

ABSTRACT

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Experience of Organizing Online Foreign Language Teaching under Force-MajeureAssociate Professor **Lazareva O. Ya.**¹, Associate Professor **Kovtun O. O.**¹¹*National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute", Ukraine***Background:**

Distance learning has long been known and practiced by most Universities worldwide. With modern Internet technologies it has turned into a powerful educational industry. In Ukraine, though, this type of teaching has always been considered only as a part of traditional education. Actually this year in March our teachers faced the necessity of real and complete distant education for the first time ever due to the announced Covid-19 quarantine. Moreover, the lockdown was enforced so urgently that most departments had no time to prepare for an unaccustomed way of teaching.

Methods:

Here we will discuss the ways distance teaching was organized at the department of foreign languages of National Technical University "KhPI" and the outcomes achieved. There were several directions to take action: 1) choosing efficient methods of delivering foreign language classes; 2) mastering the relevant technologies; 3) organizing coordinated work of the department staff; 4) creating materials for classroom work and assessment; 5) establishing stable interaction with students. After more than two months of teaching students via different Internet services, the survey was conducted to learn the teachers and students' opinion about their experience of teaching and learning the foreign language distantly.

Results:

1. Based on the available knowledge and experience of using Internet technologies, the decision was made to use different correspondence and messaging services, e.g. e-mails, Viber, Telegram etc.; one of the tools providing video-conferencing (Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype etc.) for face-to-face classes; Google Forms for online testing. As a result, all teachers established communication with students via email and messengers; 63% of teachers managed to organize video-conference sessions, while all the other teachers provided teaching using other forms of communication; 95% utilized Google Forms tests.

2. It appeared that 46% of the teachers had no prior experience in using Google Forms tests, not to mention creating them. So the teachers had to adopt the skills of producing online tests almost in no time. As a result, 54% of the department teachers mastered Google Forms technology either proficiently or quite confidently. Most teachers reckon that additional teacher excellence courses on Internet technologies should be organized.

3. As the teachers of the department follow the same syllabus, it was agreed to form teams to design sharable working and assessment materials for each module currently studied. Overall, more than 60 tests covering 3 modules were designed. Staff meetings and seminars were held once or twice a week via Zoom to discuss and solve burning problems. Minor issues were considered on a regular basis using one-to-one communication via Skype, Viber or other available services.

4. Similar to traditional language classes, online teaching cannot only rely on one textbook. Additional materials, i.e. special texts, audio recordings, video materials, illustrations, assessment tools etc., had to be provided in a digital form. One of the ways of accumulating all types of materials in one document appeared Power Point presentation, 76% of students who were supplied with educational materials in this form highly appreciating this way of teaching. Likewise, the developed Google Forms tests also contain all kinds of the above information. Meanwhile, 93% of the teachers agreed that preparation for online teaching was more time-consuming than for usual university classes.

5. Due to different reasons (hardware problems, poor Internet connection etc.) both students as well as some teachers were unable to establish regular audio-video sessions. About a half of the students just sent the results of their individual work – mostly written tasks – by various online services. This laid additional stress on students and multiplied checking efforts for the teachers. Despite various obstacles and lack of due preparation time, overall more than 50% of students involved in online education expressed their complete satisfaction with organization and quality of distant foreign language learning.

Conclusions:

1. To make the online foreign language education complete, all types of communication, namely face-to-face video conferencing, online testing, online consulting via messengers, sharing information through cloud storages etc., should be involved.
2. Universities should pay more attention to educating faculty in modern Internet technologies.
3. Development of online educational tools should continue in case of any possible emergency. Besides, they can be efficiently applied at traditional university classes as well.

Information about the authors:

Lazareva Olga Yaroslavna – Doctor of Philosophy in Technical Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, National Technical University "KhPI", Ukraine.

Research interests: education and training, ESP, EAP, methodology of teaching, distance learning, computer-aided teaching; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0299-0138>.

Kovtun Olena Olexandrivna – Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, National Technical University "KhPI", Ukraine.

Research interests: ESP, EAP, methodology of teaching, distance learning; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2297-8160>.