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## **ANALYSIS OF THE FEATURES AND DIFFICULTIES OF USING EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

**Abstract.** In the modern world, the use and improvement of digital educational technologies is of particular importance, improving the modern education system. This article is devoted to the use of digital educational platforms in online foreign language teaching.

The use of modern educational technologies at the university in the learning process creates new possibilities for implementation, effective interaction between the teacher and the student during the development of distance or blended learning, positively affects the development of cognitive activity of students, on their creative activity, on awareness.

The key method is a questionnaire survey conducted among bachelor degree students of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) and the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University (QyzPU) and . The questionnaire is based on 4 criteria: students' experience in using educational platforms at foreign language classes, platform features and capabilities, the attitude of students to the further use of platforms in online education, language skills' development.

**Keywords:** educational platforms, distance learning, language skills, combined education, traditional learning.

**Introduction.** Over the past decade, online education has been actively developing. From the beginning of the pandemic of Covid-19 to the present day, online learning has become the main way of learning, or an integral part of blended learning. It is widely believed that online learning has many advantages. Distance learning allows students and teachers not to be tied to a place and time.

Over the past decade, online education has been actively developing. From the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic to the present day, online learning has become the primary learning modality or integral part of blended learning. It is widely believed that online learning has many benefits. Distance learning means that students and teachers are not tied to place and time.

There is an opinion that technologies are important and useful, but do not provide the necessary learning outcomes for students. Conversely, others the scholarstake into account that certain technologies are actually useful for students to make progress as they create simulations, demonstrating realistic models in the classroom. Despite the fact that the opinions of researchers differ, the main conclusion is that the effectiveness of online learning is not in the isolated use of technology, but in creating an environmentally friendly learning atmosphere by combining technology and educational methods (F. Sametova, Zh. Kiyнова, G. Orynkanova; 2022) [1].

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researchers consider that certain technologies are useful for students to progress when creating simulations and demonstrating realistic models in the classroom. Although the opinions of researchers differ, the main conclusion is that the effectiveness of online learning does not lie in the isolated use of technology, but in the creation of an environmentally friendly learning atmosphere through the combination of technology and pedagogical methods.

It should be borne in mind that the progress of students directly depends not only on the competence of the teacher, but also on the correctly chosen methodology, appropriate material, and ongoing activities. The result, which the students receive directly, depends on the plan, strategy, the number of students and methods of assessing the knowledge gained. It follows that the introduction and conduct of distance education includes knowledge and practice of pedagogy, psychology and sociology, technology, economics and business (Sametova F.T., Onalbaeva A.T., Omarkhanova; 2021) [2].

In this context, we will analyze the possibilities of introducing such information technologies as educational online platforms; highlight the most effective methods and strategies for their use in distance and blended learning.

**Methods and material.** Students need a flexible online environment to achieve a certain result; the creation of such an environment is a long and complex process, including careful planning and constant monitoring. The article will discuss the possibilities of the educational platforms and the results of their implementation in the process of teaching a foreign language at the university. The methodology is based on a questionnaire survey, which was conducted among the second and third-year students, who have been studying English as a foreign language.

In compiling the survey, we relied on previous studies by Alqahtani, Bhaskar, Elumalai, Abumelha (2018) [3] and B. Klimova (2021) [4].

The questionnaire involves 14 questions. The 13 multiple choice questions and 1 open question, were divided into four categories, i.e. students' experience in using educational platforms at FL classes, platform features and capabilities, the attitude of students to the further use of platforms in online education, language skills' development (consult Table 1 below). Before students were asked to fill the questionnaire, they had been explained with the aim of the research. The survey was anonymous. The quantitative method was used in processing the respondents' responses as well as qualitative method while analyzing the course of questionnaire and its respondents given responses.

Table 1. An overview of the measurement scales

1	Age	
2	Nationality	
3	University	
4	Year	
5	Students' experience in using educational platforms at FL classes	Which of the following online educational platforms are you familiar with?
		What platforms do you use at your university now?
		Were educational platforms used before the COVID-19 pandemic by you?
6	Platform features and capabilities	Have you figured out the interface and all capabilities of the platform?
		Was any assistance provided by university on the usage of educational platforms?
		What difficulties did you face when you were using educational platforms?
		What new functions of platforms would you like to add? Right down, please.
7	The attitude of students to the further use of platforms in online education	Which of the following do you consider to be the disadvantages of online learning? You may choose more than one option
		Which of the followings do you have online now?
		Which of the followings do you want to have online?
		In your opinion, do the educational platforms help to develop a more positive attitude towards English as a second language?
8	Language skills' development	Have your language skills improved with the use of educational platforms?
		In your opinion, what is the best skill to develop with the help of educational platform?
		In your opinion, what skill is inconvenient to develop with the help of educational platforms?

