

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WITH THE
HELP OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

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Abstract

The study, which is the basis of the article, answers the question how effective teaching using digital technologies is, it touches upon the problems and difficulties that modern students have encountered in the process of learning Russian as a foreign language under the circumstances of self-isolation due to the spread of the deadly virus COVID - 19. The article describes an experiment that was conducted on the basis of the Moscow Polytechnic University (preparatory department) and the Volgograd State Polytechnic University (preparatory department). In the course of the experiment, it has been found out that distance learning can neither be a leading way of educational process nor replace traditional full-time education (teacher-student), but can be considered either as a complementary component of distance learning or as a supportive component of full-time traditional education. Undoubtedly, distance learning, will be an integral part of our modern society, since it has a number of advantages: transparency, cost-effectiveness, territorial independence, accessibility, non-attachment to a specific time and space, independent work of the student. However, it must be born in mind that this education cannot replace the role of the teacher's personality in the organization of the educational process, live communication contributing to the growth of the process of socialization and adaptation of the individual in society, and to raising the level and quality of knowledge.

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1. Introduction

Digital information technologies, which, as a rule, are very successfully used in the market of distance education, have been actively developed and introduced into the Russian education system in recent decades. A large number of educational and methodological projects on the prospects and opportunities that open up thanks to distance learning, on the effectiveness of combining traditional and innovative teaching methods created by digital technologies have been written, successfully developed and implemented in the modern education system. These are audio and video images, presentations, multimedia projects, electronic textbooks, online sites. In the education system the question has been raised about the possibility of modernizing modern education with the help of information technologies, and, accordingly, the introduction of distance learning, which expands the educational process. All methodologists point out the main advantage of distance learning – this is the opportunity to master the basic professional educational programs regardless of the place of stay using digital technologies: “One of the characteristics of the future [...] is the digital revolution, the manifestations of which are [...], the digital transformation of education” (Makarenko et al., 2020, p. 114)

Humanity could not assume that a situation in the world would develop in such a way that would require transferring education to distance learning due to the spread of COVID-19. All educational institutions of our country have gained invaluable experience in terms of organizing the educational process in the form of distance learning. The unique properties of digital technologies made it possible not to interrupt but complete the learning process at all levels of the educational system in Russia during the quarantine.

2. Problem Statement

The main problem of this study is the need to study the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning under the conditions of forced self-isolation, under the conditions when education, provided by means of digital technologies due to compulsory measures, has become a fundamental, leading way of education. This article also discusses the problem: Modern digital educational environment gives students the opportunity to master special technologies and creates conditions for the formation of competencies needed in the professional field (Semikina & Semikin, 2019).

3. Research Questions

3.1. How do digital technologies influence the formation of cognitive skills in the field of grammar, phonetics, writing, listening and reading among foreign students? What problems do foreign students and teachers face in the process of distance learning?

3.2. Which learning method, traditional, distance or mixed, can be considered the most effective?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article that underlies the study is the need to consider how the opportunities provided to students for mastering basic and additional professional educational programs, regardless of where students stay, have influenced the quality of their knowledge.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study is made up of the principles and provisions of the systemic, structural-functional and comparative-typological approaches. An important methodological guideline in this study is the works of Russian developers of distance learning V. Samoilenko, T.V. Tretyakova, who write about the modification of modern higher education through distance learning (Samoilenko, 2017; Tretyakova et al., 2020). Ideas about the modernization of higher education are developed in works by Kuzu (2020). An in-depth analysis of the transformation of higher education using digital technologies is found in the works of Seres et al. (2018). Dexeus (2019) writes about the revolutionary process in the higher education system, which is happening today with unprecedented speed. Sandkuhl and Lehmann, (2017) spoke about the consequences of the transformation of the traditional education system. Akhmetova et al. (2020) observations on the use of digital technologies in the sphere of inclusive education are of great interest. Making various fields of activity in higher education digital is also being actively discussed in modern pedagogy (Lazarenko et al., 2020; Starodubtsev & Ryashentsev, 2020).

6. Findings

Despite all the advantages of distance learning, which were repeatedly indicated in research works earlier, in the process of teaching foreign students Russian as a foreign language using digital technology, teachers faced a number of insurmountable difficulties and problems that turned out to be a serious obstacle in many ways: in the way of for the organization of the learning system and the ways of supplying the studied material, and for mastering the material by the students, and in the field of technical equipment of the process of distance learning with the necessary tools. It turned out that neither the object (electronic training course), nor the tool (software and services for teaching the content of electronic courses), nor digital hardware (computer, tablet, smartphone, laptop, tablet) can replace the personality of a teacher.

During distance learning (hereinafter - DL), two training options are supposed: independent and in the on-line class, in addition, distance learning can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Within the synchronous method of teaching, students communicate with the teacher / tutor on-line in a virtual audience in real time using modern means of transmitting information. Within an asynchronous approach, in the process of self-study, the student himself chooses an information-carrying medium suitable for him, the pace of learning, and, having completed the work, sends it to the teacher / tutor. Under the condition of quarantine, the teaching of the Russian language at preparatory departments at universities was carried out using both options: in on-line class at the synchronous basis, and in asynchronous regime of learning process.

To form a definite picture of the assessment of the success / failure of teaching Russian as a foreign language in the circumstances of distance learning (DL) with the use of digital technologies, an experiment was conducted among foreign students (154 people participated in the experiment) and also among teachers (27 people participated in the experiment) of preparatory departments of Moscow Polytechnic University and Volgograd State Technical University.

As a result of this experiment, an empirical study has been carried out, thanks to which it is possible to formulate certain ideas about how successfully / unsuccessfully students have mastered the material in the process of distance learning, how effective / ineffective the process of education with the use of digital technologies has been, if the quality of education has improved/degraded during distance learning.

The questionnaire included the questions of the following nature:

1. Do you like to work remotely? (81% answered negatively);

2. In which circumstances do you understand the educational material better? (95% of the recipients answered that they understand the material better in an audience);

3. How well do you understand the educational material (teacher) within distance learning? (67% replied that they did not understand the material very well);

4. How does distance learning affect the quality of knowledge that you receive? (58% affects, but not strongly, 42% affects negatively). Regarding this issue, many students replied that their knowledge of the subject had become significantly worse.

5. Do you think it is possible or not to learn Russian remotely? Opinions were divided on this issue, but in general, most of the recipients answered that it is possible to learn, but not very well - 41%, the answer "impossible to learn" was given by 69% of the interviewees.

6. For how long (how much time) can you study remotely? (The results of the survey revealed the following picture: 2-3% can be engaged in the learning process 2-3 hours a day, 28% can study 4 hours a day, 12% can spend on education 5 hours a day).

7. Is it difficult or not for you to study remotely? (77% said it was difficult).

Full-time study in the classroom is a much more effective way of learning: students have more time to complete tasks, a higher level of workability, deeper understanding, informational, emotional and psychological contact within a group of students is much more productive. Also, the process of people's "understanding" by each other (student-student, teacher-student) is significantly worsened in the situation of distance learning. Digital technologies only exacerbate the process of separation among people, make society even more isolated and individualistic. People, deprived of interaction with each other, find themselves outside the framework of socialization and become increasingly intolerant of each other. Understanding as a process of people interacting within the framework of the established communication in the classroom (student-student, teacher-student) begins to collapse, which destroys the learning process, making it increasingly poor in quality and invalid. This is exactly what students point out in the questionnaires: "If there is no direct communication, a person cannot always be understood".

In addition to the problems listed above, students also note the absence of a language environment during distance learning, since it is the language environment that contributes to the development of communication skills: "Foreign students have to listen to Russian speech a lot, so we don't just need online

lessons, we need to talk face to face with our teacher. The first five months we learned a lot from her, we talked a lot, education with her was a joy for us”.

Another feature that reduces the level of education within distance education and worsens the quality of knowledge is the lack of direct contact with the teacher, the direct contact is broken: "Sometimes when the teacher explains, I don't understand everything during distance learning, I want to ask, but I don't know how to do it and whom to address". The students emphasize the role of a teacher: "There is no teacher nearby to correct mistakes"; there is no teacher to "explain how to do the exercise" or help when the student does not fully understand the lesson.

