



The Motivation as a Way of Students' Involvement in the Distance Learning of Foreign Languages

Olga Khaleeva¹, Alena Kuvaeva², Irina Leshutina³, Yulia Naumenko⁴,
Liliia Vokhmina⁵

Pushkin State Russian Language Institute, Russia^{1,2,3,4,5}

Abstract

The paper is devoted to the problem of maintaining the motivation and the involvement of both students and teachers in the educational process within the distance learning. The consideration of the peculiarities of students' motivation is to help the teacher to develop effective ways to maintain, improve it and it keeps the high number of students engaged in the distance learning of foreign languages. There are four main components of the motivation (the classical model of the motivation by J. Keller): the attention, the significance, the confidence, the satisfaction. And this model can be combined with the teaching language methods and used within the distance learning. It must be the base for teachers in the process of the creation and maintenance of the motivation in the distance learning of foreign languages. And the success is guaranteed by students' emotional involvement in the learning process. So the set of creative online and offline tasks aimed at the team building in order to unite the distance learning group should be the important part of the distance learning of foreign languages.

Keywords: *motivation, distance learning, foreign languages, engaged students*

In 2020 the distance format of life has absorbed all of us without exception. We have plunged into the depths of numerous language courses, webinars, websites, online platforms, etc. The range of offered types of distance learning has also expanded: from individual classes to seminars and lectures that virtually simulate visual classroom communication. In this situation there are some questions which are actual: is it possible to learn a foreign language without the direct contact with the teacher, without the classic "dialogue pair", without interaction with other students? In which way can we build the effective cooperation "teacher – student/students"? Is the success of such distance training guaranteed? And what motivation must be in such distance learning of foreign languages? All these questions are of great concern to teachers and students who are already responding to the challenges of modernity in the process of teaching / learning foreign languages.

For the first time some foreign researchers (J. Keller (1987), T. Gao, J. Lehman (2003), B. Tuckman (2007), J. Visser, T. Plomp (2002), Ch. Schlosser (2008) and others) spoke about the motivation in the distance learning in the late XX – early XXI centuries [1, 9]. In Russia at the same time such reserchers as G. Sharaborova, A. Mikhailov (2009), I. Arefieva, T. Lazarev (2011) and others thought about the issues of the motivating students in the distance learning [1, 9]. Even A.N. Leontiev long before the era of digitalization said that motives are "the engine of activity" [6, 10]. The motives for language acquisition are the main sources of energy in the educational process. If it is interesting, the memory will work better, the attention and the productivity will increase. And students are engaged into the educational process by all these factors.

Within the distance learning the peculiarities of students' motivation should be taken into the consideration by a teacher. And this can help him to develop effective measures of maintaining and increasing the level of the motivation.

Serious risks of online learning in this case can be presented by both possible technical difficulties and a large amount of material prepared by a teacher for classes, as well as a significant percentage of the necessary independent work of students.

At the beginning of the training the motivation is high. There is enough energy and desire to learn a foreign language. And at the start of the training such energy is usually enough, as the motivation has always been and remains the main mover in achieving goals, including educational ones. And what happens then? The answer is obvious: then the level of the motivation is decreasing. If it is not supported, it can fall to zero. Therefore, the significant element of the motivation is its orientation. If there is a goal, the motivation is ordered and directed to it. The main goal in the language learning is



to speak this language, to fulfill the communication needs. In this sense such basic categories of the methodology as the principles of teaching a foreign language [2] do not lose their relevance. The strict adherence to these principles will help a teacher to implement the fundamental one: the principle of communication, the postulation of which provides a practical orientation of learning and hence the orientation of the motivation.

There are four main components of the motivation, the classical model of the motivation by J. Keller: the attention, the significance, the confidence, the satisfaction. In the opinion of the scientist, each component can be influenced, thus the effective motivation system can be created. And to our mind this model can be combined with the teaching language methods and used within the distance learning.

