

USE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS IN THE FORMATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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This paper explores the effectiveness of online platforms in developing foreign language competence among students in higher education institutions, within the context of the digital transformation of the educational environment. It emphasizes the importance of integrating information and communication technologies into foreign language teaching as a strategy to enhance the quality, accessibility, and adaptability of education. The study also delves into modern scientific approaches to leveraging digital educational resources, especially within blended and distance learning frameworks. A combination of theoretical and empirical methods was applied, encompassing literature analysis, surveys, pedagogical observation, and quasi-experiments. The research involved 60 students from non-philology majors, divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received training through online platforms such as Moodle, Quizlet, and Google Classroom. Findings revealed that incorporating online platforms positively influences students' foreign language competence. Specifically, it boosts their motivation, encourages autonomy, and improves speaking abilities. Notably, significant progress was observed in receptive speech activities, although productive skill development requires further methodological enhancements. Additionally, the study highlights that the success of using online platforms hinges on several factors: the digital competence of participants in the learning process, the quality of instructional design, and the level of technical complexity associated with these tools.

Key words: foreign language competence, online platforms, digital learning, blended learning, distance learning, higher education, foreign languages learning, student motivation, autonomous learning, digital technologies.

Данилюк Сергій. Використання онлайн-платформ у формуванні іношомовної компетентності студентів закладів вищої освіти

У статті розглянуто питання ефективності застосування онлайн-платформ у процесі формування іношомовної компетентності студентів вищих навчальних закладів в умовах цифрової трансформації освітнього середовища. Акцентовано увагу на значущості інтеграції інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій у процес навчання іноземних мов як на інструменті, що сприяє підвищенню якості, доступності та гнучкості освіти. Проведено аналіз сучасних наукових підходів до використання цифрових освітніх ресурсів, зокрема в контексті змішаного та дистанційного навчання. Дослідження базується на використанні комплексу теоретичних і емпіричних методів, таких як аналіз наукової літератури, анкетування, педагогічне спостереження та квазіексперимент. У ньому взяли участь 60 студентів нефілологічних спеціальностей, які були розподілені на контрольну та експериментальну групи. Для учасників експериментальної групи навчальний процес реалізовувався із впровадженням онлайн-платформ Moodle, Quizlet і Google Classroom. Отримані результати підтвердили позитивний вплив використання онлайн-платформ на формування іношомовної компетентності студентів. Зокрема, це сприяло зростанню мотивації до навчання, розвитку автономності та вдосконаленню мовленнєвих навичок. Найбільші покращення відмічено у розвитку рецептивних видів мовленнєвої діяльності, тоді як формування продуктивних навичок усе ще потребує додаткової методичної підтримки. У дослідженні встановлено, що ефективність застосування онлайн-платформ залежить від рівня цифрової компетентності учасників освітнього процесу, якості педагогічного дизайну і комплексного підходу до їх інтеграції у навчання.

Ключові слова: іношомовна компетентність, онлайн-платформи, цифрове навчання, змішане навчання, дистанційне навчання, вища освіта, навчання іноземних мов, мотивація студентів, автономне навчання, цифрові технології.

Introduction. The current phase in higher education development is marked by a profound digital transformation of the learning environment, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional methods for organizing educational processes. Information and communication technologies have evolved beyond mere tools for modernizing education; they now serve as pivotal components for enhancing its quality, accessibility, and adaptability. These advancements hold particular significance in the realm of foreign language education, where digital resources provide vast opportunities to create immersive linguistic experiences and foster active communication among students.

The application of online platforms in foreign language instruction is influenced by several key factors, including globalization, the growing intensity of international academic

exchanges, and the need to maintain uninterrupted learning during crises such as pandemics or periods of martial law. Against this backdrop, online platforms emerge as effective solutions for facilitating blended and distance learning approaches, enabling the optimization of educational processes in response to contemporary challenges.

Relevance of the topic. The development of students' foreign language competence is a multifaceted process involving the enhancement of speech skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), linguistic abilities, sociocultural awareness, and strategic proficiencies. Modern online platforms play a significant role in advancing these elements by offering interactive tasks, multimedia resources, adaptive technologies, and opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous communication. A notable advantage

of such platforms is their capacity for personalized learning, which caters to each student's unique educational needs, learning pace, and preferred style.

Additionally, digital educational environments foster student autonomy, cultivate independent learning capabilities, and boost educational motivation. Through access to diverse resources and continuous practice in foreign language communication, learners are provided with conditions conducive to a more thorough grasp of educational materials.

However, despite the considerable promise of online platforms, their effectiveness in developing foreign language competence remains an area needing further research. Key challenges include establishing methodologically sound approaches to employing digital tools, understanding their impact on different facets of language competence, and assessing the effectiveness of their integration into the educational framework.

