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The role of the ZOOM platform in foreign language teaching

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Abstract

The article aims to discuss one of the most important problems now – distance education. Today it causes a lot of controversies. The author of the article makes an attempt to identify the advantages and disadvantages of online education. Despite this, today it is a very good opportunity for many students to graduate from universities. The author points out one of the most effective ways of learning in modern conditions, such as the combination of distance and traditional education. The article pays attention to the importance of educational platforms in distance learning. According to many experts, using ZOOM is a particularly effective form of working with students. The ZOOM platform offers communication software, which is viewed as one of the main advantages of this system, combining video conferencing, chat and collaboration between students and teachers through the use of various functions provided by the ZOOM platform. Teaching a foreign language involves direct communication between students and a teacher in various forms. The ZOOM platform provides such conditions. The author identifies such important Zoom functions as comment, screen sharing, chat and others and comes to the conclusion that ZOOM has many advantages, which makes it indispensable for foreign language teachers during distance learning.

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Keywords

Modern realities, education, distance learning, Zoom platform, foreign language teaching.

Introduction

Modern realities, especially now in the conditions of the pandemic, have forced us to look for new ways of teaching students using the latest information technologies. In the shortest possible time, we selected such educational platforms to continue our educational process successfully, but already in the Internet space. According to many users, working on the ZOOM educational platform is a particularly effective form of working with students.

ZOOM is a cloud-based video conferencing platform that allows us to communicate online in an accessible format in real time. The ZOOM platform offers communication software, which is one of the main advantages of this system, combining video conferencing, chat and collaboration between students and teachers using various functions provided by the ZOOM platform.

Teaching a foreign language involves direct communication between students and a teacher in various forms [Mantatova, Levchuk, 2016]. The ZOOM platform implements these conditions, since the teacher, who is also the organizer of the conference, gives an opportunity for communication both orally and in writing, operating with various functions that this system offers. For example, the teacher-organizer has the ability to control the microphone, i.e. to organize audio and video conferences for all participants, create a language class for practicing listening and reading skills, demonstrate the screen of digital device to display various information materials, including audio and video materials, presentations, visual materials.

The advantages and disadvantages of the Zoom platform

During the demonstration of the screen, the teacher can use the “comment” function to highlight those points that the students need to pay special attention to or perform various exercises, for example, connect words and pictures, solve a crossword puzzle. The students can show their completed homework on their screen by implementing the “screen sharing” function, and the organizer of the conference can see it, correct the task, and give a grade. Another useful function “chat” allows us to write questions and give answers to them without turning on the microphone, i. e. to practice writing skills, introduce new lexical units for learning or send files and various types of documents to all students at once or selectively, which helps to ensure a differentiated approach in teaching a foreign language at a university.

In addition, an interactive whiteboard is built into the platform, which allows us to communicate with our students directly; the teacher has the opportunity to explain educational material, give written tasks and check them at the lesson, work on the necessary lexical, grammatical and visual material.

One of the necessary functions of this platform for teaching a foreign language is the ability to record a lesson. The teacher has the opportunity to show the previous lesson to those students who, for some reason, could not attend the online lesson at one time or another.

In ZOOM, we can divide the students into pairs or groups to work on individual tasks: for example, creating a dialogic or monologic statement, projects, or group creative tasks. Thus, teachers retain their usual methods of work, effectively integrating them into the new lesson format. In other words, ZOOM has many advantages, which makes this function indispensable for foreign language teachers during distance learning, but the most important advantage is that the platform allows us to use live speech when interacting with the students, without which studying a foreign language is impossible, and thus contributes to the organization of full-fledged foreign language classes in a difficult situation of modern

realities.

Despite its obvious advantages, the platform has some disadvantages; the most significant one is the time limit of the session (40 minutes), which is insufficient for a traditional lesson at a university. Of course, like any online platform, ZOOM requires high-speed Internet and a powerful digital device.

Thus, the ZOOM platform is one of the effective ways for teaching foreign languages in the conditions of distance learning because it allows us to save the most important and fundamental factor in the success of the acquisition of basic skills as communication, which is essential in mastering the language competence, and is the main result of learning a foreign language.

Webinar options in Zoom are instant – the moderator connects to the conference mode and sends out access links to the participants (the format is suitable for discussions, solutions to urgent issues); scheduled – the moderator determines the day and time of the arrangement in advance, sets up the necessary parameters and sends out invitations to future participants (these are usually online lessons, master classes, and conferences).

