

SPECIFICATION AND TYPES OF ASSESSMENT IN THE PROCESS OF
ONLINE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract. *The article investigates the specification of assessment in the process of distance foreign language learning and their types. The modern world is changing every minute, presenting new challenges for all sectors of society, including the process of teaching foreign languages, which has also undergone significant changes. Over the past few years, the technology and opportunities for organizing distance learning have significantly expanded, with the number and quality of available applications, podcasts, websites, and textbooks increasing. This article explores which types of assessment in the process of learning foreign languages online can be used as well as analyzes examples based on personal experiences and interaction with students. This article focuses on highlighting different types of assessment that can be implemented in remote foreign language education. With the help of the understanding of these types, organizing distance learning has become easier, and the interactivity of classes can be advantageous in engaging students in quality foreign language learning. Importantly, each type of assessment outlined in this article is illustrated by its own examples. The article expands the understanding of the topicality of organizing properly the specification of assessments during online learning.*

The aim of the research is highlight the specification and the types of assessment in distance learning and show how it can work during lessons.

Keywords: *distance learning, assessment, foreign languages, online learning, teaching.*

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТА ВИДИ КОНТРОЛЮ В ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ОНЛАЙН

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Анотація. У статті досліджується специфіка і види контролю в процесі дистанційного вивчення іноземних мов. Сучасний світ змінюється щохвилини, створюючи нові виклики перед усіма сферами життя суспільства, в тому числі і перед процесом викладання іноземних мов, який також зазнав значних змін. За останні кілька років технології та можливості для організації дистанційного навчання значно розширилися, а також зросла кількість і якість доступних додатків, подкастів, веб-сайтів і підручників. У цій статті досліджується, які використовуються види контролю в процесі вивчення іноземних мов онлайн, а також аналізуються приклади, засновані на особистому досвіді та взаємодії зі студентами.

Основна увага в цій статті приділена висвітленню різних видів контролю, які можуть бути реалізовані в дистанційному навчанні іноземних мов. З допомогою цих видів контролю стало легше організувати дистанційне навчання, а інтерактивність занять має неабияку перевагу в залученні студентів до якісного вивчення іноземної мови. Важливо, що кожен вид контролю, описаний у цій статті, проілюстрований власними прикладами. Стаття розширює розуміння важливості правильної організації специфікації оцінювання під час дистанційного навчання.

Метою цієї статті є розкриття особливостей та видів контролю в процесі вивчення іноземної мови і показати як це може працювати протягом дистанційних уроків.

Ключові слова: дистанційне навчання, контроль, іноземні мови, навчання онлайн, викладання.

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Introduction

Online learning is always a lengthy and laborious process that requires careful engagement from both students and teachers. Especially in a world where everything changes rapidly, demanding adaptation from both sides to new challenges. Nonetheless, distance learning has firmly established itself in modern teaching processes, gradually even replacing traditional methods. Previously, no one was ready for the transition to a new level of organization in both teaching and assessment. However, now, with attention to all the innovations that the Internet can offer us, it can easily be said that organizing teaching and assessment remotely is becoming increasingly easier.

Day by day, distance learning continues to improve, along with methods of assessment. Comparing it to traditional education, where methods of assessment often consisted mainly of online testing, distance learning is expanding in various directions, incorporating interactive elements, gamification, artificial intelligence (such as computers performing mechanical tasks instead of humans), and enhancing direct communication between student and teachers (Simonson, 2018).

Studying the organization process of distance learning, and especially researching methods of assessment, is a relatively new area of study. However, it is important to note that an increasing number of researchers, instructors, and instructional designers are becoming involved in developing new assessment methods or adapting existing ones for online education. The relevance of researching the types and characteristics of assessment in distance learning lies in the necessity to describe it in order for distance education to become comfortable, modern, and, most importantly, effective for students. Taking into account the peculiarities of distance learning and analyzing potential methods of assessment, organizing distance education will become easier for instructors, and students will not experience stress from the unclear process of their learning.

The purpose of this article is to explore the specification and the types of assessment in distance learning and demonstrate how it can operate during distance lessons.

Research materials and methods

The first step in preparing this research involved practical lesson planning to assess the relevance of assessment methods and how students respond to the requirements and expectations of these methods. Initially, lessons were conducted, followed by the provision of exercises to assess the material learned. In preparing for assessment, considerations were also given to students' individual preparation, their engagement in lessons, and their objectives and goals. It is impossible not to consider that each student has a different level of preparation and varying goals when learning a foreign language.

Secondly, consideration was also given to the topics covered during the lessons. For instance, grammatical topics required formal assessment, necessitating the preparation of tests, while lexical topics could be assessed in a more informal manner. Thus, when reviewing these topics, it was necessary to note how to adapt each topic to the students' level. It is important to highlight that each topic was addressed separately according to the students' level. For instance, the grammatical topic "Present Perfect Continuous" required not only testing knowledge of the rules but also completing practical exercises. For example, preparing exercises involving filling in the blanks with "have/has" or forming their own questions, which is a more advanced level of assessment.