Traditional education cannot always satisfy modern demands from employers in terms of training potential employees.

The blended learning models that combine the best of traditional learning with the capabilities of modern information technologies allows us to find answers to the questions that the participants of the educational process are facing today (Khodjikulova Sh., Rasulova M., Khatamova G., 2020) [5].

The COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed and transformed the traditional educational setting in over 60 countries all around the world (Wynng, 2020) [6]. Both teaching and learning have been transformed to online settings at

all educational levels. Starting from March 2020, distance learning has been introduced in all educational institutions of Kazakhstan. In general, the distance learning format was planned to be carried out in accordance with several directions: television lessons, Internet platforms, as well as in the format of transferring assignments through Kazpochta or by hand on paper.

The modern concept of "educational platform" integrates a wide range of very different possibilities. This concept owes its name to the fact that a wide variety of software products, systems and complexes are "installed" on the educational platform. Researchers Van Dijck and Poell(2018) [7] describe the concept of an educational platform the following: "An online "platform" is a programmable digital architecture designed to organize interactions between users – not just end users but also corporate entities and public bodies. It is geared toward the systematic collection, algorithmic processing, circulation, and monetization of user data".

Since the introduction of distance learning during the pandemic, the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan has published a list of recommended educational platforms for educational institutions of all levels, among them for schools: "Kundelik.kz", "Bilimland", "Daryn.online", "Opiq", "Itest", "STEM Academy", "iMektep", "NIS Play"; for colleges and universities: "MOODLE", "Univer", "Platonus", "Canvas", "QAZAQSTAN TARIHY", "All elementary mathematics", "Blended learning". In addition, for all institutions: "Google Classroom", "Coursera", "Khan Academy".

In addition there were used many other platforms which main purpose was not educational, however they were recommended by school and universities staff. The main ones were Whats'App, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams [8].

The leaders among the implemented domestic platforms were "Kundelik.kz" and "Bilimland". The "Bilimland" was installed into 7032 educational institutions of the country and "Kundelik.kz" was installed into 3020 schools. Both of them are free for teachers, students and parents. More than 40 gymnasiums and lyceums have used the Daryn.online since 2011 [9].

Currently many Kazakhstani schools practice the combined education i.e. some gymnasiums and lyceums conduct 5 weekdays offline and 1 day (Saturday) online classes, in the northern regions e-classes began to be conducted due to bad weather conditions. In the period of sharp increase in the incidence of Covid-19, lessons switched back to online mode. Some colleges and universities practice the following scheme: practical classes are offline and lectures with more than twelve students are held online. Therefore, we can conclude that educational platforms play a significant role in arranging online classes and control students' learning progress.

In recent years, with the popularization of online education, more and more online education platforms have emerged one after another. Meanwhile, higher requirements have been put forward for the teaching/learning outcomes and technical standard that the platforms need to achieve. Therefore, more consideration should be given to the technical and interactive features of online education when evaluating these platforms and courses. (Chen, Peng, Jing, Wu, Yang, Cong; 2020).

**Results and discussion.** 33 students took part in the questionnaire survey. Their age range from 18 to 22 years old.

As for the nationality 97% were Kazakh, 3% were Uygur. 18respondets were the students of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 18 respondents were the students of Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University.

In the first block of our survey, we examine students about their experience with online platforms for educational purposes. Below, we describe the results of the first block of research questions. Figure 1 below illustrates the usage of each platform. The findings indicate that 90% of respondents used Zoom for online classes; more than 70% used WhatsApp previously, despite these two platforms do not considered as educational by their creators. Moreover, Zoom was more being used earlier for the corporate environment, while WhatApp was created for communications between people from contact lists. 51,5% of students practiced telegram for their learning, Telegram is usually used for exchanging materials among students and many of youth prefer Telegram to WhatsApp in sending high volume material (Fig.1).

