodically analyze the lesson, a script that can be used in the future, and a good effective way to provide counseling and reference assistance to a foreigner who did not understand, master, or miss the lesson. Recording the lesson means that this lesson is automatically saved to the cloud and you can share this resource with other groups or teachers.

During a session in a meeting format, we make active use of its tools, such as:

- Presentation or multimedia presentation demonstration:
- Whiteboard:

The whiteboard functionally replaces the conventional whiteboard. All foreign language students have universal access to it. When the instructor uses the whiteboard as a technical aid to show instructional material or to explain complex phenomena, only the instructor should be allowed to write on the whiteboard.

Both printed text fragments and, using multicolored markers, emphasis on important information, graphic and symbolic inscriptions are inserted into the format of the whiteboard.

Demonstration of the device screen: as well as the whiteboard is used at the main stage of the organization of the practical lesson to explain complex phenomena on the topic. If necessary, the teacher opens a Word document and prints the actual information. Word tools allow you to create tables, highlight important aspects with color, Poberezska (2017).

The analysis of the above tools showed that Screen Demonstration and Work in Word is technically more convenient in its implementation than Whiteboard. In addition, the screen demonstration mode is used both at the stage of training tasks and when performing additional tasks for group or individual form of work. The document with the tasks is displayed on the screen, and students perform the tasks one by one or collectively under the guidance of the teacher.

Meeting mode is used not only in distance learning, but also during the classroom in the case when the group works in the classroom, and one or more students can not be present at the lesson (illness, domestic problems). In this case the instructor creates a meeting with the absent

student. The international student hears all the teacher's explanations and can be a full participant in the learning process.

MS Teams platform, as mentioned above, allows for successful integration of other MS Office 365 services, namely One Note notebook, Forms test platform, MS Stream video hosting, as well as Flipgrid, Kahoot, Mindomo applications. These electronic resources can be used at all stages of the educational process: for the organization of multilevel didactic tasks, for students' independent work, for the organization of training (grammar, speech, communication), in the organization of control, to help with homework.

The wide didactic capabilities of the electronic resource "One Note" when teaching a language to foreigners deserve special appreciation. One Note allows you to create a learning environment for individual, group work; display cooperating users; simultaneously provide shared access to information; automatically save the material offered by the teacher, and save the content of the tasks completed by students. The teacher can quickly create his or her own space for each student (Cook et al., 2004).

In this virtual space, the student can work both remotely and in the classroom. The student's space is structured according to the following sections:

1. Student's independent work (hereinafter: SIW). SIW is performed under the control of the instructor, but without his direct participation. The teacher supervises the independent activity of the student at any time and from any electronic medium. Differentiated by degree of difficulty tasks for independent work provide conditions under which each student can reveal the potential cognitive abilities and demonstrate skills for self-improvement of their own knowledge.

2. Homework. One Note provides an opportunity for the teacher to create interactive, creative homework tasks that stimulate the learning activities of foreigners.

3. Tests. Forms is used to administer tests by integrating them into One Note. A quick automatic check of the results is provided, which saves the instructor a lot of time.

4. Handouts. This section is filled with explanatory and reference material, which expands the base of necessary knowledge and develops language and speech skills of foreign students.

The peculiarity of the MS Teams "Notebook" electronic resource is that it includes a space for both the instructor and the student.

The space for the teacher, where class notes, programs, syllabi, information about students, class schedule, etc. are placed. Only instructors have access to this electronic folder.

Space for the student - in the folder "Library", which contains dictionaries, textbooks, manuals.

And also creates a Collaboration Space, which provides corporate cooperation of students in the group. For example, provides our students with space for collective creative activities in the formats: quizzes, webquests, sharing photo and media materials, joint editing and online use of text documents, spreadsheets, presentations and other documents, working together on online whiteboards (Dziuban et al., 2005).

