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## **ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMPLETE GLOBAL TRANSITION TO LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES ONLINE IN THE NEAR FUTURE**

***Summary.** Через спалах COVID-19 люди всього світу були змушені перейти на здобування освіти дистанційно. У період глобальних соціальних криз та конфронтацій, медіаграмотність виявилася надзвичайно важливим фактором для нормального перебігу соціальних подій. У цій статті розглядається можливість повного глобального переходу на дистанційне навчання у сфері вивчення іноземних мов.*

***Ключові слова:** дистанційне навчання, освіта в умовах пандемії, вивчення іноземних мов.*

Due to the coronavirus disease outbreak the whole world had come upon a challenging problem in organization of studying at home. The transition from offline learning to e-learning had to be made rapidly, so the quality of organization was not considered as important and was put on the second place. Over time, after more than a year since the beginning of the pandemic, both the teachers and students have developed the best strategies for the setting up of online education.

As always, such a ubiquitous and lifestyle-changing event as the global pandemic has made a lot of changes in all areas of our everyday life. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak we have as well received an opportunity to try out the online education. In the time of global social crises and confrontations, digital media literacy has turned out to be of critical importance for the normal course of social events and their interpretations.

After a year of studying online, participants of the educational process seem to have recognized most of the opportunities and obstacles of studying at home. However, it is still uncertain whether it is better to get education online or at classes in person and discussions on that topic still continue. The most daring option would be transforming the whole education system to online. Theoretically, it is possible because of the fast growth and evolution of information and communication technologies and a wide spread of high-speed Internet access. But it is a rather utopia to think that

establishing online schooling globally is an easy task, because there are lots of problems with online education that yet have to be solved.

Let us start by reviewing the obvious advantages of studying online. These would noticeably vary depending on the form and subject of studying, but they would correlate in general. The most evident one is that a person is able to study wherever they want when they are online. This means not only that the students will not have to leave their houses and go somewhere to get education, but also that they may choose the place where they would like to study more freely. For this reason, they and their parents or fiduciaries would not have to worry about spending a lot of money on the trip and a dormitory or a flat abroad, as well as some students will not be experiencing panic when moving to a different country, especially when it is far away. Considering the fact that the lectures might be recorded by university staff and played on the student's device anytime, this also brings an opportunity to students to be freer to choose how they plan to spend their time.

The next advantage is that there are potentially more opportunities for the individual and their personal educational vector. For example, messengers and email have made it easy to communicate and allowed people from all over the world to gather by interests and deliver and exchange information quickly. This is a good benefit for the learners of foreign languages, because they can quickly find native speakers of their age or which they would share common interests with.

There are plenty of mobile phone applications or websites that help students to learn English and other languages from their homes. The courses provided there should ideally be compiled by qualified teaching staff together with linguists and would allow students to get necessary skills without putting a lot of the effort. These online services differ by the type of content they provide, but most popular ones promise to let students get good level of knowing foreign languages.

Despite those massive pros of studying online, as stated before, there is still a lot of caveats and problems of online education, and even if they are not as significant, they can still affect the quality of the education when implemented worldwide.

First of all, it is important to keep in mind that online education still requires physical hardware to operate. It is not a huge problem to get such hardware in developed countries, but it might be an issue in poorer states, where computers or smartphones that are capable of video streaming as well as high-speed Internet access are not accessible to everyone just yet.

According to the research made by DataReportal [1], 40.5% of the world population do not use Internet on their daily basis – that is roughly 3.17 billion people who do not have a regular access to the worldwide web or choose not to use it. The number of active Internet users has increased by 7.3% (which is roughly 316 million people) in a year, according to the study, and there is definitely a positive dynamic in the amount of global Internet users, but it is still too early to talk about the global Internet coverage.

According to a study carried out in Bulgaria, which combined materials and data that have been analyzed related to the period of the lockdown between March 2020 and December 2020 and has had a focus on access to equipment for distance learning [2], in 86% of schools, all teachers had a suitable device at home. In the remaining 14% of schools, between 1% and 16% of teachers did not have an access to a proper electronic device at home. 68% of the schools took measures for additional resource provision of the teaching process by providing electronic equipment for personal use by the teachers, while more than 80% of urban schools have provided teachers with additional equipment, only 49% of rural schools have provided their teachers with electronic devices for personal use. At the same time, the data show that the share of teachers in villages who do not have their own computer (or other electronic device) is higher than that of teachers without devices in cities.

Another huge problem is satisfaction of students and teaching staff. Assessments of students in Spain on the impact of COVID-19 on the virtual learning environment [3] have shown that many educational institutions in spite of developing specific digital strategies as a reaction to the massive change towards the use of new technologies, lack the vision, capacity or commitment to implement them effectively. The study has

shown that students are rather very unsatisfied with the following functions and tutoring tasks of the teaching staff in their e-learning: regarding assistance and support – helping to go deeper with learning, giving advice and stimulating the students, doing both individual and group follow-up; regarding organization and planning – the tasks were not reasonably adapted to the time of completion and delivery, the additional materials were not organized properly, tasks were not evaluated qualitatively, timing turned out to be not adequate and not adapted to the length of time the semester lasts; with regard to monitoring and control – the interviewee answered they lacked individual monitoring.

We should also note that not all parts of the society and teaching staff were capable to quickly adapt to modern technologies in the conditions of pandemic. Some people might not just be ready to use such devices or they might lack some digital skills to use such technologies properly and effectively. This particularly implies to older people – who mostly have big scientific and research experience and often work as teaching personnel at schools and universities.

Considering those facts, we might come to conclusion that, despite the worldwide web could help us getting basic skills in learning foreign languages by easily connecting people all around the globe and simplifying the communication between them, learning languages professionally might not be as effective and easy as offline learning, unless the devices and technologies used effectively and are easily accessible to everyone regardless of country of residence, social status, personal disabilities or age.

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