BLENDED LEARNING TECHNOLOGY AS ONE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS IN THE CONDITIONS OF EDUCATION DURING WARTIME

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Summary. The day after the start of a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine recommended stopping the educational process in educational institutions at all levels and sending students and educators on a two-week vacation. On March 14, the educational process in the areas where the security situation allowed it began to resume. Teachers have a task to ensure the learning process so that as many students as possible can gain knowledge, acquire skills and experience psychological renewal. The purpose of the article is to study some methods and technologies of teaching foreign languages in wartime conditions. Distance learning systems have been known to university teachers for a long time. The article pays special attention to Moodle and Zoom electronic platforms. Of particular importance is the use of the method of Blended Learning, as the most relevant in our opinion in conditions of wartime.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Moodle, Zoom, distance education, wartime.

Wars unleashed by adults take away childhood and youth from millions of boys and girls. Many of them take part in hostilities, die from bullets and are blown up by mines. Children in countries where there is a war are deprived of the opportunity to study and receive medical care. “Armed conflict significantly damages a nation’s education sector. Such damage takes various forms, including both direct and indirect damages to educational facilities, actors, and students” [1].

In connection with the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the invasion of its armed forces, as well as the occupation of part of Ukraine, the organization of full-time education, depending on the situation in each locality, carries quite high risks to life and health of participants in the educational process. The founders and heads of educational establishments take all possible measures to organize training of participants in the educational process on the distance form to be the safest one for life and health in martial law, to ensure state guarantees to promote a safe educational environment and organizing an education. Communities exposed to conflict often see the benefits of education “in helping to restore a sense of normalcy in the midst of chaos and providing a protective environment and sense of continuity for young people” [2].
The article aims to consider the features of learning a foreign language in distance education based on the experience of working during a pandemic, to study some methods and technologies of teaching foreign languages in wartime conditions regarding the acquired skills and experiences and taking into account the realities of today.

Restrictive isolation measures during the pandemic necessitated a massive transition of the education system to online learning using distance learning technologies. At present, extensive experience has been accumulated in the application of electronic digital technologies in the educational process of the country's universities; electronic educational resources, online courses in the disciplines of curricula of various areas, profiles and levels of training have been introduced. The experience of organizing the educational process using electronic digital technologies, and the creation of an electronic digital educational environment has allowed the higher education system to easily switch to the format of mass online education of students. The transfer of learning to a distance format in extreme conditions has significant differences from properly planned online learning. Educational organizations forced to work remotely with students in order to reduce risks should be aware of this difference when evaluating the effectiveness of so-called “online learning” using distance learning technologies. Teachers organized the educational process through distance learning technologies based on various methods of delivering electronic content and available communication tools for students and teachers in the electronic information and educational environment.

In the distance learning format, several modes of organizing training in universities are used:

- asynchronous or part-time mode, in which students study educational material at a convenient time for them, in accordance with the deadlines set by the teacher;
- synchronous mode, in which there is simultaneous participation in the learning process of teachers and students, for example, in the format of a webinar;
- mixed-mode, which implies the combination of synchronous and asynchronous interaction.

In extreme conditions, the teacher must take into account the current situation, and the individual capabilities of each student, giving preference when choosing one format or another. It is especially necessary to pay attention to the fact that not all students have constant access to the Internet.

During distance learning during quarantine, teachers teaching foreign languages widely used various technological resources, one of them is the Moodle electronic platform. The Moodle platform makes it possible to conduct learning at an individual pace; provides freedom and flexibility, i. e. the student can independently plan the time, place and duration of classes. It provides:

- accessibility (an educational resource is available regardless of the geographic and temporal location of the student and educational institution), which is especially important during wartime.
- mobility (effective implementation of feedback between a teacher and a student is one of the main requirements and foundations for the success of the learning process).
• manufacturability (use in the educational process of the latest achievements of information and telecommunication technologies);
• creativity (creation of comfortable conditions for the student’s creative self-expression).

For teaching a foreign language, the Moodle platform is extremely convenient: materials for developing different language skills can be placed in one temporary or modular block: text for reading and discussion, additional materials for self-study, audio and video files, test tasks. The visibility and clear structuring of such a system make the materials placed in the system a truly electronic textbook or methodological complex. The ability to insert a date synchronizes the course with the real semester calendar, which is also very convenient, especially for tracking deadlines. All this allows you to organize a personal learning space for a teacher and a student since all the materials and records necessary for classes are in one place and can be accessed from any device with Internet access.