Another important method of research was the examination of available sources, methodological materials, and interactive resources. Currently, there are numerous materials with various methods of organizing lessons at all levels of reading, vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension. All these materials are prepared for different levels of learning and consider what is interesting for students. However, even with a large number of materials, it is important to conduct a thorough analysis of these materials. Of course, in order to select what will best suit for assessment. Quite often, the best tasks come from those that are combined from various preparatory materials. For this reason, analysis is necessary when preparing for a lesson and assessment.

Furthermore, discussions were also employed during the research preparation. Dialogue is an important component in assessing students' moral readiness for any level of evaluation. Discussion can also help understand how students currently feel about grammatical or lexical topics, or which topics are useful or not useful for them. Therefore, based on this, it is necessary to emphasize once again the importance of applying various methods to research in order to obtain the best possible results and to note the advantages and disadvantages of what has been studied. It is through such methods that it was possible to identify which assessment methods work and are relevant for current use. This is especially essential when studying how to properly organize distance learning and assessment.

Discussion

With each passing year, an increasing number of researchers delve deeply into the examination of the intricacies of distance learning and how to organize assessment. These studies encompass psychological, cultural, technological, and social aspects to thoroughly explore distance education. Historically, the roots of distance learning can be traced back to 19th century Britain, coinciding with the emergence of printing. Printed materials, inspired by the ideas of stenographer Isaac Pitman, began to be distributed hand-to-hand, thus creating a form of distance education. At that time, this process was referred to as "correspondence" and was not as widely accepted by society as traditional education. Across Europe, "correspondence" education gained popularity in Berlin, where in 1856, Tussen and Lanchensthein established an institute in Berlin based on correspondence-based foreign language instruction (Pylaieva, 2016:3). Returning to Victorian London, we can note that it was there, at the University of London, where the first department of distance learning emerged. The university assisted students from around the world who had the desire and means to receive education through correspondence. Through this correspondence, the university also organized preparatory professional courses for further enrollment in departments. Later on, this practice of correspondence found application in the United States and Canada (Pylaieva, 2016:4).

By the mid-20th century, most private colleges or universities worldwide had implemented distance learning for their students. Moreover, this method was most accessible to the middle class, who could not dedicate most of their hours to attending classes. Major fields of study included library science, engineering, management, economics, mathematics, and foreign languages (Pylaieva, 2016:4). Year by year, distance education progressed further, keeping pace with emerging technologies. These advancements gradually transitioned from traditional postal methods to electronic formats, integrating audiovisual and video materials.

The results of the research

The COVID-2019 pandemic swiftly entered human existence, bringing substantial changes to all facets of society. Quarantine measures, limitations on mobility, and the closure of public venues all impacted how people communicate and socialize. Consequently, the education system underwent similar transformations, necessitating learners to adjust to novel approaches in organizing the educational process (Makhsma, 2021:244). It's evident that transitioning to a remote format is a process that requires considerable effort. To ensure that the process aligns with the curriculum and meets the capabilities of both students and teachers, it is important to consider numerous factors, including technical equipment and the readiness of both parties to effectively facilitate the learning process. This typically poses the greatest challenge since ensuring the engagement and satisfaction of both sides and monitoring progress requires careful consideration of all the advantages and disadvantages that may arise in organizing online education in the long run (Makhsma, 2021:244).

It is also worth considering that each participant should share a common goal when organizing the provision of quality online education. Teachers should aim to provide students with information they can effectively absorb during distance learning and supply them with the necessary materials according to their capabilities. Meanwhile, students should demonstrate motivation, a willingness to learn, and discipline (Négyesi, 2021:71).

Therefore, now it is worth noting the specification of distance learning. Firstly, distance learning is developing in the era of Artificial Intelligence, which is the ability of a computer or software to perform tasks or answer questions similar to those performed by humans (Copeland, 1998). To ensure assessment during distance learning, artificial intelligence can be useful for developing tests and for checking these tasks. In addition, artificial intelligence can easily create a test that is suitable for a given level, class, and student's capabilities (Huang, 2023:112).

Secondly, another specification of e-learning is the availability of interactive exercises that will be useful for better preparation for the lesson. Interactive learning can also

include gaming technologies, which are also being developed to make learning a foreign language as easy as possible. For example, game technologies can be creative, assessment, summarizing, communicative, training, cognitive and educational. During the game, the learning material is transformed into a tool that naturally begins to be absorbed by students in the learning process (Andriianova, 2018: 142). For games, there are such platforms as ISL Collective, WordWall, Kahoot.

Thirdly, applications where everything is stored in one place have become increasingly popular in distance learning. An example of this is Miro or Twiddla boards, where a teacher can post materials for a lesson, and students can view it at any time and do tasks directly from these boards (Chervinska, 2018:243).

However, now it is necessary to pay attention to the types of assessment, because assessment is an extremely important part of the learning process, regardless of whether it is online or offline. Surely, the process of assessment students' progress has often been a provocative question. One may ask how we can properly organize assessment so that the student experiences minimal stress and be able demonstrate their achievements. This question becomes especially important in the context of implementing distance learning, as the teacher, interacting through a computer screen, must ensure effective assessment over the student's progress (Shum, 2021: 90). Hence, it is crucial to delineate the various types of assessment available and how they can be implemented in remote foreign language education.