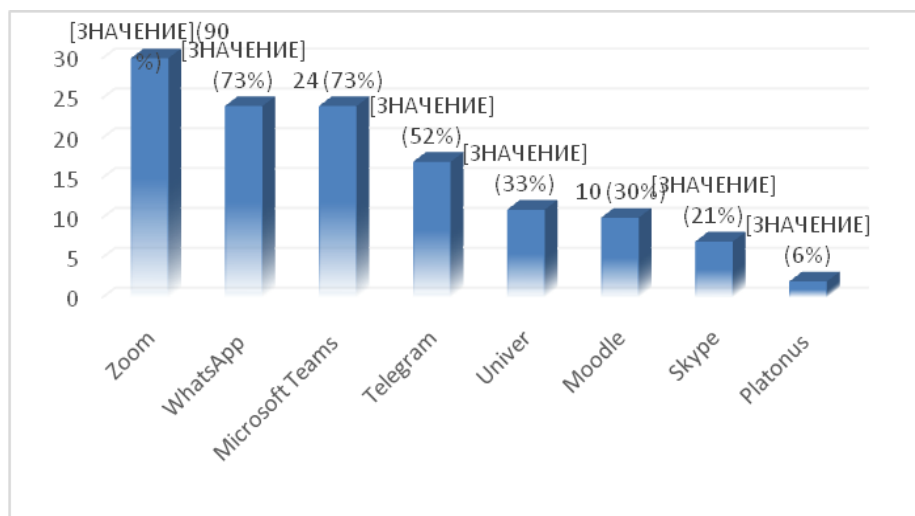


Fig.1. The experience of e-learning with the usage of educational platforms

Among the platforms that students use at the moment, Univer is the leader, it is used by more than 50% respondents, the second most popular platform is Microsoft Teams, it is used by 48% of respondents. It is noteworthy that the analogue of the Univer platform, the Moodle platform that was introduced in Kazakhstani higher education institutions, is used by only 24% of the students surveyed. Along with Microsoft Teams, students also use the Zoom platform for online conferences, but a little less only 36.4%.

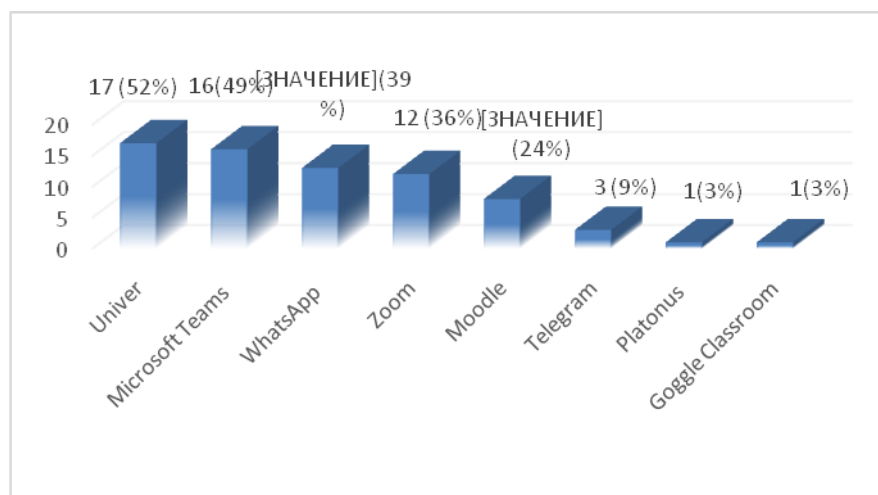


Fig.2.The usage of educational platforms

54,5% of students surveyed used online educational platforms before the Covid-19 pandemic, 36,4% of respondents did not use them in educational purposes. At some higher educational institutions the part-time students have online classes and 12,1% of respondents claiming that these students were the only ones using online learning platforms at their university. Only 3% of the respondents marked the students who are receiving second high education, with the same percentage respondents claim that in their University only students who are on internship abroad were using them.

However, 6% of respondents state that the students who study by Academic Mobility were practicing the classes with the use of educational platforms.

In the second block of questions, we tried to reflect the ability of students to use platforms productively on foreign language lessons and what difficulties they might have faced.

As for abilities of the platforms, 36,4% figured out the interface and all capabilities of the platform, most of the students 48,5% encountered problems in the beginning of using online platforms, 12% figured out only some of their functions and capabilities and only 3% never figure out the interface and all capabilities of the platform.

Students also indicated problems that arose during the online learning process. The majority of respondents (36,4%) point the problems with uploading materials (audio, documents) into the platform. No less important problems are poor video quality and failures in the operation of the platform itself, 30% of the students surveyed face each of these problems. More than half of the respondents (51%) note that they were provided with instructions from teachers on how to use the platforms and the 42% point that only partially got the help with it. 6% of the respondents had to independently study the properties and interface of the platform. One of the questions was open; unfortunately, only 36% of the 100% answers can be discussed as the remaining answers do not match the question. The question concerns the topic of students' desire to change something in the platforms that they currently use, any new features or functions. Thus 38% of the relevant answers indicate that they are completely satisfied with the existing functionality of the platform and are not willing to add anything. The other options were proposed: the ability to log in and do everything through the phone, good video quality,

maybe some games, the Kahoot, Webex, Mirror video, Tiktok, studying by book face to face.