The first way of the motivation increasing is to attract the attention of students to the distance course and online-classes. The teacher must capture the initial attention of students and keep it throughout the course. If the first task is easily fulfilled, the second one is not so simple. A variety of content types can save students from the boredom and the effect of "falling asleep" and "turning off" during an online lesson. So hyperlinked presentations, audio, video, flash animations, interactive games must be used. Infographics, created or taken from the internet, can offer students the set of tasks. And the teacher can use the whole infographics or some parts of it: every part gives a kind of tasks. For example, it can be: restoring some logical sequence; connecting an image with the corresponding definition, explanation; restoring some missing information; schematic representation of the listened information; connecting the listened information and given images; transforming the received information into messages, reports, notes for a web page, etc. [3].

The component "attention" can be kept also through the changing of kinds of activities in the virtual learning environment, the variability of tasks within each module, the personal experience of students, the use of problem-solved pedagogical technologies (flipped class, interactive Mind-map, debates, cases) which stimulates the participation in online dialogues, discussions.

Did the teacher manage to catch students' attention? If yes, it is great! However, the motivation may decrease if the content of the lesson does not have a practical way out for students through a system of some training exercises / tasks / tests and, further, into communication. The teacher's influence on the "significance" component means helping to understand the specific benefits of learning for each student personally, determining the significance of the learning for his personal growth. In our opinion, the use of the "Language portfolio" technology is necessary and effective in this case, and the "What can I say already" section is the main element of it. By filling in this section, students can think about, realize and describe their achievements at this stage of learning a foreign language, can see / verbalize the results of their classes, determine where and how they can apply the acquired knowledge, skills, qualities and methods of action in their professional or other activities.

It is important that from the very beginning students have the sense of self-confidence and in their personal success. And this confidence should be strengthened by a teacher, who should emphasize in every possible way students' ability to cope with the educational material and achieve intermediate goals. Supporting students' self-confidence is the third way to increase the motivation. Have you explained the material? Excellent. Now every student should have an opportunity to get some intermediate result, to give a good answer, to do an exercise / task / test, to solve a case-task. During the distance learning the component "confidence" can be influenced by the definition of the deadlines for completing tasks, the organized structure of the training course, the provided information about the quality of completed homework.

Even if the first three factors of maintaining the motivation were successfully implemented in practice, students' motivation will inevitably fall towards the end of the course. This is indicated by accumulated fatigue, a large amount of new information. Therefore, the "satisfaction" component also needs some constant "feeding" from a teacher who gives these distance classes. It is important to pay special attention to the results of work, which generates the satisfaction. This can be done by various means: marks, points, oral comments.

And here again the reflection is necessary. First of all the compliance of learning outcomes with students' expectations must be. They may be happy with their results; they may feel proud that they chose this particular foreign language to study and "went all the way". The satisfaction with learning outcomes is also promoted by the actions of the teacher who supported students throughout the learning process and helped them to achieve success.

While learning a foreign language, students should understand the stages of learning (from the initial stage to advanced) and the levels of a foreign language (elementary, basic, etc.). The achieving a



certain level is encouraged in any form, which also increases the motivation. The successful completion of studying should be highlighted. It can be congratulations on the computer screen/gadget, some music in honor of the finalist. If there was a whole group of students, the teacher can praise and congratulate students in front of everyone at one of the last online classes.

The path from the goal to the learning outcomes is a consistent upward movement, the steps to the success in the process of learning a foreign language. And the success is guaranteed by students' emotional involvement in the learning process. During the distance learning students can hardly establish themselves emotional and psychological contacts with each other and the teacher. The set of creative online and offline tasks aimed at the team building in order to unite the distance learning group should be the important part of the distance learning of foreign languages. They are project technologies, game aspect training, individual projects and projects of "small groups", business and role-playing games, solving cases and situational problems, virtual quests, etc. [5, 8].

Thus, this model (the attention, the significance, the confidence and the satisfaction) must be the base for teachers in the process of the creation and maintenance of the motivation in the distance learning of a foreign language.

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