So, the advantages of Zoom include the following:

- stable connection – disconnection is rarer than the rule;
- takes less Internet, which means it works faster;
- requires less of computer memory;
- there are different options for displaying the screen: we can choose the screen that will be displayed to our students (and do something in parallel in another program), or choose a mode in which the students see the same thing as we;
- we can demonstrate the screen and draw on a special online board;
- we can use mobile devices (however, the camera is turned off at the same time);
- we can place the students in breakout rooms and work in pairs or mini-groups, they will only hear those who are in their breakout room, and we can move between the rooms and monitor the tasks;
- Zoom involves active interaction with many students; already on the free version, we can organize an online arrangement with up to 100 users;
- it is easy to get to the conference via an invitation link through our browser from any device, even from a smartphone, and we do not need to install an application program specifically;
- multifunctionality does not affect the operation of the program, interference with communication is usually associated with a poor Internet connection of users, and not with the problems of the site;
- “raise your hand” function will let us know that someone has the questions or suggestions during the speech; with the help of “reaction” stickers, we can show our personal attitude to what has been said or seen.

The disadvantages of Zoom include the following:

- group conferences are only available for 40 minutes, then we need to activate the paid version or call back again;
- at the beginning of working with the program, it is necessary to understand the principle of operation;
- the program has vulnerabilities that can lead to leaks of personal data of users [Gureeva, Valyaeva, 2020].

Distance education

Now many people ask the question: “Is distance education good or bad?” It is difficult to give a definite answer [Pavlutskaya, Dubitskaya, 2016]. Like all it has its advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of distance education include: accessibility – independence from the geographical and time position of a student and educational institution allows us not to limit ourselves in our educational needs; mobility – effective implementation of feedback between a teacher and a student is one of the main requirements and foundations of success of educational process; technological effectiveness – using the latest achievements of information and telecommunications technologies in our educational process; social equality – equal opportunities to receive education regardless of the place of residence, health status, elitism and material welfare of a student; program development – well-developed training programs and courses; creativity – comfortable conditions for creative self-expression of a student.

The obvious disadvantage of distance education consists in the lack of face-to-face communication between students and a teacher. That is, all points related to an individual approach and upbringing are excluded. And when there is no person nearby who could emotionally give knowledge, this is a significant minus; the need for a number of individual psychological conditions. Distance education requires strict self-discipline, and its result directly depends on the independence and consciousness of students; the need for a constant access to information sources. We need good technical equipment: a computer and Internet access; the lack of traditional practical teaching; the lack of control, which can be a powerful motivation [Batorova, Batorov, 2016; Kuznetsova, 2015; Leoke, Ushakova, 2020].

Conclusion

Thus, learning on the ZOOM platform, like distance learning in general, has a number of advantages and disadvantages. To come to some kind of consensus, it is necessary to find the most effective way, such as a combination of distance and traditional education. So, in Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University, this type of education is now used, where the students study both internally and remotely. This allows us not only to diversify the process of education, to make it fuller and more interesting, but also to reduce a direct contact, which is a very important factor in a pandemic.

Online education today is a very good opportunity for many students to graduate from universities during quarantine, despite all the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning. And it is not yet clear now how the pandemic will develop, but e-learning technologies will definitely be at the peak of their development. This means that in the future we'll have: introduction of augmented reality in the educational process; elements of gamification; online excursions and practices; search for new visual materials, use of a 3D printer; development of a new knowledge control system to take exams and tests remotely; strengthening the role of teachers in giving the knowledge.

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Роль образовательной платформы ZOOM в обучении иностранному языку

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается одна из важнейших проблем современности – дистанционное обучение. Сегодня это вызывает много споров. Автор представляет преимущества и недостатки онлайн-обучения. Несмотря на это, для многих студентов сегодня это очень хорошая возможность окончить университет. Указывается на один из наиболее эффективных способов обучения в современных условиях, такой как сочетание дистанционного и традиционного обучения. Отмечается важность образовательных платформ в дистанционном обучении. По мнению многих экспертов, работа в программе ZOOM является особенно эффективной формой работы со студентами. Платформа ZOOM предлагает коммуникационное программное обеспечение, которое является одним из основных преимуществ этой системы, сочетая видеоконференции, чат и сотрудничество между студентами и преподавателями за счет использования различных функций, предоставляемых платформой ZOOM. Обучение иностранному языку предполагает непосредственное

общение студентов с преподавателем в различных формах. Платформа ZOOM обеспечивает такие условия. Автор представляет такие важные функции ZOOM, как комментарий, совместное использование экрана, чат и др. ZOOM имеет много преимуществ, что делает его незаменимым для преподавателей иностранных языков при дистанционном обучении.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

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Ключевые слова

Современные реалии, образование, дистанционное обучение, платформа ZOOM, обучение иностранному языку.

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