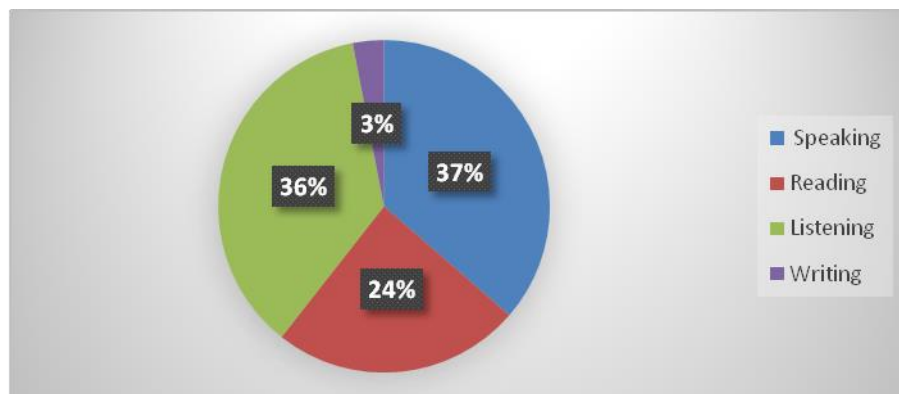


Fig.3. The skill developed the most

For 9.1% of respondents, all classes and assignments are held exclusively offline. For 9.1% of respondents, all classes are held exclusively offline. For more than half of the respondents, 51%, the student's individual work is done online. It is worth noting that 27% of respondents experience the online final exam. Seminars and practical classes are held online for 15% of the students surveyed. The respondents also prove the use of combined learning when lectures are held online and seminars and practical classes are offline. 9% percent of respondents each have an online exam and an individual student work with a teacher's instruction.

Discussing the wishes of students regarding online classes, we note that 69% of respondents expressed a desire to take the final exam online. 51% of students desire to have lectures online. The desire of students to continue to have online classes proves the need for further development of the online platforms' functionality, as well as the necessary methodology, including the constant use of online educational platforms.

Considering the obstacles and difficulties that students encountered during online learning, the most common problem are constant Internet interruptions. Weak self-motivation and lack of social interaction were chosen by 30% of the respondents. 36% noted Lack of classroom atmosphere and noises coming from rommates or family members, 24% - the lack of computer skills, 9% pointed the lack of computer skills. Moreover, one student out of all did not encounter any problems. As for the improvement of the skills described above, majority of students (60%) stated that they improved their language skills. The other 20% partially improved their knowledge. The rest 20% fell that they could not develop their skills during the e-learning. According the responses 35% of respondents could develop their listening skills the most (Fig.3), which makes it convenient to practice online. In the contrary, they found it difficult to practice speaking skills online (Fig 4). At the same time 30% of respondents answered that, they developed speaking skills the most.

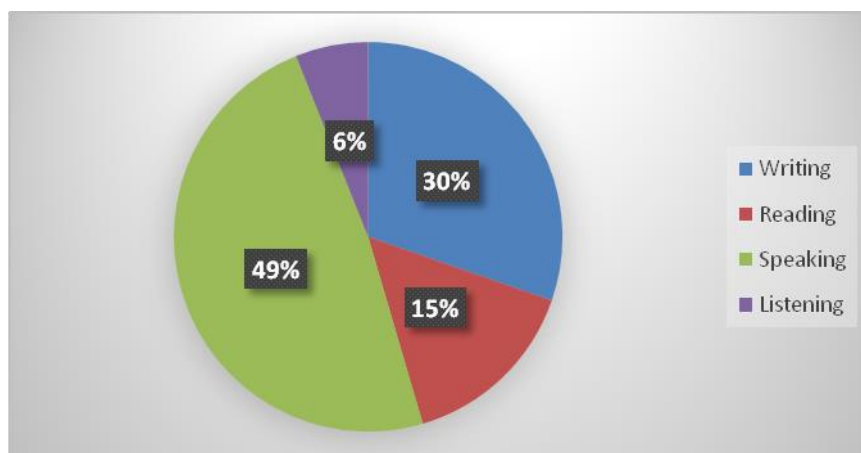


Fig 4. The skill developed the least

As for the improvement of the skills described above, majority of students (48%) stated that they improved their language skills. The other 21% partially improved their knowledge. The rest 21% felt that they could not develop their skills during the e-learning.

