1.3. Tetiana Fomenko. AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING VIA ZOOM

The article is devoted to the features of using the Zoom platform for conducting online foreign language classes under conditions of distance learning. The server options for the implementation of various forms and methods of training have been analysed. It is noted that the Zoom platform provides an opportunity to work with a full range of educational materials, as with traditional in-person teaching and learning. The capabilities of the Zoom platform allow the lecturer to fully apply various forms and methods of teaching, in particular, to use interactive methods. The technical and didactic capabilities of the Zoom toolkit for conducting video conferences are characterized, including digital whiteboard, screen demonstration, group chat and session rooms. The main advantages (clear and simple interface, exchange of audio and video content, organization of private and group chat for text messages or teamwork, provides synchronous interaction, communication and cooperation) and disadvantages (poor internet connection, low-quality technical support, load on visual receptors, insufficient feedback, "zoombombing") of the implementation of video conferences into the educational process in agricultural higher education institutions of Ukraine. It is emphasized that due to the forms of work which are applied by lecturers during foreign language teaching and learning by means of the Zoom platform, students can develop such soft skills and digital competences as communication skills in the Internet environment, the ability to work with online platforms and video conferencing, mastery of presentation programs, office programs, high level of self-organization and time management skills. On the basis of the conducted analysis, as well as personal experience of using the Zoom platform, some recommendations were made for its use in the practical work of lecturers to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the training sessions.

Introduction. Currently, higher education faces challenges that are a test for both lecturers and students. Every year, the requirements for the level of foreign language training of future specialists of non-linguistic, in particular, agricultural higher education institutions, are increasing. European integration, the internationalization of higher education, as well as the intensification of academic exchanges by students determine the practical mastery of a foreign language in the field of professional activity. Moreover, graduates of agrarian universities must know a foreign language at the level which is not lower than B2. Besides, there is a problem of lack of time for study, and at the same time, a large amount of knowledge and skills that students who study a foreign language need to acquire and learn. A significant role in improving the

system of foreign language training for agricultural students belongs to modern information technologies, in particular, the implementation of distance learning methods.

Nowadays, such phenomena as distance education, digitalization and transformation of innovations, etc. have become relevant. The coronavirus pandemic, which covered almost all countries of the world in 2020, later the full-scale war in Ukraine as well, require modifications, the ability to innovate and the choice of the most optimal forms, methods, and means from all participants in the educational process. Distance learning forces teachers to choose teaching methods and principles that would be effective in a virtual educational environment. The problem of choosing effective digital resources and learning services, as well as the tools necessary for organizing online meetings with students in a remote format, is currently one of the most relevant in the educational domain.

For almost three years of learning mainly remotely, it is undoubtedly early to talk about the ideal model of online foreign language classes, a successful algorithm for planning and conducting them; since each lecturer tries out different methods and selects the optimal methods and forms of educational activity, taking into account various extra-lingual factors that did not have a place in traditional classroom education. Therefore, it is important to find and analyse effective tools for organizing online classes.

Literature review. In the past decade, much research has focused on e-learning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of online learning (e-learning) is a fundamental part of the learning process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has changed the way how is taught and learned. The scholars have stated that the objective features of pandemic and post-pandemic reality require a gradual transition from usual educator-centred and lecture-based frontal learning towards primarily learner-centred blended educational process, containing work in groups, collective projects, disputes, hands-on learning activities, and mostly lectures online (Zhu & Liu, 2020).

The educational process had to be transferred into digital space where it is possible to support new knowledge comprehension with websites, podcasts, simulations, interactive tutorials on YouTube, Internet-based educational games and links to reliable sources on the Internet (Bilotserkovets et al., 2021).

Currently, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet are the most common platforms in Ukraine for conducting classes that provide the possibility of video conferencing. Destianingsih

and Satria (2020) stated that the effective tool that can be utilized in explaining the subject and as the virtual tool to replace face-to-face meetings is the Zoom application.

Scholars have underlined the following positive aspects of its implementation: ease of use; clear and simple interface; fast and as simple as possible connection to classes in the form of conferences (Kostikova, 2021).

Lysenko singles out the concept of "video conference" as "an interactive tool that includes audio, video, and computer technologies for communicating geographically distant interlocutors in-person in real time" (Lysenko, 2019: 126). The researcher notes that applying video conference in the process of foreign language learning makes it possible to "form a conscious attitude and consideration of the issues raised, active in its discussion, language culture, etc. The participants have the opportunity to see facial expressions and sign language, and these things are the most important aspects of communication that are lost in asynchronous types of work (e-mail, chat, forum, blog)" (Lysenko, 2019: 127).

Zoom is considered the most popular online platform, which is used during the pandemic period to support discussions or meetings through video conference. It is beneficial in the teaching-learning process since disconnection problems never happen in Zoom (Nafisatul Mu'awanah et al., 2021).