Thus, using One Note in teaching Ukrainian language at the pre-university stage, we can speak not only about the methodological value of such an online resource, but also observe positive results of the process of foreigners' adaptation to new socio-psychological conditions. The organizational and methodological problem of transforming a group of individuals, international students working online, into a workable friendly team to solve certain learning tasks is a condition for increasing the effectiveness of the distance learning process. Such organizational format as learning community promotes the development of students' responsibility for the academic work done, forms the skills of corporate readiness to receive new knowledge not only from the teacher, but also when communicating with each other - which is an important factor in solving organizational and socio-psychological problems observed in distance learning. These problems were particularly acute during the social quarantine at COVID-19 (Nerubasska et al., 2020).

An important methodological step is to create an additional channel on the Classroom Teams page. This channel serves as a chat board where questions are posted. It is the correspondence in the dyad "student-teacher" or "student-student" or in the triad "student-teacher-student" on the chat board that is an effective means of liberated communication, is an effective means of increasing interest in communication with the teacher and the group. This way of teaching helps to form skills of free participation of foreign students in the thematic conversation, in the discussion, even with a low vocabulary, which, unfortunately, we see in our students at the pre-university stage of training. When students see the answers of their classmates, when they notice for themselves that their classmates, like themselves, also have grammatical or other types of errors, when they evaluate and determine independently the level of speech training of their comrade, and observe the friendly professional attitude towards the teacher,

correcting in a friendly, tactical way, helping, correcting - all this has a psychologically calming effect and stimulates the foreign listener to communicative activity in virtual reality, encourages the development of critical thinking and self-improvement of their level of communicative foreign competence. The teacher can also use this channel to expand language competence and the variety of communicative tactics that meet the standard requirements for foreign language proficiency at this stage of preparation. It is important not to complicate the requirements to the language competence of students at this stage and in this format of communication, not to hyperactivate and not to expand the range of communicative tactics than what is required by the communicative minimum of pre-university stage of language training, to avoid the problem of foreign students inhibition in mastering the language material in the named way, not to provoke them to lose interest in learning a new language and withdrawal and unwillingness to enter into communication in chat, as in informal and optional virtual space.

Thus, the use of the chat board allows synchronous and asynchronous discourse in dyads "student-student" and "teacher-student", to accelerate the pace of communication, correlating it with the actual rate of communication of participants, and may also become an option for creating a collective (teacher, international students team)) a case of questions for a particular thematic communication or for communication on a particular educational or cultural and everyday, socially significant problem. The channel alerts both students and the teacher in real time about recently posted questions. This way of communication performs not only cognitive and communicative functions, but has an organizational and educational dominant, as it leads to the collective convergence of students to perform certain learning tasks, contributes to the formation of such qualities as corporatism, collective responsibility and sociability in foreign students (Kuharenko et al., 2016).

Another methodological technique that builds creative thinking skills, formulates questions, forms the ability to express their own ideas and suggestions for solving communicative tasks in the language lesson is the creation of online collaborative documents in Power Point. Thus, international students are given the right and opportunity to create their own slides in a joint presentation on a proposed topic: publish their statements, arguments, compose their own questions, create dialogue models, etc. After completing a joint presentation on a proposed lexical or communicative topic, each student presents his or her own slide. Importantly for the

learning process, any information can be added or corrected in real time (Gerasymova et al., 2020).

Thus, using the necessary online tools of Teams, whether it be calls, a chat board channel or a collaborative document "Files" or in Power Point live, we create a virtual environment for teaching foreign listeners, create new learning materials.

Learning capabilities of MS Office 365 services as a testing platform Forms and MS Stream video hosting in blended learning of foreigners

The use of such MS Office 365 services as the Forms testing platform and MS Stream video hosting also opens up wide learning opportunities.

The Forms platform provides testing that solves the problem of objective assessment of foreigners' knowledge of each software topic.

MS Stream allows you to share tutorial videos created by teachers themselves or original videos in Doodle format with students. The video is accompanied by a set of tasks aimed at improving oral skills.

Some other applications, such as Kahoot and Flipgrid, Mindomo, can also be integrated on the MS Teams platform.

