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O. V. Shaparenko
Candidate of Philosophical Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Language Training,
European Integration and International Cooperation,
Ukrainian Engineering and Pedagogical Academy
Kharkiv, Ukraine

INCREASING ROLE OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN ACQUIRING NEW AREAS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE CURRENT CONDITIONS

Summary. *The article analyses formation of communicative competence of the second language learners in the new conditions of war. It is proved that the change of the paradigm of human existence alters the essence of communicative competence. The author introduces a new communicative competence – a digital communication competence. A digital communication competence suggests acquiring skills of text messaging, mobile conversation, social networking, communication with chat bots, and media. The work is also aimed at determining the role of distant learning in acquiring communicative competence in the second language. The significant effectiveness of computer-based technologies in distance learning has been proved. It is estimated, that success in developing communicative competence of students through distance learning in Ukraine depends on the level of introduction of a web-based intelligent system with focus on personalized adaptation to students' needs.*

Key words: communicative competence, digital communication competence, media competence, second language, social distancing, distance learning.

Significance of the problem lies in the fact, that though forming communicative competence has already been examined, and the key elements of it were outlined and found their reflection in numerous teaching and learning techniques, humanity had never faced a total isolation before social distancing during COVID-19 pandemic. On the top of that, Ukraine was attacked by Russia, and the outcomes of the hot phase of the aggression are disastrous. The war influenced all spheres of our life, including education. How to teach under the new circumstances is an urgent issue to solve. Consequently, to develop communicative competence is currently challenging and needs more research.

Our first assumption is that the change of the paradigm of human existence should alter the essence of communicative competence.

Our second assumption is that the role of distant learning in acquiring communicative competence in the second language might increase significantly due to the current conditions of the hot phase of war in Ukraine.

The goal of the article is to check our assumptions. **The specific tasks** of the research are determined by the goal and consist of reviewing the traditional areas of communicative competence and identifying new communicative skills that are of demand today; as well as working out the ways of developing communicative competence in the second language in the new conditions of the hot phase of the war in Ukraine. The work is also aimed at determining the role of distant learning in acquiring communicative competence in the second language.

Analysis of the research into this problem. Research in the field of communicative competence is characterized by a variety of studies. Understanding communication as skilled performance was introduced by Hargie O. Such scolars as Aspegren K., LØnberg-Madsen P., Junod Perron N., Sommer J., Louis-Simonet M., Nendaz M. found out the ways of acquiring communication skills. The use of cognitive resources was viewed by Kalyuga S. Communicative adaptability and behavioral flexibility were the subject of the research for Spitzberg and Cupach. Means B., Toyama Y., Murphy R., Baki M. studied the effectiveness of online and blended learning. Distance learning in language teaching was examined by Abaci S., Dennis A. R., Deshler D. D., Kennedy M. J., Lloyd J. W., Morrone A. S., McNamara, K. O., Plaskoff J., and others.

Methodology. Methods of observation, systematization, generalization, comparative analysis, synthesis have been employed.

Presentation of the main material of the study. A key concept of the communicative approach to language teaching is communicative competence. This notion is understood as the learner's ability to understand and to

use language appropriately in order to communicate in authentic (rather than simulated) social and school environments. This approach to teaching provides natural environment for learning rather than repetition and memorization of grammatical patterns in artificially created situation.

Communicative competence is a polysemantic term that does not contain only the structural features of language, but also its social, pragmatic and contextual characteristics. Communicative language teaching suggests developing language proficiency through interactions input in meaningful contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to understand communicative competence as the sum of a series of competences [6]. Jaimes W, N. claims, that there are four areas of communicative competence, they are:

– Grammatical competence (refers to the ability of speakers to use the different functioning rules of the system of their language or the linguistic code: the mastery of second language phonological and lexicogrammatical rules and the rules of sentence formation. It includes: Phonetics: pronunciation; Morphology: word function and inflection; Syntax: structure of language; Lexis: vocabulary and semantics);

– Sociolinguistic competence (refers to the ability of speakers in producing sentences according to the communicative situation). Here, the mastery of socio-cultural rules of appropriate use of second language can be seen from how utterances are produced and understood in different socio linguistic contexts;

– Discourse competence (refers to the ability of speakers to use the different types of discourse). Usually language users know what is being referred to in different contexts, i.e.they distinguish between new and old information, and are able to determine the discourse topics. It also deals with the mastery of rules concerning cohesion and coherence of various kinds of discourse in second language;

– Strategic competence (refers to the knowledge speakers have to maintain communication).Therefore, this competence accounts for the strategies language users have to be understood, and to understand others. Gestures, expressions, mimics andintonation are among others some of the most strategies used. The mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in second language used when attempting to compensate for deficiencies in the grammatical and socio linguistic competence or to enhance the effectiveness of communication [6].

According to some scholars, communicative competence across communicative functions or settings, is «possibly related to communicative adaptability and behavioral flexibility» [12]. It is in human nature to adapt to new circumstances and work out new means of communication.

