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PROS AND CONS OF DISTANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING

The study is aimed at determining both advantages and disadvantages of distance language learning and recommending potential areas of research for future studies. To this end, selected publications on the issue are overviewed.

There is no doubt that developments in educational technologies have spread to online or distance language learning and teaching field. Opportunities to learn languages through online or distance education are presented by private courses, colleges, schools, and higher education establishments. The introduction of distant learning resources has recently become crucial for higher educational establishments due to the increased interest of the undergraduates in e-learning and boost in the electronic device market.

According to the research by Ekmekçi, distance language course generally meets undergraduates' expectations. However, some skills such as listening, speaking and writing are evaluated as weak parts by most of the undergraduates. It is considered that presenting and integrating language skills in face-to-face language courses needs to be planned well beforehand. When it comes to distance language learning courses, it is more challenging. The negative perceptions of undergraduates about effective teaching of language skills may be attributed to this challenge. Providing feedback is another issue which is negatively evaluated. This may be because of the time limitation in the synchronous courses as synchronous courses provide undergraduates with almost the only opportunity to get feedback from the instructors. Assignments, grading techniques and clarity of undergraduates' responsibilities are also criticized by most of the undergraduates. Semi-structured interview verifies these results since almost half of the undergraduates state that assignments and exams are among the ones they like least about the course. Actually, it seems to be difficult to organize assignments in distance language courses, but when it is planned well, the reactions will be probably better. The study yields not only negative aspects but also some positive findings about the distance language course. For instance, a great majority of the undergraduates enjoy distance language course since it enables them

to follow the lesson independent from time and place. This flexibility can be regarded as one of the main strongest aspects of the distance course. This study deals with only one distance education program in a one state-funded university. A wider and more comprehensive study can be conducted by comparing two or three programs with more undergraduates in the further research. It is hoped that this case study will give some hints about the nature of distance language courses and their improvements for the following programs [1, p. 396].

Akimova, Bobyreva, Palutina, Pomortseva systematize pros and cons of distance language learning. According to the authors, it offers pedagogic, administrative and economic advantages: interactivity (instead of passive acquiring information), enhanced undergraduate-teacher and undergraduate-undergraduate communication, more individual time for undergraduates, individual flexible optimization of undergraduates' progress; better monitoring of undergraduates and better administration of educational processes; more undergraduates can be involved into the learning process with fewer labor hours, reuse and modularization. Among the disadvantages they mention the following aspects: time limitations, level of tasks is higher than of those done in classes, lack of information (glossaries, lectures, additional materials [2, p. 350].

Faramarzi, Elekaei, Koosha investigate the major areas of research in distance language learning by analyzing previous works and recommending potential areas of research for future studies. The authors mention that distance language learning offers a great opportunity for people living in developing countries who cannot afford real classes. They can benefit from high quality education with a much lower cost comparing to traditional ones. However, in many situations the price of providing internet connection and the proper materials can easily hamper many people to participate in distance education programs. Local and international foundations should be active enough to support and encourage undergraduates by financially assisting undergraduates in this regard [3, p. 201].

Kudlay analyzes methodical aspects of the distance teaching of foreign languages in professional training of future lawyers. The research concludes that distance teaching foreign languages for future lawyers can help to better master the knowledge of legal disciplines and orientation in the international legal space in the context of the selection of appropriate methodological recommendations for the effective use of multimedia learning complexes during distance learning in foreign languages [4].

The lack of scientific researches on the problem of distance learning of foreign languages in the process of training future law enforcement specialists indicates that topic being addressed continue to remain the highest priorities.

References

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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING COMPETENCE IN THE ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT

Modern society needs not just highly qualified specialists who are able to resist the threats to the national security, but professionals who are ready to innovate and have the potential for constant self-development in the dynamic world. Thus, the life-learning process at the Academy of the Foreign Intelligence of Ukraine also needs to be radically modernized turning post-graduate students from passive learning into active agents who can independently upgrade their levels of foreign language communicative competence, acquire the necessary professional knowledge, and effectively organize their self-directed learning activities [1]. In order to perform their duties, a qualified national security specialist is obliged to possess a good command of a foreign language that implies constant vocabulary