According the responses 36% of respondents could develop their listening and speaking skills the most (Fig. 3), which makes it convenient to practice online. In the contrary, 48% found it difficult to practice speaking skills online (Fig 4). At the same time 24% of respondents answered that, they developed reading skills the most.

75% of students, the use of educational platforms in foreign language lessons develops a positive attitude towards the language being studied, while 25% do not conceive this phenomenon in themselves.

Thus, according to the results of the survey, it can be noted that such a skill as speaking is difficult to learn through educational platforms, which is contradictory since the majority of students also claim that it was speaking that was developed the most through the educational platforms. All this says only that the use of platforms in foreign language lessons is in demand. For example, the skill of listening, this skill is noted by most students after speaking to be developed the most, and this is quite justified, since the features of educational platforms are convenient for listening records and watching the videos.

**Conclusion.** The online learning is a new form of educational process in Kazakhstan. Many Universities consider distance learning and teaching as a long-time approach. Educational platforms can be considered as one of the main tools in distance learning and the majority of the mentioned platforms are free of access. The findings reveal that more than 50% of respondents found the usage the educational platforms as effective as the face-to-face classes. However, not all the respondents are satisfied with the distance learning. They faced difficulties concerning the appliance of educational platforms, therefore we think that not only clear instructions should be provided for current educational platform, but intensive training on how to use this or that platform should be given. Some respondents also experienced the lack of traditional training especially when it comes to effective communication. In any case, communication between a student and a teacher is vital for healthy learning atmosphere and the image of a teacher in educational platform dialog window cannot replace the real life interaction and feedback.



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**ШЕТ ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДА БІЛІМ БЕРУ ПЛАТФОРМАЛАРЫН ҚОЛДАНУДЫҢ  
ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ МЕН ҚИЫНДЫҚТАРЫН ТАЛДАУ**

**Аңдатпа.** Заманауи әлемде, қазіргі білім беру жүйесін жетілдіретін цифрлық білім беру технологияларын пайдалану және жетілдіру ерекше маңызға ие. ЖОО-да заманауи білім беру технологияларын оқу процесінде пайдалану қашықтықтан немесе аралас оқытуды жүргізуде оқытушы мен студенттің өзара тиімді әрекеттесуіне жаңа мүмкіндіктер туғызады, студенттердің танымдық белсенділігін, олардың шығармашылық белсенділігімен сана-сезімін дамытуға оң әсер етеді. Бұл мақалада сандық білім беру платформаларын онлайн шетел тілі сабақтарында пайдалану қарастырылады. Негізгі әдіс – Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ Ұлттық Университет және Қазақ Ұлттық Қыздар Педагогикалық Университеттердің (QuzPU) бакалавриат студенттері арасында жүргізілген сауалнама. Сауалнама 4 критерийге негізделген: студенттердің шет тілі сабақтарында білім беру платформаларын пайдалану тәжірибесі, платформаның мүмкіндіктері, студенттердің онлайн білім беруде платформаларды одан әрі пайдалануға көзқарасы, тіл дағдыларын дамыту.

**Тірек сөздер:** білім беру платформалары, қашықтықтан оқыту, тілдік дағдылар, аралас білім беру, дәстүрлі оқыту процесі.

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**АНАЛИЗ ОСОБЕННОСТЕЙ И ТРУДНОСТЕЙ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ ПЛАТФОРМ ПРИ ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА**

**Аннотация.** В современном мире, особую значимость приобретает применение и усовершенствование цифровых образовательных технологий, которые улучшают современную систему образования. Использование современных образовательных технологий в вузе в процессе обучения создает новые возможности для реализации эффективного взаимодействия преподавателя и ученика при проведении дистанционного или комбинированного образования, положительно влияют на развитие познавательной активности учащихся, их творческую активность и сознательность. Данная статья рассматривает применение цифровых образовательных платформ на онлайн уроках иностранного языка. Ключевым методом выступает анкетный опрос, проведенный среди студентов бакалавриата Казахского Национального университета имени Аль-Фараби (KazNU) и Казахского Национального женского педагогического университета (QyzPU). Опрос основан на 4 критериях: опыт использования обучающимися образовательных платформ на занятиях по иностранному языку, особенности и возможности платформ, отношение обучающихся к дальнейшему использованию платформ в онлайн-образовании, развитие языковых навыков.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательные платформы, дистанционное обучение, языковые навыки, комбинированное образование, традиционный учебный процесс.