DISTANCE LEARNING IN HIGH SCHOOL:
ICT TOOLS FOR TEACHING SPEAKING ONLINE

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Abstract. The paper gives an insight into main features of online platform for distance EFL (English as a foreign language) learning. The strategies for applying breakout rooms, chat box, interactive whiteboard, tick icon, share screen are given in the study.

Distance learning is becoming more and more popular lately. The evolution of large-scale distance language education from print-based correspondence courses came first with educational radio and broadcast television, then audio and videocassettes, and most recently computers with computer-mediated communication (CMC), interactive multimedia and Web-based video, audio, and multimedia [4].

Distance learning is growing rapidly with the development of the Web and its information and communication technology and tools. E-learning or distance learning is considered to be one the innovation strategies in the system of High Education. Besides, it is a good alternative to part-time study. This is explained primarily by benefits of distance learning such as: flexibility (a student choses where and when to study), colocation (the ability to combine study time with work), large audience (distance learning makes it possible to have face-to-face online classes both with one student and a group of students), cost-effectiveness (all the economic benefits the university has with the implementation of distance learning should reduce the tuition fees). Unfortunately, the concepts, trends, applications of e-learning platforms haven't been studied full-scale, at least in Ukraine. The attempts have been made to adopt up-to-date technology in university classroom such as using the potential of on-line courses, mass media platforms, "mall" (mobile assisted language learning) tools, the latest and most popular one is podcasts [1]. Such characteristics of podcasts as authenticity, multi functionality, ability to motivate, flexibility and quick absorbing of information make it a very perspective teaching strategy [1]. University teachers participate webinars and on-line seminars to improve their competency. Teachers and lecturers of Ukrainian universities can benefit from attending webinars. Flexibility, interactivity, cost-effectiveness, long-time value made online workshops number one training in the world [2]. However, a lot has to be done to manage distance learning programs according to the world best practices.

Foreign language teachers, to our mind, are more familiar with the procedure of online teaching, because they were the pioneers in live lessons via Zoom. But we should take into consideration that teaching and planning group lessons is often more challenging than planning a one-to-one lesson. This may mean using a set of platform features that will make distance learning successful [3]. So, our focus is on effective using the platform features such as: breakout rooms, chat box, interactive whiteboard, tick icon, share screen to ensure all learners in the group have the opportunity to develop their speaking skills.

Breakout rooms in Zoom platform make it possible to split a group of part-time students into smaller groups. We used breakout rooms to "break the ice" at the beginning of the lesson: sharing the information about themselves in the groups», making the tasks according to the student's level (it helps to provide the low-level students with more attention), pair work and role plays. Chat box in Zoom can be recommended in EFL learning to elicit useful phrases for the speaking task; to set a listening task for students (type in phrases they hear) when half the class are performing the second speaking task (role play), to elicit corrections to errors. It is also possible to create an audio vocabulary. With the help of interactive whiteboard the students can get pre-made-information and new vocabulary, complete useful phrases used in the speaking tasks; to introduce new phrases. Tick icon is very important for the instructor, because it shows when they've finished reading the task to move on. If we click "share screen" wan show our students the entire screen with spreadsheets, the useful words and expressions, presentations and images.

Using technology to deliver instructions in any educational institution became commonplace. The traditional distance learning is being transformed nowadays. Soon we'll deal with fully online format that will include live group sessions as well. That is why it is of vital importance to adopt the best pedagogical practices in the sphere of distance learning and integrate the distance platform tools in university online classroom.

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