The online platform offers various advantages over other applications, one of which is that it has the ability to bridge space, time, and students' flexibility time in their learning process (Nanda Amalia Putri & Maman Suryaman, 2022). Zoom application is easy to use on various digital devices, such as Smartphones (Android and IOS-based), Personal Computers (PC), Laptops, Notebooks, and Tablets with internet quota savings.

Suardi (2020) argues that in the cognitive aspect e-learning process by utilizing the Zoom Cloud Meetings application is almost no different, even the same as the in-person learning process in class and actually has a few advantages based on its flexible nature as it can be carried out anywhere that makes students relaxed and comfortable in learning, not tense, just like in class.

Methods. The paper is targeted to analyse the specifics of the preparation of the educational process using the Zoom platform for teaching foreign languages online in the context of distance learning; to determine the main advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of video conferences in the educational process in agrarian higher education institutions of Ukraine.

To achieve the goal of the study, a set of methods was used: analysis and systematization to identify the presented problem at the current stage; a generalization method for presenting the advantages and disadvantages of implementing video conferencing in the educational process of higher education institutions. To present the results of the analysis of the effectiveness of the Zoom platform, a descriptive method was used.

Results and discussion. The pandemic has caused significant challenges for the higher education system in Ukraine. The lockdown period became a stage on the way to gaining experience in teaching foreign languages, in this case, under the conditions of distance learning. Learning a foreign language through distance learning is a new reality for both lecturers and students. The instructors had to master the basics necessary for conducting online conferences in a short period of time.

In addition to the technical side of conducting classes remotely, the most important thing was to prepare educational material of certain content and present it so the student could navigate it independently. In a fairly short time, it was necessary to change from the model of classes in the classroom to classes in the so-called virtual space. A properly selected educational portal plays an important role.

Since the beginning of the quarantine, the training of agricultural students at Sumy National Agrarian University has changed. The academicians have actively implemented online learning, using e-courses on the platform Moodle. The lecturers are able to download the necessary learning materials (lectures, presentations and videos) as well as test tasks. In the Moodle e-learning system, students have access to all text, audio and video materials on course topics.

In foreign language classes, some online applications are popular to use, such as Google Classroom, Google Form, and Zoom. Each application has its own strengths and challenges. Practical classes are mainly carried out by foreign language lecturers by means of Zoom, which provides the opportunity to conduct foreign language classes in video format and online mode.

This platform allows learners to have high-quality video and audio communication with slow Internet. Among the main advantages of this web application are the exchange of audio and video content, the ability to set a time limit for completing tasks for controlling writing and listening skills, discussion of individual problematic issues in grammar and conversational practice (using the forum), an automatic system for evaluating completed tasks, etc. Furthermore, in learning a foreign language, effective and direct communication is important

since students can follow, imitate, have question and answer, and do exercise directly in every meeting.

Due to a wide range of built-in functions, Zoom demonstrates high efficiency in the implementation of a foreign language learning process. In terms of frequency of use, the most useful features include: chat, online whiteboard, screen sharing, and breakout rooms.

If it is necessary, a lecturer, as the organizer of the video conference, has the ability to turn on and off the microphone and the image of both oneself and the students. If students are unable to use a microphone, there is a built-in chat. It allows you to communicate both with the whole group and with an individual student. The private chat feature on Zoom allows a lecturer to send instructions or corrections directly to students. A lecturer can also use this to give feedback or grammar notes to individual students in real-time during lessons. Some students are not quite confident to ask in a spoken way, so they use this feature. It also allows a lecturer to give students individual praise anonymously, which is great for motivation.

The "Screen sharing" tool allows you to listen to audio, view videos, illustrations, presentations, interactive tasks, text files in synchronous mode, and also pause the demonstration if it is necessary. A lecturer can share the entire screen or a part of it with the participants, including a browser demo, an audio or video file, open a tutorial, select a separate sentence or paragraph, enlarge or reduce the image, delete the wrong one, and emphasize important things.

When learning a foreign language, there is a need to work in pairs or small groups. The Zoom platform provides such an opportunity. Students in groups communicate with each other in the so-called "Breakout Rooms". This function is not available on other platforms. This feature allows lecturers to divide students into smaller groups, for example, when it is necessary to make up dialogues, hold discussions, work on projects, etc.

Depending on the task and the number of students, the lecturer manually or automatically determines how many "rooms" are needed. Moreover, a participant can be moved from one "room" to another. The instructor can visit each group in order to check how the conversation among the participants is going on, as well as to provide instructions and correct language and speech errors of students. After the time is set, the participants will automatically be led back to the "main room" once the session finishes.

The video conferencing feature (private and group) enables lecturers to communicate directly with students and monitor important evaluation aspects of speaking skills, such as word

choice, pronunciation accuracy, grammar, comprehension, fluency, and intonation accuracy (Menggo, 2021).

Applying such interactive methods of teaching a foreign language as working in small groups and discussions, contributes to the development of agricultural students' soft skills (the ability to analyze, work in a team, think critically, defend their views, etc.) (Fomenko, 2022).

