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I. Kozeletska, senior lecturer
(National Aviation University, Ukraine)

ESP challenges in transition from face-to-face to e-learning

The article points out a decisive impact of globalization on foreign language competence, principles of effective e-learning in a professional foreign language in a technical university; enhancement of student motivation at online classes and how to rise to recent methodological challenges

In order to improve flight safety and foster the transition to a new conceptual framework for aviation safety, there is a need for effective implementation of both the safety management system and safety programs that, in turn, largely depends on two fundamental factors: culture and personnel training. In this article I'll analyze the latter factor in terms of foreign language competence training of aviation specialists.

What is a language? The language is a gift that broadens person's abilities, thinking, perception, memory and imagination. The knowledge of a foreign language, in particular, expands and strengthens cross-national and international boundaries, supports better integration in a foreign and linguistic environment. It's obvious that English has become the leading language for communication and dissemination of knowledge in the modern global scientific and professional environment. The need to learn English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is more relevant than ever before. There are two main areas of ESP: English for academic purposes, which prepares students to study at foreign universities and communication in an academic environment, and English for professional purposes, which prepares students to work in a particular profession, e.g. engineering, law, medicine, computer science, tourism, business management, etc.

An ESP training approach provides for determining the purpose of the course, selecting the course content, effective teaching methods and techniques. All of these will contribute to vocabulary mastery and use of language structures and functions in target situations. Modern foreign language learning reflects drastic changes effected by globalization. The relationship between teaching foreign languages and intercultural communication is evident. Globalization boosts interest in other languages due to the government-lifted restrictions on travels to create an "open" boundary world. Moreover, globalization enhances understanding between different ethnic cultures. The impact of globalization reflects on the patterns of human interaction, interconnectedness and awareness that reconstitutes the world as a single social space (e.g. global community).

On a personal level, this means the events, behaviours and values which affect many aspects of our daily habits or ways of being (e.g. the products we buy, the language and expressions we use in online chats, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the music we listen to, the television programmes we watch, the Internet sites we access). At present, we have been witnessing the acceleration of the globalization process amid the war in Ukraine when people had to flee to neighboring countries escaping Russian attacks and saving their lives and the lives

of their children. In their new destinations, they have been facing language problems as their knowledge of foreign language leaves much to be desired.

Thus, the new era demands an immediate revision of common foreign language teaching methodology and techniques. At the institutions of higher education, teaching a foreign language as a means of communication between specialists in different countries is not an applied and highly specialized task, but a tool of work and a part of culture. Hence, the objective of higher education is to create conditions for the formation and development of students' professional qualities. In order to teach a foreign language as a means of communication, it is necessary to create a real-life communication environment, i.e. the teacher should present information and introduce practices for language learners to comprehend the new language.

However, pandemic and martial law turned the traditional educational process from face-to-face learning into the online one that posed considerable challenges for educators.

The process of teaching a foreign language is subject to a number of general didactic and methodological principles. The success and effectiveness of e-learning in a professional foreign language in a technical university is ensured by the compliance with the following principles:

1. The principle of consciousness that relies on the conscious attitude of students to their study and the forms of the educational process.

2. The principle of student activity as a high degree of his/her independence.

3. The principle of knowledge assimilation that opens up mixed learning possibilities for the students to come back to any stage in an electronic course and work through the most difficult moments for him.

4. The principle of learning retention that provides an individual set of learning support, i.e. adaptation of the learning system to an individual student, an individual way of learning activity control, a choice of individual pace of work, etc.

5. The principle of orientation to specific learners that takes into account individual psychological features of learners and the field of their professional activity.

6. The principle of stimulating and motivating students' positive attitude to the learning process (creation of appropriate learning conditions).

7. Here are some tips how to strengthen motivation:

- explain the importance and usefulness not only of language study, but each task or type of work. The teacher should be cognizant that different people think in different time horizons, i.e. some are motivated by getting a high grade, some think of higher chances for their career, and some are motivated by the opportunity to make their contribution to the global environment. The one-to-one teaching and self-paced learning technique is advisable;

- give students an understanding about the course structure, topics and tasks, schedule of online meetings, deadlines, grading and assessment criteria. In addition, it is important to spell out what is acceptable and what is unacceptable during the course (tardiness, absence from classes, cheating on tests and an exam, etc.). The teacher should provide ongoing access to course materials: video lectures, articles, textbooks, links to websites, answers to typical questions, instructions for exercises and tasks, instructions for using online tools;

- communicate with students, in particular, answer their questions, moderate discussions, structure the learning process and just be "in touch". It's important to clearly define when you are on call to take care of your rest. For example: "I respond to messages throughout the day, but not late in the evening and on weekends." The teacher can also send weekly messages using the PPP technique (Progress - what students have learned so far; Problems - what difficulties / typical mistakes the students have; Plans - what students will do this week);

- encourage students to communicate with each other: create chats, give group tasks, etc. A friendly atmosphere and work in pairs and mini-groups stimulate the learning process. The amount of tasks for each activity should be commensurate with the students' ability to do it, especially on their own. The teacher should break large and complicated tasks into small modules to avoid learners' temptation to put it off. The teacher should give the students the opportunity to actively participate in discussions during a video session, in a chat room or in a forum (for the students who are more comfortable expressing themselves in writing), i.e. offer students choices wherever possible and put what has been learned into practice immediately. This will allow them to fulfill autonomous and complete an assignment (asynchronous assignments).

The content, forms and methods of training are selected with regard to their relevance to the learning objectives and their effective application in the online educational process. They are presented in the form of educational-methodical complex of materials, including electronic teaching aids in a hard copy, workbooks, task booklets, self-study aids, audio and video materials, CDs, etc. There is no doubt that all the selected means, forms and methods, goals and content of learning affect the structure of the remote learning model.

Conclusion. Since its introduction, distance learning has become a robust language training solution. It allows users to determine their own learning time and access the learning environment from any computer which is connected to the internet. The teachers should adjust their teaching methods and techniques, adapt to these challenges, reconsider and modify learning strategies.

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