Thus, students indicate that it is the lack of presence of a teacher's personality, his or her help, support, the lack of direct live communication worsens the knowledge of the Russian language, since for independent language study they still have "insufficient practice".

Moreover, students point out a number of psychological factors that arise during distance education, which contribute to the deterioration of the quality of knowledge. In addition, students indicate another negative aspect – the lack of conditions for quality home education. Often there appear complaints about health problems: "I can't study using digital technologies for more than 3-4 hours a day, because I have to sit in only one place, which is not good for my health".

A survey has also been conducted among the faculty, in which teachers from both universities participated. In the process of questioning the recipients, it turned out that 81% believed that it was inconvenient to conduct classes remotely in a group, especially on such a subject as Russian as a foreign language. 62% of the teaching staff answered that the amount of work in the process of distance learning has increased compared to full-time learning because of preparation for lessons (teachers has been developing a huge amount of materials for distance learning) and because of marking and grading of a greater number of students' individual works. 91% of the teachers believe that students' knowledge has deteriorated in the field of phonetics, grammar, speaking practice, 56% of the recipients believe that listening and writing skills have also declined, 62 % of the teachers noticed the same negative process in terms of listening and reading skills.

Many teachers (67%) replied that it is almost impossible to implement an individual approach within distance learning. The teachers (80% of respondents) believe that the level of students' motivation is much lower in comparison with traditional form education. Many students cannot endure on-line classes lasting more than 2-3 hours, many of them cease to connect to lessons, as they do not assimilate the material, and therefore lose interest in learning. The vast majority of recipients (98%) report severe fatigue and significant deterioration of their health within DL regime, since they experience a high degree of tension during the teaching process. 98% of teachers declared that it was impossible of organize quality control over the students' work. The fact that DL made the interviewed teachers abandon many types of activity, including communicative and creative ones, was confirmed by 81%. It should also be noted that 87% of recipients believe that within DL it is completely impossible to access the students' understanding the material. In general, teachers (89% of respondents) estimate that the level of knowledge has significantly decreased due to the use of digital technologies when learning Russian as a second language. Over the period of distance education, the health of teachers has significantly deteriorated (67%) compared with the usual mode of work (stress in the eyes, a sedentary lifestyle, sleepless nights due to material preparation are noted). If it

was developed during full-time studies, it is extremely difficult to maintain it during distance learning (67% of respondents). The most essential losses in process online of training occur in such kind of works as translation of the art text. The matter is that there are losses in mastering a material by students in the field of phonetics, grammar, syntax on both directions: students experience difficulties with the given kind of works as during the translation and still accumulate problems which arise at remote training at students in mastering a grammatic and phonetic material. Also, as it has been correctly noted that higher education institutions are not ready for the transition to a digital educational environment (Usacheva & Chernyakov, 2020)

Among the communication problems that arise when using online technologies at the university and identified the following ones: The Information, represented in the broadcast mode, is more difficult to perceive: extraneous noise in a large audience interferes, exact science information is especially difficult to perceive; feedback is set back: it takes more time to ask a question and get an answer; students who take a course via Skype lecturers get tired faster; there is not enough “live” communication with the teacher (Orlova, 2016; Prokhorova, 2014).

7. Conclusion

Distance learning does not make proficient specialists, since it only introduces some material, forms a general idea of the subject. Accordingly, distance learning, as a legacy of modern technological progress, has the right to exist, but only in combination with the traditional form of education (Vlasova & Nechaeva, 2019). Otherwise, society will lose qualified, knowledgeable, skillful specialists on the labor market.

In education the personality of the teacher and the communicative interaction, which has been formed, are crucial. The creative atmosphere also affects the process of learning. Distance learning lack all these components, which has a detrimental effect on the process of education. Distance learning cannot be the principal method of education. It can only be effective when combined with full-time study under the supervision of a teacher. Since the skills of students' independent work have not been fully developed yet. «Teaching Russian as a foreign language will be more effective when combining traditional and innovative technologies» (Popkova, 2019, p.78). In conclusion, we would like to quote the author's words, with which we cannot but agree: The fate of a person depends to a certain extent on the quality of education (Serditova & Belotserkovsky, 2020).

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