The purpose of the article. This article aims to evaluate how effectively online platforms contribute to developing foreign language competence among students in higher education institutions.

The state of problem research. The use of digital technologies in teaching foreign languages has gained significant relevance in recent years, particularly with the shift toward distance and hybrid learning models. Contemporary research primarily focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of online platforms as tools for developing students' foreign language proficiency.

In one study, G. Stockwell [1] highlights how digital and mobile technologies enhance educational accessibility, foster learner autonomy, and accelerate the learning process. The study underscores that the success of online platforms largely hinges on their judicious and pedagogically sound application.

Similarly, A. Kukulska-Hulme's research [2] demonstrates that mobile and online learning not only ensure the continuity of education but also facilitate personalized learning experiences. The study stresses the value of contextualized learning and the integration of academic activities into students' daily routines.

A notable contribution to the field comes from M. Warschauer and Y. Xu [3], who regard online platforms as dynamic environments for fostering communicative competence through computer-mediated interactions. Their findings emphasize the importance of digital tools in creating an immersive language atmosphere while broadening opportunities for student engagement and collaboration.

The investigation into student motivation and engagement within digital learning environments has been explored by Z. Dörnyei, P. D. MacIntyre, and A. Henry [4], who provide updated interpretations of motivational models in contemporary research. Their findings suggest that incorporating interactive platforms, gamification, and digital environments fosters students' intrinsic motivation and enhances their educational activity.

Additionally, research conducted by H. Song and Z. Liu [5] highlights a pivotal shift in the development of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). This transition is marked by the evolution from isolated technological tools to the establishment of comprehensive digital learning

ecosystems that seamlessly integrate various online platforms, social networks, and artificial intelligence functionalities.

OECD reports [6; 7] further underscore that while the digitalization of education positively impacts the overall quality of learning, its effectiveness is contingent upon factors such as participants' digital literacy, access to technology, and methodological support tailored to specific educational needs.

However, current studies also point out limitations in the use of online platforms. For instance, G. Stockwell identifies that digital tools are particularly effective in improving receptive skills like reading and listening, whereas productive skills such as speaking and writing require additional pedagogical interventions and structured opportunities for communicative engagement.

In summary, modern scientific research highlights the substantial benefits of online platforms in developing foreign language competencies among students. Nevertheless, the nuanced influence of these tools on all aspects of foreign language proficiency remains insufficiently explored, signifying the need for further study in this area.

Materials and methods. To achieve the research objectives, a combination of complementary methods was utilized, ensuring a thorough examination of the effectiveness of online platforms in fostering students' foreign language competence.

The theoretical methods employed included analysis, synthesis, generalization, and systematization of scientific literature related to the research topic. These approaches helped to explore and define the concept of "foreign language competence", its structure, and the didactic potential of online platforms in its development.

On the empirical side, the study incorporated questionnaires, pedagogical observation, and elements of a pedagogical experiment. The questionnaire aimed to assess students' motivation levels, attitudes toward using online platforms, and their self-evaluation of foreign language competence. Pedagogical observation took place during students' participation in educational activities, enabling the researchers to document changes in engagement, autonomy, and overall learning dynamics.

The research followed a quasi-experimental design and spanned one academic semester (four months). It involved 60 non-philology major students from a higher education institution, who were divided into two groups: an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students). The experimental group was taught using online platforms such as Moodle, Quizlet, and Google Classroom, while the control group adhered to traditional teaching methods.

Specifically, the Moodle platform was adopted to structure the training courses, host educational materials, and facilitate knowledge assessments. Quizlet was employed for vocabulary acquisition and memory reinforcement through repetition-based techniques. Google Classroom served as a tool for communication, managing assignments, and providing feedback.

To measure students' foreign language competence, several criteria were established: communicative skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing abilities); lexical and grammatical proficiency; motivation; and autonomy (capacity for self-directed learning).

The study unfolded in three stages: an initial (declarative) stage involving baseline testing and student surveys to assess their starting level of foreign language competence; a formative stage during which the experimental group was exposed to online platforms for learning; and a final (control) stage featuring post-testing and comparative analysis of the outcomes.

The research results were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including average values and percentage ratios, along with a comparative analysis of the experimental and control groups. This approach enabled the assessment of changes in foreign language competence indicators and the evaluation of the effectiveness of online platforms.

To ensure the reliability of the findings, principles such as objectivity, systematicity, and validity were adhered to. Both groups were placed under identical learning conditions, with the sole distinction being the introduction of online platforms as the experimental factor.

Results. The findings of the quasi-experimental study demonstrate that the systematic integration of online platforms in foreign language learning significantly enhances students' foreign language competence.

