

Learning a Foreign Language Online: Practical Approach

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Abstract

The article is devoted to practical issues raised in the course of using the elements of distance learning in teaching foreign languages. The article also considers the issues reflecting the characteristics of the essence and content selection of teaching foreign languages for remote course taking into account the specifics of the subject "Foreign language", and also the peculiarities of organization of educational process in distant form. In order to effectively organize the educational process when teaching foreign languages remotely in the context of a pandemic, special technical, psychological, and pedagogical training is required to switch to this form of education. Thus, it is necessary to study the current state of distance learning in foreign languages, both in Uzbekistan and abroad, and analyze the prospects for the development of this form of education, taking into account factors that have a positive impact on the process of learning a foreign language.

Keywords: distance learning, e-learning, specificity, foreign language, Internet-resource.

1.0. Introduction

At present, technology is an invisible but integral aspect of language use: every day we use electronic devices to communicate orally or in written form, to extract or to compose information. The level of the digital skills required to perform these communication tasks is basic or moderate, as it does not presuppose developing software, applications or programming, using computer syntax or statistical analysis packages. On the other hand, due to globalization trends, many foreign languages have become the worldwide lingua franca, and, more often than not, individuals are expected to be able to use foreign language for purposes related to work or leisure activities. Thus, under these circumstances, it is likely that the amount of communication undertaken/performed in a foreign language, mediated by technology be on the rise, and, consequently both digital and foreign language skills be constantly improving. Everyone has tried learning a foreign language the traditional way by going to a school to learn. One of the bidders of the traditional approach is having to take into account the travel time to and from the lesson. You might have to plan at least an hour and thirty minutes ahead just to get to class! If you just don't have time for this whole process, there is another practical option for those people who are always on the go. You could have your language lesson online through a number of applications, most namely Skype.

2.0. Why Learn a Foreign Language Online?

The benefit of enrolling in an online program is that you can adjust the schedule to your own. Whether you are balancing a full time job, home obligations, or creative ventures, language learning can progress both part-time and full-time. Your home space can also transform into a creative learning space by decorating objects with vocabulary on sticky notes or by writing, drawing, or printing out a menu for your meals. If living alone, you can initiate two way conversations as practice

or could even teach some words to those living with you. Learning a language online allows you to stay in your comfort zone so you can create your learning space according to your own taste and preferences.

Learning a language online through Skype, Facetime etc. is less time consuming for those of us who are always “on-the-go”. You don’t have to worry about managing your time as much as you do when you have someplace to be. With the rise of different mobile applications, you can have an online class while you’re sitting in traffic (as a passenger of course), while you’re cooking or even while you’re on your break at work.

I have plenty of students who run their own businesses and practically have no time to stop for a breath. One of my students has a little down time when he gets to work in the morning, so at 7:00 am we connect for an hour and a half for an online accent reduction class. He has the same book as I do, and we practice until his daily meetings begin. I even have students in other cities of Uzbekistan. We coordinate the times for the lessons, since they are in different conditions and subsequences.

One of the greatest benefits of learning a language online is that it is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. There are programs, resources, and scholarships online for anyone and everyone. With live classes (especially in small group settings) or in individualized tutoring, feedback can be given immediately and digital tools can make the online classroom feel like an in-person one. Small group discussions or focused diction and pronunciation drills are now feasible online through using virtual break-out rooms. All this to say, you can experience many of the benefits of an in-person classroom without the hefty price tag.

It’s really efficient and allows me to “visit” many countries in a single day and help those foreigners who want to learn from a native English speaking teacher.

In the age of COVID-19, we all have to think about our impact on other communities. As the vaccine isn’t available to all yet, the best way to ensure your health is to remain at home and follow all health protocols as outlined by health officials. A key element of learning a language abroad is acting as a cultural ambassador to your home country. The most respectful ambassadorial role is in prioritizing language learning and exchange without risking infecting your teachers and friends.

3.0. Students Rely Only on Their Voice

In contrast to being in a traditional classroom where there are numerous aids to help with teaching/learning the language, having class online makes learners rely on their voice and your voice. From the perspective of the teacher and the student, you have to make sure your pronunciation and tone helps the other person understand what you’re saying. Imagine you are in a class, and because the person doesn’t understand you, most of the conversation consists of “what?” and “huh?”. A teacher is more limited in tactics for teaching, but this also causes the student to focus on the lesson more. It’s true what they say, “no pain, no gain”.

Studying on Skype feels very natural and comfortable, which will help the student open up and speak more. One student of mine who is very good at grammar is very shy when it comes to speaking. So, I suggested that we have skype classes just so she actually uses what she is learning and practices speaking more. Our Skype classes have made her more confident in speaking. She does not feel like anyone is judging her and I am happy to have assisted her in overcoming that obstacle.

4.0. Instant Access to the Internet

When you are learning a language online, you can easily send links to pictures or videos related to the topics that you are talking about. You can also send definitions to words by copying and pasting them into the conversation. It is easier if you are both on PC’s and not just on your phone or tablet. My favorite aspect of online classes is showing the student pictures of what I am talking about when they don’t understand my explanation. However, I first give the student the chance to try understanding just from my explanation, because I want them to be proactive learners. You will never learn anything if you do not try to figure out things for yourself.

5.0. Conclusion

Regardless of whether you will attend a virtual or in-person language learning course (or even both), it is crucial that you must be motivated to learn your target language. First, reflect on why you wish to learn the language and use that angle to connect with native speakers. Craft realistic language goals and speak with others who have learned the language; you will come to understand that you can’t become fluent overnight (or even after a few years). Make mistakes, have fun with the language, and when you doubt your proficiency advancement, remember why you decided to learn the language in the first place. So, yes having traditional classes will continue being a great option, but do not rule out newer ways of

learning. As stated before, class online is practical in that it is less time consuming and convenient, it builds confidence because it relies mostly on speaking, and you have the internet at your fingertips to back everything up.

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