For example, Kahoot task types:

- Jumble - a competition in which participants have to put the answers in the right sequence or find matches of grammatical or speech objects.

- Survey - interviewing and questioning the audience and then working through the results.

An effective resource at the training and control stage is the electronic application Flipgrid. The Flipgrid application records video messages of international students. This method of training is used to form the skills of creating a collective text, to form analytical and creative skills of foreigners.

Mindomo is free to use and can be easily integrated into the Teams platform. The program has all the necessary functions to create mind maps. In Ukrainian lessons, mind-maps are created depending on the topic, goals and objectives of the lesson. We achieve the greatest results using mind maps when working with lexical and grammatical material (Fandeyeva, 2017):

- making mental maps by students together with the teacher in the class;

- making mental maps by students in class individually, in pairs, in a group;

- making mental maps when doing homework.

Intellect maps are easy to use, develop logic, thinking, promote better memorization of information, develop creativity.

The promising thing for us today is to master new software applications, e.g., MIPO. Applications that can be easily implemented in the MS Teams platform and help to solve educational tasks remotely in a real-time format. Of particular interest at the present stage are platforms that facilitate cross-functional teamwork and collaborative work in the learning process, allow extensive use of interactive methods involving video, chat, presentation.

Padlet has the ability to create unique content, creative in creating interesting educational posts, which attracts students' attention and promotes their mental, creative, searching and cognitive activities. Each participant of the educational process can create an author's post, unlike others, to show their individual abilities (Onishchuk et al., 2020).

In connection with the above, we can conclude that Padlet board is one of the innovative tools, which can certainly be used in the organization of students' independent work.

Conclusions

The importance of the study is to determine the role of distance learning in the postmodern era, as it creates opportunities for blended learning for foreigners. The paper identifies the structural and content components of the organization of language training for foreigners within the MS Teams platform. The presented model of blended learning of foreigners' language contributes to the solution of organizational and methodological task for departments - to train foreigners for active communicative activity in social-cultural, everyday and educational-professional sphere in the current complex conditions, when there is a communicative lack of "live communication", complications with immersion in language environment from the first days of students in a foreign country due to strict quarantine social-distance restrictions, in the conditions of education digitalization.

Also presented the learning capabilities of MS Office 365 services as a testing platform Forms and MS Stream video hosting in creating a postmodern model of teaching the language of foreigners in non-verbal higher educational institutions in Ukraine, outlined the goals and objectives of this learning model, described the experience of using cloud services in a blended learning environment and in revealing the features of the virtual learning model; using cloud services MS TEAMS office 365 as an effective tool to organize a blended learning model of foreign language. It also

describes the methodology of teaching the language to foreign students in a new format of organizing the learning process - in digital format.

In the study the specifics and possibilities of using cloud services MS TEAMS office 365 to solve didactic tasks of language training of foreigners, the application of progressive non-standard educational technologies, original didactic ideas and forms of educational process support for the development of virtual educational space in modeling the learning process of foreign students, primarily to create an organizational and methodological system that offers learning and communicative strategies for formation and development of communicative competence of foreign students, implemented by means of IT technologies in pandemic conditions were studied (John, 2015).

The use of such MS Office 365 services as the Forms testing platform and MS Stream video hosting has been proven to provide extensive learning opportunities. On the Forms platform testing is conducted, allowing you to solve the problem of objective assessment of foreigners' knowledge of each program topic and share with students original videos in Doodle format, accompanied by a set of tasks aimed at improving oral skills.

The MS Teams platform presents the integration of some applications, such as Kahoot and Flipgrid, Mindomo.

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The Author 3 analyzed the learning capabilities of MS Office 365 services as a testing platform Forms and MS Stream video hosting in the postmodern era

The Author 4 made an analysis of the possibilities of using MS TEAMS cloud services Office 365 as an effective tool for organizing a model of blended learning of foreign languages.

The Author 5 and Author 6 explored the role of distance learning as an opportunity creation for blended learning for foreigners.

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