In our opinion, communication during social distancing is a self-reproducing, constantly changing systematical interaction of people and artificial intelligence in the information field with certain changes of intercultural behaviours (crosscultural changes) of individuals. It is based on post-classical approach, which reduces the nature of the social to the subject-object relations, suggests the principle of intersubjectivity, and excludes objectivity. This approach is traced in the works of N. Luhmann. Society is seen as a network of communications, and communications create an opportunity for the «self-recording» of society and its «self-reproduction» [7]. Communication is seen as «an active, self-organizing environment» [7]. According to Bakke E.A., this environment suggests «mobile communication competence» [2]. Considering constant development of digital instruments, including apps, chat bots, we suggest to introduce the term *digital communication competence*. This kind of competence is based on six factors: willingness to use, mobile preference, asynchronous communication, efficacy, affect, and appropriateness[2]. Electronic environment suggests wide spread of media and its influence on communicative processes. That is why, in our opinion, media competence should be included in the framework of digital communication competence too.

Recognition of digital communication competence encourages further research in forming communicative competence in a purely electronic environment, which refers to acquiring such communicative skills as mobile conversation, text messaging, or social networking, ability to communicate with chat bots, media resources, employing critical thinking. The recent development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) «has further stressed the need for lifelong, personalized, flexible education»[11]. Thus, *Our first assumption, that the change of the paradigm of human existence should alter the essence of communicative competence,* proved to be correct; the content of communicative competence in the process of second language teachings should be enriched by adding digital communication competence which derives from the current reality.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced many Ukrainian schools and universities to transform traditional face-to-face teaching to distance teaching through the use of digital tools, The biggest concern was the second language teaching. «In fact, during the pandemic, communication was «almost entirely based on and restricted by IT connections (social networks, online platforms of educational institutions, shops, mobile applications and services, etc.), with extensive use of regularly updated artificial intelligence products, chatbots»[9].

The new paradigm of human existence caused the implementation of blended learning. «Blended learning" is typically described as the thoughtful combination of online and face-to-face instruction [3]. It should be noted that mixed-mode learning and hybrid learning are two other terms typically used interchangeably with blended learning[8]. In the work devoted purely to blended learning, we came up with the conclusion that «blended education, when properly planned, designed, and supported by the appropriate mix of technology and pedagogy, is equivalent to, or in certain cases more effective than traditional face-to-face classroom instruction» [10]. Online learning tools are often used to create blended learning environments in the classroom. This helps keep students engaged in the class and in the material. The three-year experience of teaching in the conditions of pandemic has proved the effectiveness of blended learning.

During the Russian-Ukrainian hot phase of war, that started in February 24, 2022, the majority of high schools and higher education institutions got involved in purely online learning. Unfortunately, at the moment, for many regions of Ukraine, great number of students cannot have neither traditional, nor blended/online classes, as for many of them the life has changed radically: some of them became refugees, others have no stable internet access, etc. This causes the necessity of rethinking about the potential of distance learning.

Meriam Webster Dictionary defines distance learning as, «a method of study where teachers and students do not meet in a classroom but use the Internet, e-mail, mail, etc., to have classes» [5].

Distance learning is based on the educational tools of online learning, and that is probably the reason why the terms *distance learning* and *online learning* are confused. It is possible to study with online distance learning as well. In that sense, distance learning is a subset of online learning. *University of the people* points out 3 key differences between distant and on-line learning: by location, by interaction and by intention [15].

Actually, distance education was introduced into practice long ago, and due to the technological developments is being constantly improved. It was initially created for students with physical or health restrictions, or for those who lived in remote areas, or those who could not otherwise attend school due to late work hours or raising a family. This provided an equal opportunity for people to access higher education despite restrictions or location.

According to *University of the People,* the types of distance learning are as follows:

1. Online courses, which are usually offered as additional classes in traditional degrees.

2. Hybrid courses, that combine traditional classroom settings with online learning at home.

3. Conference classes, that allow students and teachers to meet up for class in real time, whether in a group or one-on-one with an instructor.

4. Correspondence courses, which consist of students engaging in class material via mail or email. [15].

In the new conditions of war this type of learning might become a way of keeping the students from escaping to foreign universities. The need for alternative instructional models has caused the emerging of many online programmes. However, the pure on-line education appears quite frequently inefficient as these programs «simply are not personalized enough to mitigate high drop-out rates. Left to learn in a vacuum, students tend to drift and do not finish their courses»[14].

Research. To evaluate effectiveness of distance learning we have reviewed 33 scientific works of American scholars devoted to implementation and estimating effectiveness of distance learning practices or products. All the scientific studies were accessed on the website https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/distancelearningstudy. The questions under consideration were:

What is the share of studies which reveal positive effect of distance learning? What causes the effectiveness of distant learning according to the findings?

To answer these questions we employed quantitative analysis. Our thorough examination found out that 28, which makes 84.84% out of 33 scientific works described significant increase of students' competence. Only one research (3.03%) testified to lower student satisfaction, and in turn, performance. The remained 4 works (12.12%) focused rather on comparing the effectiveness of digital tools, than on the effectiveness of distance learning itself. It should also be noted, that the studies also showed that the students engaged in distance learning prefer assignments to discussions.