The scientists single out several main advantages of working in "Breakout Rooms", namely: more opportunities for active learning and individual interaction; the ability to consolidate competencies by explaining concepts to others in the same room; the ability to apply concepts to situations and scenarios; creating a community and support within the same group, which improves the sense of belonging to the educational process; exchange of different points of view, contexts and competences (Shcheblykina, 2022).

However, tasks and forms of work in small groups for use in Breakout Rooms must be structured and effective, require perfect preparation, the constant growth of the lecturer's professional skills, and also require a high level of computer literacy from a modern teacher in order to achieve the main goals of a foreign language learning.

Depending on the complexity of the proposed tasks, the level of detail required, and the familiarity of the students with their teammates, the participants' working time in the breakout rooms can be from five minutes (brainstorming) to fifteen minutes (for long tasks with a final result, such as a round table, discussion, case-study).

The use of breakout rooms for group work on the Zoom platform is an effective tool and interactive method of foreign language teaching, developing students' communicative competence, teaching teamwork, as well as a method of relieving tension and creating interaction in online classes.

In addition, both the lecturer and students have the opportunity to use additional tools during video communication: presentations (created by means of such graphic tools as Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Presentations, Google Slides, Canva, etc.), as well as audio and video materials, various Internet resources. Internet technologies can be successfully used in foreign language classes in order for students to search for supplementary information on the topic being studied and to collect data for creating a multimedia presentation.

Slide shows on topics can be created for better visual and auditory perception of the information. The presentation affects several types of memory at once: visual, auditory, emotional and motor. When organizing an online class using a presentation, the learning material

is presented visually and accessible. During the performance, the student has the opportunity to use keywords, diagrams, tables, and pictures. All mentioned above allow the student to build an answer confidently, consistently and comprehensively. The scholars determine the benefits of Zoom for online foreign language learning: Zoom embodies beneficial functions and tools for educational contexts, mediates the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning, creates a psychologically comfortable atmosphere for online education, provides synchronous interaction, communication and cooperation, and helps develop foreign language skills (Tuncer & Karataş, 2021).

In particular, due to the forms of work used by lecturers in the process of foreign language teaching via Zoom, students can foster such soft skills and digital competences as communication skills in the Internet environment, the ability to work with online platforms and video conferencing, mastery of presentation creation programs, office programs, high level of self-organization, and time management skills.

The practical experience of applying the Zoom platform in foreign language teaching shows that in addition to a large number of advantages, there are some disadvantages, in particular:

- poor Internet connection;

- low-quality technical support for individual students (some students do not have computers or tablets; they only have smartphones that do not allow them to use all the functions of the Zoom platform);

- limited phone memory;

- visual load for both the student and the lecturer.

Not all students and lecturers have all the necessary equipment: a web camera, a microphone and the computer itself. At the same time, technical problems occur on the platform itself with increased user load. In addition, there is abuse on the part of students who justify their absence from class in the format of video communication or refusal to answer with technical problems.

Among the main problems, the lecturers also point out insufficient feedback, the impossibility of applying usual forms and types of work that were used in offline learning, checking work and correcting mistakes, significant time spent on preparation, lack of personal contact, and sometimes visual contact, due to the reluctance of students (and sometimes lecturers) to work with cameras on, etc.

Another disadvantage of this platform can also be "zoombombing". There are known possible cases with unwanted third-party visitors who have access to the password and link, but in the event that the lecturer has disabled the waiting room.

The use of the Zoom application requires lecturers to consider the virtual platform's didactic possibilities and external factors that may negatively influence the intention of students to apply this platform. Creating favourable psychological and pedagogical conditions and taking into account methodological principles will undoubtedly contribute to more effective implementation of the Zoom platform in the educational process. These principal conditions include the following: clear planning of the training session and selection of the necessary educational content in conjunction with the use of certain program tools for the best presentation of the material; digital competence and necessary digital skills to work using the Zoom platform; style of pedagogical communication and teaching methods for involving students in online communication; ethics of online communication and protection of personal space and opinion of the interlocutor.

Planning and conducting online classes are associated not only with the ability to present learning materials and competently build pedagogical communication but also with adjusting and regulating educational technologies in such a way that interactivity does not interfere but contributes to effective synchronous communication. These recommendations are typical not only for working in Zoom but also for building online learning and communication in general.

Conclusion. According to the findings, among online platforms for conducting video conferences, Zoom has proven itself as an effective service for teaching a foreign language. The options offered by the Zoom platform allow a lecturer to fully use various forms and methods of teaching and to apply communicative methods. This program has a number of advantages (the ability to attract a large number of participants and use various options during an online conference) as well as certain disadvantages (poor internet connection, low-quality technical support, load on visual receptors, insufficient feedback, "zoombombing").

The practical significance of our study is the possibility of using its results in further studies of the effectiveness of applying the Zoom platform in teaching foreign languages online in the process of organizing distance learning at universities.

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