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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Digital technologies have become an integral part of teaching and learning a foreign language, helping to organize the educational process. In today's realities, a foreign language lecturer must have a good understanding not only of teaching methods, but also of technologies. To provide educational services successfully, a lecturer must have the following digital skills: use computer programs, keep an electronic journal, create video content; be able to work with distance learning systems, have an account in social media, etc. This imposes a number of requirements and needs some time to master new skills and tools, however, the active involvement of the digital space helps to make the process of learning a foreign language more effective. So, the need to analyze teaching methods using digital technologies is becoming relevant, especially in the process of the development of modern technologies.

The analysis of scientific works showed that a significant number of publications by many scientists are devoted to the study of certain aspects and problems of the use of digital technologies in higher education. In particular, the following issues are highlighted: online foreign language learning in higher education institutions (Kostikova, 2021), digitalization of foreign language training of students of higher education institutions (Slyusarenko & Soter, 2022), implementation of Internet tools into the process of foreign language learning (Zablotskyi, 2021), possibilities of Google Classroom service in foreign language teaching (Hubina & Martyniuk, 2019), foreign language learning by means of Moodle (Bilotserkovets & Gubina, 2019), etc. However, the issue of applying digital technologies in foreign language teaching, especially during distance learning, requires additional research and careful analysis.

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the didactic possibilities of digital technologies which are used in distance learning of a foreign language for agricultural students.

The process of digitization of higher education affects the direction of foreign language teaching as well. Every year, various platforms for learning foreign languages, innovative and interactive tools are developed and effectively used in practice, which help students better learn the educational material. Considering the fact that the last two years of study mostly take place remotely, the role of these technologies in foreign language training of students in non-linguistic institutions of higher education is quite decisive.

Undoubtedly, a more important factor for the effective organization of distance learning is careful planning of classes and a clear vision of the application of appropriate technologies in each

specific case. However, in order not to overload the educational process, the lecturer should focus on a limited number of proven Internet tools that really work and contribute to productive educational activities (Zablotskyi, 2021).

This paper deals with the problem of learning a foreign language at Sumy National Agrarian University (SNAU) under the conditions of distance learning.

The main e-learning platform at the university is Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). In 2016, a distance learning center was created on the basis of the Moodle educational platform, which coordinates electronic courses developed and presented on its website. This platform supplies the means of training, and the system for monitoring and evaluating students' learning activities by providing free access to e-resources.

The educators who teach foreign languages by means of the Moodle platform are able to create their own electronic courses, upload necessary teaching materials (multimedia presentations of lectures, audio and video teaching materials), as well as tasks for independent work and a set of tests. The system is focused, first of all, on the organization of interaction between the lecturer and students in the absence of direct contact, although it is also suitable for supporting in-person learning. In the Moodle system students have the access to all text, audio and video materials on course issues. Students pass tests and receive a final grade for each module. According to the scholars (Bilotserkovets & Gubina, 2019), working with Moodle enables agricultural students to develop self-discipline and habits to work independently with a foreign language learning materials, that includes recognizing the need for separate self-study without the help of a lecturer; to develop the ability to learn through the integration of formal (regular courses and content uploaded on the Moodle platform) and informal learning outside the classroom and beyond the control of the lecturer.

Currently, a variety of tools with a different set of functions are available for lecturers to diagnose the results of educational activities. They can also use Google Forms, Kahoot, or Quizizz to conduct intermediate control in an interesting interactive game form.

Interpersonal interactive communication is implemented by using synchronous tools, but remotely, via Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. They make it possible to supplement learning management systems and implement not just the exchange of information, but the communicative interaction of partners in a foreign language, which is quite significant given the insufficient number of hours allocated in a non-linguistic institution of higher education for foreign language training of students (Slyusarenko & Soter, 2022).

Practical classes are held online by means of Zoom and Google Classroom software, which makes it possible to study in video conference mode.

Zoom platform is used especially effectively by lecturers to conduct synchronous classes online. The platform offers free and fairly high-quality video and audio communication, provides the

ability to communicate by means of short text messages. The scientists single out 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).

By means of this platform, classes can be held in video format and in real time. Special built-in functions of Zoom online program make it possible to make the process of studying foreign language educational material by students more effective. Among Zoom functions, lecturers most frequently use the Chat function, the Online Whiteboard function, the Screen Demonstration function, and the Breakout Rooms function. Using the "Screen Demonstration" function allows participants of the learning process to listen to audio materials, view video materials, presentations, perform interactive tasks, and operate text files in shared viewing mode.

The most popular element of this product among teachers is the student' work organizations function in Breakout Rooms. This option allows students to work in groups, for example, they can conduct dialogues. The lecturer is able to divide students into appropriate groups, with whom he can maintain an educational connection during the duration of the sessions. In addition, both the lecturer and students have the opportunity to use auxiliary tools during video communication: presentations (created by means of such graphic tools as Microsoft Power Point, Google Presentations, Google Slides, etc.), audio and video materials, various Internet resources.

Foreign language teachers also use such an online platform as Google Classroom. The system is easy to use, has all the necessary functionality for the effective organization of the educational environment, allows to place learning materials from a local or cloud drive, contains good functionality for writing and checking written assignments. Although the system does not have a built-in tool for conducting online meetings, lecturers can also use a free tool for organizing conferences with the ability to display the speaker's screen and a communication tool called Google Meet. However, the scientists note that all the opportunities provided by Google Classroom will be effective only when the lecturer has thought through, successfully developed the course program, prepared materials, presentations, audio recordings, exercises, etc. (Hubina & Martyniuk, 2019).

Besides preparing presentations, various tasks, testing for online classes, the lecturer should also communicate with students, giving them recommendations on how to complete tasks, send messages, check student's independent work, etc. We consider chats, forums, blogs, etc. as effective asynchronous tools in foreign language training of agricultural students, which provide an opportunity to exchange information.

Other communication services that are actively used in distance learning of a foreign language are Viber and Telegram. With the help of these messengers, you can quickly send homework in the form of both text files and multimedia files, as well as links to certain Internet resources. In addition,

it is convenient to correspond with students and provide them with the necessary consultations and clarifications by creating a chat for this purpose.

Such out-of-class text communication has not only practical purposes, but also psychological ones, since informal communication makes it possible to relieve some tension in communication between students and teachers or between students in general. In these Viber- or Telegram-chats, to create a positive emotional mood, students can share cognitive Internet discoveries, the teacher can also send links to high-quality and new educational materials.

For example, you can share current news, jokes, video clips, fragments from TV series, feature and documentary films, TV programs, video blogs that are relevant to the conversational topic being studied, that is, those Internet resources that there is not enough time to study in class and that have a positive effect in strengthening motivation to learn a foreign language.

Conclusion. Despite the challenges of distance teaching and learning, both lecturers and students receive from it obvious advantages: modern digital technologies make it possible to work on any tasks in a group, exchange thoughts and ideas, providing better results in a shorter period of time. Being a flexible intellectual tool, they contribute to obtaining a huge amount of resources, encourage students to intellectual development, creativity, as well as interaction in the classroom. Implementation of digital technologies and the use of modern digital methods by higher education institutions for teaching a foreign language makes it possible to make the process of knowledge acquisition more effective.

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