All 33 (100%) of the studies under analysis tie the success of distant learning with computer-based technologies. The students demonstrated higher or significantly higher results in disciplines, related to linguistics, mathematics, design, etc. due to use of laptop/computer; interacted learning; robot-instructor, games-based learning activities; instructional strategies such as multiple choice, "drag and drop", matching exercises, case discussions, use of online instructional modules and feedbacks, personalized adaptation, inquiry based learning methods coupled with advanced technology [13].

Interpretation of the results obtained. The review of 33 works in the field of distant learning displayed great potential of computer-based technologies. It is needless to say, that the same strategies, methods, techniques and instruments are normally employed in gaining communicative competence in the second language learning. Bearing in mind, that Ukrainian universities use the platform *Moodle* which has all elements of the mentioned above efficient activities, we can judge that the students have all chances to acquire communicative competence, including digital communication competence. The role of a teacher in some cases might be substituted by a smart robot that could provide effective communication.

Considering the results above, we may conclude, that our Assumption 2: *The role of distant learning in acquiring communicative competence in the second language might increase significantly due to the current conditions of the hot phase of war in Ukraine.* – is correct, provided that a web-based intelligent tutoring system is functioning.

If distance learning includes only correspondence courses (mail, e-mail), it is rather doubtful that communicative competence of students will increase. We came up with this conclusion, as 100% of the studies under consideration viewed distance learning in the context of computer-based technologies. None of them mentioned correspondence learning. This raises the necessity to develop mobile apps with smart chat bots carrying various communicative tasks and to apply them to distance learning.

Scientific novelty of the article lies in introducing the term *digital communication competence* as a constituent part of communicative competence in the second language acquisition in current conditions.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. To sum up, the significant changes of the paradigm of human existence influences all aspects of our life, including education. New reality brings new senses to understanding communicative competence. Gaining communicative competence in the second language acquisition in current conditions includes obtaining grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and digital communication skills. The latter suggests acquiring such skills as mobile conversation, text messaging, social networking, communication with chat bots, and media.

The role of distance learning in acquiring communicative competence in the second language is increasing dramatically due to the lack of access to traditional tools of teaching. The effectiveness of the distance learning has been proved by numerous findings. These findings may encourage wider implementation of distant learning tools in higher education in Ukraine even in more favorable conditions without war or pandemic restrictions.

The success in developing communicative competence of students through distance learning in Ukraine depends on the level of introduction of a web-based intelligent system in the second language learning. It should include interacted learning; robot-instructor, games-based learning activities; instructional strategies such as multiple choice; "drag and drop"; matching exercises; case discussions; use of online instructional modules and feedbacks; personalized adaptation; inquiry based learning methods combined with advanced technology. In our opinion, a further area of research should be aimed at developing techniques that provide personalized adaptation to the distance learners' needs.

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О. В. Шапаренко. Зростання ролі дистанційного навчання у набутті нових напрямків комунікативної компетентності в сучасних умовах. – Стаття.

Анотація. У статті аналізується формування комунікативної компетенції тих, хто вивчає другу мову в нових умовах війни. Доведено, що зміна парадигми людського існування змінює сутність комунікативної компетентності. Автор вводить нову комунікативну компетенцію – компетенцію цифрового спілкування. Компетенція цифрового спілкування передбачає набуття навичок обміну текстовими повідомленнями, мобільних розмов, соціальних мереж, спілкування з чат-ботами та медіа. Робота також спрямована на визначення ролі дистанційного навчання у набутті комунікативної компетенції з другої мови. Доведено значну ефективність комп'ютерних технологій у дистанційному навчанні. Встановлено, що успіх у розвитку комунікативної компетентності студентів шляхом дистанційного навчання в Україні залежить від рівня впровадження веб-інтелектуальної системи з орієнтацією на персоналізовану адаптацію до потреб студентів.

Ключові слова: комунікативна компетентність, компетенція цифрового спілкування, медіакомпетентність, друга мова, соціальне дистанціювання, дистанційне навчання.

Е. В. Шапаренко. Возрастание роли дистанционного обучения в приобретении новых областей коммуникативной компетенции в современных условиях. – Статья.

Аннотация. В статье анализируется формирование коммуникативной компетенции изучающих второй язык в условиях войны. Доказано, что смена парадигмы человеческого существования меняет сущность коммуникативной компетенции. Автор вводит новую коммуникативную компетенцию – цифровую коммуникативную компетенцию. Компетенция цифровой коммуникации предполагает приобретение навыков обмена текстовыми сообщениями, мобильного общения, социальных сетей, общения с чат-ботами и средствами массовой информации. Работа также направлена на определение роли дистанционного обучения в приобретении коммуникативной компетенции на втором языке. Доказана значительная эффективность компьютерных технологий в дистанционном обучении. Установлено, что успех в развитии коммуникативной компетентности студентов посредством дистанционного обучения в Украине зависит от уровня внедрения интеллектуальной системы на базе Интернета с акцентом на персонифицированную адаптацию к потребностям студентов.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативная компетентность, цифровая коммуникативная компетентность, медиакомпетентность, второй язык, социальное дистанцирование, дистанционное обучение.