Among these types, it would be necessary to distinguish these types:

1) Formal assessment. Certainly, the primary form of formal assessment is testing, which may include multiple-choice or true/false formats. Testing is an effective way to check students' knowledge. In addition, testing can be used for grammar, vocabulary and listening. An example of a multiple-choice test would be the following tasks that test reading comprehension:

“In which paragraph can we find the name of the main character`s brother?

- a. 1st
- b. 2nd
- c. 3d
- d. none of them”.

In practice, special tasks were prepared for students to review the material covered in the tests. Beforehand, we reviewed the material, consolidated it, and then the students proceeded to complete the tasks. For instance, these tasks were ideal for assessing grammatical comprehension or reading skills.

2) Informal assessment. A discussion stands out as one of the most straightforward methods of informal assessment. Additionally, it is crucial that such discussions can be seamlessly facilitated online, such as through platforms like Zoom (Tkachenko, 2009: 309). Discussion involves a process where participants divide into several groups, choose a topic for discussion and present their point of view on a given topic. Prior to initiating the discussion, students are required to form teams, select a topic for discussion, while the teacher observes the proceedings, making notes and tracking the students' engagement and participation. During the discussion, participants consistently demonstrate enthusiasm for the topic, engaging in active discourse, posing questions to one another, and endeavoring to justify their perspectives, typically selecting topics of personal relevance. Additionally, before commencing the discussion, the teacher may furnish students with key phrases to incorporate into their dialogue. This approach is commonly referred to as a 'Case-study' since students address specific scenarios or topics (Vorotniak, 2014:3).

For example, *a situation for discussion: ‘Would you tell the truth if you knew it would bring evil?’*. Students can view the vocabulary available to them. Practically, these tasks were among the students' favorites because they allowed them to test their skills,

demonstrate their knowledge, and freely express their thoughts. Additionally, special cards with vocabulary for review could complement these tasks effectively.

3) Monitoring. During the study of a foreign language, monitoring is used to track one's own progress in learning, identify possible gaps, and, if necessary, develop a new learning strategy. In addition, pedagogical monitoring should focus on guiding each student individually, providing assessment and feedback, taking into account their level of knowledge and language skills (Rybi, 2). Online monitoring can be done through the creation of a journal - this is a modern and relevant method that both students and teachers can use to track progress. The student can create several sections in the journal, where they will record completed work, as well as identify what has already been done, what needs improvement, and which new phrases, words, or grammatical structures are worth studying further (Cumming, 2009: 121). To carry out this process, students received tasks that they needed to work on. During this time, it was necessary to observe how students approached these tasks and make notes on their techniques and execution. Subsequently, these notes were provided to the students personally.

4) Self-reflection/assessment. Self-assessment is an important component in the process of learning a foreign language. This process allows students to evaluate accurately their own knowledge, increase motivation, set goals, and demonstrate that self-assessment is a crucial component of psychological development and preparation for language exams as well as any other activity (Makhsma, 2021:19). Usually, for the self-assessment process to take place, the student must first receive the task, complete it, and then independently check and work with mistakes: note why they chose to solve the problem in a certain way, review the rules once again, and memorize it. In practice, after each session, students were required to assess which tasks they excelled at and which ones they needed to improve upon. This method can also be helpful in learning to evaluate oneself effectively and identifying areas for further improvement. With each session, students grew more confident in their abilities and could identify areas they wanted to improve upon, as well as recognize what they were excelling at.

5) Peer-review. The process of assessing peers involves the student working on skills such as critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, as well as acquiring skills to evaluate and provide feedback, which are important for further learning. Online, this can be used during the checking of test assignments; beforehand, the teacher should also receive these tasks, after which classmates start checking each other's tasks (Vorotniak, 2014:3). During distance learning, it is essential to implement peer assessment to help students develop communication skills with each other for the first time. Additionally, in this way, they can acquire skills in providing feedback correctly, which is also crucial in the modern world. During lessons, students utilized peer review after completing listening or vocabulary exercises. They would complete the tasks and then evaluate by looking at the answers. This allowed students to learn how to criticize others and engage in collaborative error correction. This type of assessment was also very engaging and yielded positive results.

Conclusion and prospects

Thus, this study demonstrates the characteristics of modern distance learning and examines the types of assessment that can be organized for effective foreign language education. Distance learning necessitates further research, and this article can be useful for assessing methods of assessment in distance foreign language education. The specification and types of assessment in the process of online foreign language learning have not been thoroughly explored and remain a contemporary issue. As distance learning becomes increasingly valuable and relevant in our world, particularly in the education sector, it is necessary to continue researching these matters. Among the specifications of online learning, we can note the use of artificial intelligence, gamification, and various interactive boards. Regarding different types of assessment, we can distinguish formal and informal assessment, self-assessment and peer assessment, as well as monitoring. Each of these methods was supported with a practical example. Further research could focus on uncovering other types

of assessment that can be applied in online language learning. This article could serve as a useful example in highlighting the specification and types of assessment in distance language learning.

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