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LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT A DISTANCE

Distance learning has become now a necessity due to the current global pandemic. Language educators have to analyze what opportunities and challenges a new setting of learning brings to foreign languages learners.

Distance education is defined as a form of education which brings together the physically-distant learner(s) and the facilitator(s) of the learning activity around planned and structured learning experiences via various two or multi-way mediated media channels that allow interactions between/among learners, facilitators as well as between learners and educational resources [5].

G. Kiryakova [2] emphasizes a new role of the distance environment participants, teachers and learners, comparing to their roles in a traditional learning setting. The researcher admits that in distance education teacher's participation is reduced to a management adviser and coordinator to the learning process. The control over the whole process of education is shared between teachers and learners. Learners acquire also a new role. They take a central position in distance learning: determine the speed of learning and preparation; self-control and the self-evaluation are very important.

Communication between participants in distance learning is synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous communication allows participants to take part in learning at the same time. Feedback is immediate. Synchronous communication is realized by telecourses, teleconference, chats, etc. Asynchronous communication gives an opportunity to learners to connect to the teacher or connect with each other at a convenient time and place. Asynchronous communication is realized by email, audiocourses.

While examining the nature of distance education G. Kiryakova [2] indicated its features, which distinguish it from traditional education:

- sociability (distance education satisfies the continuously changing needs of society for educated staff in different fields of human activities);
- flexibility and independence (distance education gives an opportunity to learn independent from time and place. The learners define self-paced learning);
- individuality (the teacher personalizes the distance education courses in keeping with characteristic features of learners. He chooses suitable technologies for distance education).

Despite numerous advantages of distance education, researchers point out challenges which teachers and learners can face at distance learning. These challenges are especially acute for foreign language learners.

Due to the media naturalness theory (psychobiological model) [3], distance language learning being not a natural way to communicate leads to an increase in students' cognitive effort, an increase in communication ambiguity and a decrease in physical arousal (or excitement) and, thus, influences negatively students' affective domain.

Hurd [1] supports the above mentioned theory and emphasizes that some distance learning specific factors provoke language learners' anxiety: the contradiction between social character of language learning and a distance mode of this activity, lack of instant feedback, lack of opportunities for speaking practice, lack of confidence when working on one's own.

According to Nielson [4], delay in interaction in distance learning occurs and it negatively influences learners' ability to pay attention to interactions and incorporate feedback. The researcher argues that this "time lag in interaction" is especially important for foreign language instruction as learning there occurs through interaction and acquisition is dependent upon feedback and noticing.

Acknowledging these characteristics of distance learning related to foreign language learning can help us to plan necessary ways to overcome the negative effect of learning at a distance.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ АКТИВНИХ МЕТОДІВ НАВЧАННЯ В ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

Педагогіка є наукою і мистецтвом одночасно, тому і підхід до вибору методів навчання має ґрунтуватися на творчості педагога. При виборі сучасних методів навчання необхідно врахувати наступні критерії, відповідно до яких використані методи повинні:

– створювати атмосферу, в якій студент відчуває себе вільно і комфортно, стимулювати його інтереси, розвивати бажання практичного вживання іноземної мови;

– захочувати студента в цілому, торкаючись його емоцій, почуттів, тощо;

– стимулювати його мовні, когнітивні і творчі здібності;

– активізувати студента, роблячи його головною діючою особою в навчальному процесі, активно взаємодіючою з іншими учасниками цього процесу;