A comparative analysis of pre- and post-testing results revealed more notable positive progress in the experimental group than in the control group across all assessed criteria—speech, lexical-grammatical abilities, motivation, and learning autonomy. This aligns with the results of O. Zawacki-Richter et al. [8], who concluded that personalized online platforms lead to substantial improvements in learning outcomes compared to traditional approaches.

Survey data further support these findings, with 78 percent of students in the experimental group reporting increased interest in learning a foreign language and 65 percent noting a rise in independent language practice outside the classroom. These trends highlight enhanced intrinsic motivation and greater autonomy among learners.

The study's results corroborate existing research on e-learning adoption, which emphasizes that factors like perceived enjoyment and self-efficacy play crucial roles in the successful implementation of online platforms. Consequently, motivation emerges as a critical factor for the effectiveness of digital learning.

Moreover, analysis of test results indicates the most significant improvements occurred in receptive skills such as listening and reading. This can be attributed to the extensive availability of authentic materials – such as videos, podcasts, and texts – on online platforms.

While gains in productive skills like speaking and writing were less pronounced, they showed consistent growth. These outcomes mirror contemporary research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which underscores that while digital platforms are particularly effective for enhancing receptive skills, developing productive skills often requires supplementary pedagogical guidance and opportunities for interactive communication.

The research findings further validate the effectiveness of incorporating gamified elements into learning. Evidence from current experiments indicates that embedding game mechanics into online platforms can enhance learning

outcomes, though the extent of this impact varies depending on the nature of the tasks.

A key observation from the study was the noticeable increase in student autonomy. This was demonstrated by their improved ability to independently plan educational activities, more frequent utilization of additional resources, and heightened sense of responsibility for their academic performance.

These outcomes align with contemporary research in AI and digital education, which underscores the significance of personalization and adaptive learning in fostering students' metacognitive skills.

However, the study also highlighted several challenges. Participants encountered technical issues, such as unstable internet connections and platform-related problems. Some students demonstrated inadequate digital competence, and there was an identified need for more comprehensive methodological support in using online tools effectively.

These challenges are consistent with conclusions from systematic reviews in the field of digital learning. Such reviews emphasize that the success of online platforms significantly depends on both teachers' and students' level of preparedness, as well as the quality and design of pedagogical approaches.

The study's findings indicate that online platforms are a valuable resource for developing students' foreign language skills, particularly in boosting motivation and engagement, enhancing receptive language abilities, fostering independent learning, and making the educational process more dynamic.

However, the success of these platforms relies on a complex interplay of technological and pedagogical factors, highlighting the necessity for continued research in this area.

Conclusions. The research findings confirm that employing online platforms in foreign language learning is a highly effective approach for cultivating foreign language competence among higher education students. Empirical data demonstrate that integrating digital educational tools into learning significantly enhances key components of foreign language competence, including speech skills, lexical-grammatical understanding, motivation, and autonomous learning.

Specifically, the study revealed that online platforms positively impact several aspects of the learning process. They boost students' intrinsic motivation through interactivity, gamification, and personalized experiences, while simultaneously intensifying educational engagement by providing access to authentic resources and opportunities for repeated practice. These platforms also facilitate the development of receptive skills, such as listening and reading, alongside a gradual enhancement of productive skills like writing and speaking. Furthermore, they contribute to fostering student autonomy by encouraging independent learning, self-regulation, and effective planning of personal academic activities.

The findings underscore the advantages of adopting an integrated approach that combines multiple online platforms – such as learning management systems (LMS), mobile apps, and communication tools – to address various dimensions of foreign language competence more comprehensively. However, the study highlights that the success of digital learning depends heavily on the pedagogical design of courses, the digital competency

levels of both educators and learners, and the quality of methodological support provided.

Despite the significant benefits observed, certain challenges were identified. These include technical limitations, unequal access to digital resources, and insufficient readiness among some students to use online platforms effectively. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to digitalizing foreign language education by aligning technological, methodological, and organizational elements.

The study's scientific contribution lies in its thorough examination of how online platforms affect different components of foreign language competence and its identification of conditions required for their successful application in higher education contexts.

In terms of practical implications, the results offer valuable insights for refining teaching methodologies, developing blended and online language courses, and optimizing the use of digital resources in educators' professional practices.

Future research avenues included designing and experimentally validating models for integrating online platforms into language education, exploring the effects of artificial intelligence on developing language proficiency, analyzing the long-term impacts of digital tools on learning outcomes, and investigating individualized learning pathways in digital environments. These findings reinforce the effectiveness and relevance of online platforms in today's higher education system. They pave the way for further advancements in foreign language teaching methodologies amidst ongoing digital transformation in education.

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