The main goal of teaching a foreign language is the development of communicative competence, which, in turn, implies the formation and development of students’ communicative skills in understanding sound / oral speech by ear, speaking, reading and writing in a foreign language. The Zoom platform is also used to develop communicative competence in the framework of distance learning of a foreign language in extreme conditions. Through this platform, you can carry out both video conferences and webinars. It is very important that creating a video conference and conducting an online lesson makes it possible to exchange messages in a chat, as well as save and later view for those students who were not present at the lesson.

The most relevant method of teaching a foreign language in wartime conditions is Blended Learning. It is this technique, in our opinion, that helps to continue learning or try to do it despite all the difficulties – physical, technical, psychological.

Blended Learning technology allows you to more effectively use the benefits of distance learning, which is necessary for extreme conditions. The Blended Learning model itself is not new. This is a model of the learning process, in which the teacher provides students with material for self-study at home, and in the face-to-face lesson, the material is practised. It is assumed that students use gadgets to watch video lessons and study additional sources on their own during the extracurricular time. Then, in the classroom, all students discuss new concepts together, and the teacher helps to apply the knowledge gained in practice. During the lesson, the teacher helps students to understand the theoretical part and answers questions that students have in the process of doing homework.

Given the conditions of complete isolation and the lack of the possibility of full-time education. We propose to use this technique by combining work on two platforms Moodle and Zoom. The theoretical material is studied by students independently before the start of the lesson with the help of information and communication technologies (video lectures, interactive materials, presentations), and the freed-up time in the lesson is aimed at solving practical tasks, performing a laboratory experiment, cooperation, interaction, applying knowledge and skills in a new situation, and on the creation by students of a new educational product. By
relieving them of the typical traditional homework assignments, it can reduce the stress and anxiety caused by the large amount of learning material they have to master on their own. It also allows students to learn new material at their own pace, as they can watch the video material as many times as they need and when they need it, which is very important in an Internet outage environment. By lesson, in this case, we mean video conferencing on the Zoom platform. Students receive a link to the finished lesson, where they complete tasks prepared by the teacher. An important component of the lesson on the platform is the opportunity to develop students’ critical thinking through participation in an open discussion on the topic. The teacher, in this case, evaluates and gives feedback, which is important for the effectiveness of the educational process.

“As a facilitator, the priority of a teacher is to equip the students with appropriate online didactic material, accompanied by clear instructions on what to” [3]. When forming educational material, it is necessary to provide the student with everything necessary for self-mastering the course and achieving the set goals, i.e. the necessary theoretical material, a sufficient amount of authentic language and speech material, as well as a set of exercises for the formation of the prescribed skills and abilities; the structure of the course should ensure optimal progress towards the final level and continuous management of learning activities through feedback, support for independent learning activities and a control system. During wartime, being distance learning, not all students have the same opportunity to access the Internet. They have to manage their study time depending on the possibilities. It is important to create conditions for the conscious and effective independent management of their educational activities, including self-control, self-correction and self-assessment of the result.

It is required to adapt the course materials to the specific learning conditions and individual characteristics of the trainees. It is necessary to take into account both the physical and psychological state of students.

As part of the language course, the student’s independent work should be mainly aimed at automating lexical and grammatical skills, developing the skills of receptive types of speech activity, as well as writing creative works, preparing projects for subsequent presentation on the Zoom platform, where the skills of productive types of speech activity are developed. Conferences on the Zoom platform involve feedback and an active form of interaction between all participants in the educational process.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the implementation of the learning process during combat operations requires the solution of several tasks, namely:

- adaptation of educational materials to the individual characteristics of students;
- ensuring constant monitoring of the student’s educational activities;
- providing constant feedback at different levels of interaction and support and with the provision of various communication channels;
- conducting the learning process through the implementation of various types of interactivities, including between students.

It can be said that blended learning technologies allow not only the educational process, i.e. teachers to teach, and students to acquire knowledge and skills. The
method also has a huge psychological impact, allowing students to control and motivate themselves, as well as communicate, interact and provide support to each other, which is necessary for wartime conditions.

References: