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Information Technologies in Foreign Language Education

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Abstract

The authors consider the specifics and possibilities of applying information technologies during foreign language training in non-linguistic universities of Russia, especially in conditions of preventing the spread of a new coronavirus infection (Covid-19) in the Russian Federation at Moscow State Institute of International Relations University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and REU named after. G.V. Plekhanov (Moscow) in 2018–2020 years (undergraduate and graduate levels). The foreign language e-learning practice is analyzed. The authors view: educational platforms (Google class, Moodle, MS Teams, Edmodo) that allow to organize off-line classes; conducting on-line classes by means of on-line conferences (Zoom, MS Teams, Google handout); usage of educational sites and applications, as well as sites (with duplicate applications) for assessment and creating tests and handouts that allow lectures to prepare for lessons, and students to improve their level of language proficiency. Authors present the experience of MGIMO and REU named after G.V. Plekhanov, where the professors of Foreign Languages Department No. 1 conduct a number of courses on their platforms on an ongoing basis using pedagogical and information technologies.

We briefly discuss the specifics of project method applying through the mentioned technologies and provide examples from the educational practice of MGIMO, for example, the "Readers' Conference", a teleconference, reports and other on-line video projects, which undoubtedly contribute to the development of educational motivation of students in studying English. It is proved that the use of information technology meets the requirements of the higher education standard and is aimed at achieving the stated results of training in the subject "Foreign Language".

Keywords: foreign language, foreign language e-learning, teaching, students, University, information technology, educational platforms, on-line conferences, educational sites and applications for free language learning.

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1. Introduction

Creating of the informative and educational environment today is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the current Federal State Standard for Higher Education (hereinafter – the Standard) and of accreditation requirements of the educational organization and the provisions of the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of April 5, 2017 № 301 "On approval of the organization and implementation of educational activities on educational programs of higher education – bachelor's degree programs, specialist programs". It should be mentioned that several Russian scientists and scholars have paid special attention to that problem in their works (Krasnoryadtseva i dr., 2017; Sisoeva, 2006; Prishepa, 2016). Unfortunately, the number of scientific and pedagogical research and works on the use of information technologies in the implementation of foreign language education in non-linguistic universities are still insufficient (Blokhovtseva et al., 2016; Polat, 2005; Pyanzina, 2013). All this makes it necessary to introduce and use information technologies (Mamed, 2017) in the educational process of the higher education institution (Gromova, 2017; Yamenko, 2013), in particular, in the field of foreign language education (Legan, Yatsevich, 2014; Korenkova, 2017). Hereafter we analyze the practice of foreign language e-learning under Order No. 398 of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation dated March 14, 2020 "On the activities of organizations under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation in preventing the spread of a new coronavirus infection on the territory of the Russian Federation" at MGIMO and REU named after G.V. Plekhanov, Moscow and Moscow region, Russia.

The aim of the research is to study modern and actual tendencies and possibilities of application of information technologies in realization of foreign language education in the conditions of non-linguistic universities of Russia (at MGIMO and Plekhanov Russian State University of Economics, Russia).

2. Materials and methods

We used methods of statistical analysis while organizing piloting study where a total of 45 teachers and 275 students of 1-4 courses from MGIMO University and Plekhanov University of Economics (Russia) took part in 2018–2020 time period when our study was conducted. Students were divided into two groups: control (those whose studying was based on regular programs and they were not engaged into the pilot study) and pilot (those whose studying involved applying of information technologies in the presented way). To obtain experimental (pilot) results we used a modified methodology proposed by V.F. Soroka and G.V. Rubina.

While assessing the change in language proficiency (Table 2), we identified the efficiency coefficient (η), fixed by the ratio of the number of correctly completed training tests in pilot groups to the arithmetic mean of the same tasks in control groups, i.e., the number of tasks in control groups (1):

$$\eta = \frac{X_p}{X_c};\ \eta_p = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} P_i}{N_p};\ \eta_c = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} P_i}{N_c} \quad (1)$$

(1) where: N – total number of students = N1 (Advanced) + N2 (Intermediate) + N3 (Pre-intermediate); Pi – number of correctly completed tests; p – maximum number of questions/training tasks.

Comparison the of the efficiency coefficient of changes in English level development (η) in pilot and control groups allows to judge the success of the study.

To prove the statistical reliability of the obtained experimental results, we used the Khi-square χ2 criterion (the total received data of the pilot study for critical values for 5 % (that is freedom degree 0.05), defined by the following formula (2):

$$x^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{(E-T)^2}{T},$$

where E – is the empirical frequency; T – is the theoretical frequency.

The materials of the research are educational sites, educational platforms of "University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation", Odintsovo branch and FGBOU VO REU named after G.V. Plekhanov, free applications (Google classroom, etc.) and platforms (Moodle, MS Teams, Edmodo.com, etc.) for the distance foreign language learning implementation.

The study required the applying of a number of methods, in particular: integrated analysis of the reserved data to prove the effectiveness of applying of information technologies, the analysis of theoretical sources on the problem and multi-factor analysis, the study with subsequent generalization of the actual pedagogical experience were used to show the importance and current state of the problem of the application of information technologies in the process of teaching a foreign language; the analysis of educational and working programs in the discipline of "Foreign language" training direction: 38.03.01 Economics, 40.03.01 Jurisprudence, 45.03.02 Linguistics, 38.03.04 State Municipal Administration, 42.03.01 Advertising and public relations helped us to find out the ways of effective applying the technologies.

3. Discussion

Nowadays the study of a foreign language with the use of information technologies seems to be relevant. Mastering a foreign language as a means of international communication, students of non-linguistic universities, as the developers of Federal State Educational Standards rightly believe, will contribute to their professional and personal development not only in the course of training in educational institutions of higher education, but also in the subsequent professional activity. However, experience shows that this is not fully implemented in the modern practice of language training of students of non-linguistic institutes/departments. The use of information technologies is aimed at covering this gap.

At present, pedagogical researchers and scholars have accumulated certain experience in the use of information and communication technologies and the Internet resources in teaching non-native languages, which proves the scientific significance of the proposed research. The methodological and theoretical basis of the proposed research was formed in the works of O.M. Krasnoryadtseva, L.A. Sysoeva, T.A. Prishepa et al., who considered the issues of theory and practice of using information technologies in modern education (Krasnoryadtseva et al., 2017; Sysoeva, 2019; Prishepa, 2016). O.M. Krasnoryadtseva studied digital problems of educational interaction (Krasnoryadtseva i dr., 2017). L.A. Sysoeva constructed the architectural model for electronic information-educational environment of the university to implement the requirements of federal state educational standards of higher education (Sysoeva, 2019). While T.A. Prishepa viewed the contextual learning for the development of jobs in the information-educational environments (Prishepa, 2016). Besides, we consider prospects of distance learning development in Russia (Blokhovtseva et al., 2016).

These authors rightly raised the problem of the importance of modern distance e-learning and information security of the involved students. Actually the methodological peculiarities of building learning tools using the components of the teaching material in electronic form were studied by E.S. Polat, E.P. Pyanzina, M.A. Mamed who devoted their works to a more detailed study of these problems of distance learning and lecturers' competence in this field (Polat, 2005; Pyanzina, 2013; Mamed, 2017). There is also a problem of the design engagement of distance learning models and electronic textbooks (Gromova, 2017; Yamenko, 2013; Legan, Yatsevich, 2014). Information technologies applying in the foreign language education on regular basis demands various software systems implementing (Korenkova, 2017; Sazonova, 2017; Ter-Minasova, 2002). Thus, domestic scholars are concerned not only about the prospects of the distance learning development in general but also about a number of methodological aspects of its implementation (i.e. the tasks, used models of learning and their effectiveness, the creation of adequate electronic textbooks and courses, funds of evaluation tools, etc.) which was taken into account by us while organizing the study.

In this study, we also rely on the practical experience of foreign scientists and scholars on the problem. A more subject-oriented study of the potential of the personality-centered approach in the use of information technologies in education is revealed in the works of N. AlKirima, N. Ruibach, M.A. Serhani, K. Tarkhini, Farfan, J.M. Fernandez-Caballero, A. Hallermo and others (Al-Qirimet et al., 2018; Gascueña, Fernández-Caballero, 2005; Guillermo, 2013). We support A. Casper, A.G. Thompson, A.H. Weasley, J.M. Fernandez-Caballero, who analyzed private

questions of information technologies usage when working with the audience (Kasper, 2012; Thompson et al., 2014; Xiaojing et al., 2011). A. Bosede, M.A. Gaschuena, Neli, V.R. Rivas, A.R. Yamahi discussed the specifics and prospects of educational platforms and sites usage, as well as the ways of students' knowledge evaluating by IT means (Yun-Jo et al., 2009; Bambang et al., 2011; Rivas, 2002).

However, while applying of information technologies in the foreign language education and evaluating the obtained results we should consider the following limitations: time consumption, quantitative and spatial limitations, as well as other terms of educational programs covering. This research is believed to be an attempt to reveal the basic scientific approaches to solving the problem under study and, based on the results of theoretical analysis and experimental work, to outline ways to its further solvation.

4. Results

Today a special attention is paid by teachers and scholars to the following possibilities of Internet resources usage while teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic areas of training. Moreover, the use of the methodological potential of the information and materials presented on educational websites and platforms allows teachers to achieve the goal of teaching a foreign language in the university, stated in the Standard and program of the academic discipline, namely, the development of the foreign language communication competence of students. The results of distance learning during COVID-19 at MGIMO and in conditions of implementation of the above-mentioned Order of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation dated March 14, 2020 № 398 can be found at https://odin.mgimo.ru/news/3200-lingvisty-izuchayut-mezhkulturnuyu-kommunikatsiyu

The practical value of the study lies in the development, implementation and piloting of scientific and methodological recommendations on foreign language e-learning and using of other information technologies that include the creation of Internet classes, online English-level assessment, etc. aimed at improving language skills. The presented materials could be used by lecturers in other higher education institutions at different stages of foreign language learning, including specialized faculties, in the following areas: philologist, linguist, translator, foreign language teacher, as well as at advanced training courses for lecturers of schools and university lecturers.

Teaching practice shows that today, especially with the introduction of generalized temporary quarantine due to the spread of a new coronavirus infection, it is possible to use information technologies in the following four directions (see Table 1), including distance language learning, which contributes to the above stated goal of language learning.

Table 1. Information technologies in foreign language education

Information technologies in foreign language education. directions of implementation			
1. Educational platforms	2. On-line conferences	3. Educational sites and applications for free language learning	4. Sites (with duplicate applications) for test creation; assessment and evaluation
The purpose of the e-resource is to achieve learning outcomes according to the Standard and program = development of foreign language communication competences.			
Specifics of training process implementation			
1. Off-line e-training: organizing independent work, working in remote classes,	2. Live language communication with students (frontal and group/pair work), organize	3. Organization of independent work, finding additional material on the studied topic	4. Assessment with the possibility of viewing and analyzing the results (feedback).

etc.	discussions, dialogues, etc.		
Outcome: Reaching the teaching goal according to the Standard and program of the discipline "Foreign language"			

Further, it seems logical to study the current practice and experience in the application of information technologies in language education in the framework of the pilot study at MGIMO and Plekhanov Russian State University of Economics in detail. Further we are going to consider the directions of application of information technologies declared in the Table1 in more details:

1. Educational platforms Moodle, Edmodo, MS Teams, Google classroom, etc., allow lecturers to create and conduct remote lessons in off-line e-learning mode. MGIMO organized a number of Google and Edmodo classes according to the number of study groups in the department during COVID-19. The Plekhanov Russian State University of Economics conducts a number of courses on its platforms, also on a permanent basis and during COVID-19.

Turning to the experience of using of the following educational platforms Moodle, Edmodo, MS Teams, Google classroom in the process of foreign language e-learning during COVID-19, we should mention that the English Department of MGIMO has organized a number of Google classes (according to the number of study groups and the directions of training), for example, the access code (from corporate mail) 6hcdyrh, bk74rxe, hfcrter, etc. and on the site Edmodo.com (access by invitation, no corporate mail required): ryyyrpd, dp5uhh, 8rqs6e and others. Lecturers have created e-classes with tasks for students to perform on these platforms. The tasks include not only reading and evaluation (with feedback), but also discussion of topics through writing comments and attaching files. In other words, the use of these platforms allows to improve all types of speech, except speaking on the spot, within the framework of the realization of program requirements and the achievement of the goal of language learning. In addition, MGIMO students had the opportunity, as part of the on-line "Reader's Conference", to put a video in the classroom, where they presented, according to a predetermined plan, a story (monological speech) about the book they have read (link: https://classroom.google.com/u/3/c/NTQxMDkzNTk2ODZa/a/ NTQxMDkz NTk2OTRa/submissions/by-status/and-sort-name/done access by invitation). After that, the whole class had an opportunity to discuss all the books by adding comments, and later there was an on-line zoom conference in this direction.

In this vein, it is also important to note the currant teaching experience of the Plekhanov Russian Economic University, where the Department of Foreign Language No. 1 conducts a number of courses on its platforms on a permanent basis and during COVID-19 as well. In 2019, an experimental educational platform with the use of pedagogical and information technologies was introduced (Link https://www.rea.ru/ru/org/cathedries/inyaz1kaf/Pages/studymaterials.aspx access by invitation). The staff of the Chair allocated architectural and structural solutions, which were provided with the application of existing open (patent free) standards for interfaces, formats and protocols of information exchange in order to ensure mobility, interoperability, stability, efficiency and ease of use. The purpose of the research conducted by the Department of Foreign Language No. 1 is to improve the language training of students through e-learning in the framework of the working program and the current standards. The e-class was attended by students of the first (50 people) and second (70 students) courses of the Marketing Faculty of REU named after G. V. Plekhanov (direction of training 42.03.01 Advertising and Public Relations, bachelor's level), who were trained in remote mode on the platform of the Institute. It should be mentioned that the organization of distance courses at this Institute includes the following stages: identification of students' readiness, definition of a set of educational programs of different levels in one professional field; integration of information into student groups and organization of students' independent work. The pedagogical scenario of the course at REU named after G.V. Plekhanov includes theoretical (video lectures) and practical (forum, tests) parts.

2. In order to implement the on-line lessons and develop the foreign language communication competence of the students, Zoom conferences, Google hangouts meet, https://meet.jit.si/, Skype, MS Teams, etc. are also used (Al-Qirimet et al., 2018; Gascueña, Fernández-Caballero, 2005; Korenkova, 2017; Gromova, 2017). Online conferences are primarily aimed at improving speaking and listening skills. Practice shows that the majority of students

(about 75 %) are actively interested in such on-line classes, but at the same time about 25 % of students have some emotional difficulties due to shyness. Moreover, Zoom allows putting conference participants into session halls, which help teachers to organize classes not only in the front, but also in a group mode. Thus on 26.03.20 the MGIMO Department of Linguistics organized an on-line zoom conference with a professor from the Monterey Institute (California, USA, Conference ID zoom: 174 283 050), when MGIMO students and lecturers had a chance to discuss the current topical and global problem of coronavirus distribution, which caused a lively response among students. Such conferences are sure to be held in future.

3. Proceeding to free foreign language e-learning educational websites and applications we should admit that they help to improve the students' English level, as they are rich in teaching materials/handouts for their self-study and for the teaching staff when preparing for classes. Many educational sites provide free opportunity to download, evaluate and discuss materials and handouts. Also, a number of sites and applications involve live and remote communication with native speakers, etc., which creates a natural language environment and improves language skills.

Also teachers can pre-select some free authentic materials/handouts to work on the topic under study as follows: download audio recording and develop or use the various tasks available on the site for listening; organize an oral discussion of a problem using authentic materials (discussion, conversation, etc.); conduct linguistic analysis of messages, statements of native speakers, containing phrases, linguistic and culturological rhetoric.

We support S.G. Ter-Minasova (Ter-Minasova, 2002) and believe that the information, presented on these sites, can be adapted to various innovative methods of teaching, for instance: case method, project, etc. We would like to highlight the project method and possibilities of its application during foreign language teaching by means of information technologies at MGIMO. This problem has been studied in detail by such professors as E.S. Polat, T.A. Prishepa, A.S. Sidenko, E.U. Collings, I.D. Chechel and others (Prishepa, 2016; Polat, 2005). However, due to objective circumstances (including the reality of time and COVID-19) they did not consider the possibility of usage of information technologies when applying project method in foreign language teaching of students of non-linguistic areas of training.

Today the project activity of the students is an obligatory component of the educational process in the conditions of the Federal standard of higher education implementation, that is why it is possible to point out that the use of the studied technologies in the process of e-teaching of the subject "Foreign language" allows to outline the following types of projects:

- by the dominant type of activity, there can be research, creative projects (reflecting the main aspects studied in the lessons), information projects (for example, analysis of literature on a problem and making power point presentations), applied projects, etc. Thus, in 2019 the English Department of MGIMO successfully organized the projects competition "MGIMO-Project Day" (link to the event: https://odin.mgimo.ru/news/2788-mgimo-project-day), when second year students presented their projects in a foreign language (ESP aspect);
- monoprojects and interprojects are distinguished by their subject content. Inter-subject projects seem to have great educational value because they are aimed at solving a variety of different learning problems, which contribute to the learning motivation development;
- by the number of participants (organizers) of a project. There are individual, paired and group projects. Such projects are very valuable because they teach students to communicate, negotiate and overcome difficulties. Moreover, in case of contradictions between the project participants, students have an excellent opportunity to improve their mediation skills in a foreign language.

Thus, the accumulated pedagogical experience convincingly proves that the project activities carried out by e-learning means appear to be the optimal environment for achieving the results in the subject indicated in the federal standard.

4. Assessment with the possibility of getting feedback (Bambang et al., 2011; Rivas, 2002). Websites (with applications) for creating tests, for example: Google forms, Quizlet.com (link: https://quizlet.com/class/13669050/), kahoot.com (link: https://kahoot.it/challenge/0985119?challenge-id=fd4b721e-76a0-469a-9ba4-a8ba9f19826b_1584476985868), etc. play an important role in e-assessment and evaluation of the current English level. We admit that the use of IT as part of assessment tools is an important and relevant aspect of implementing educational standards. MGIMO regularly organizes current and interim assessments through the use of information technology,

when rating tests as part of a credit or examination are conducted on-line (see link: http://ed.odin.mgimo.ru/sdo.php password access).

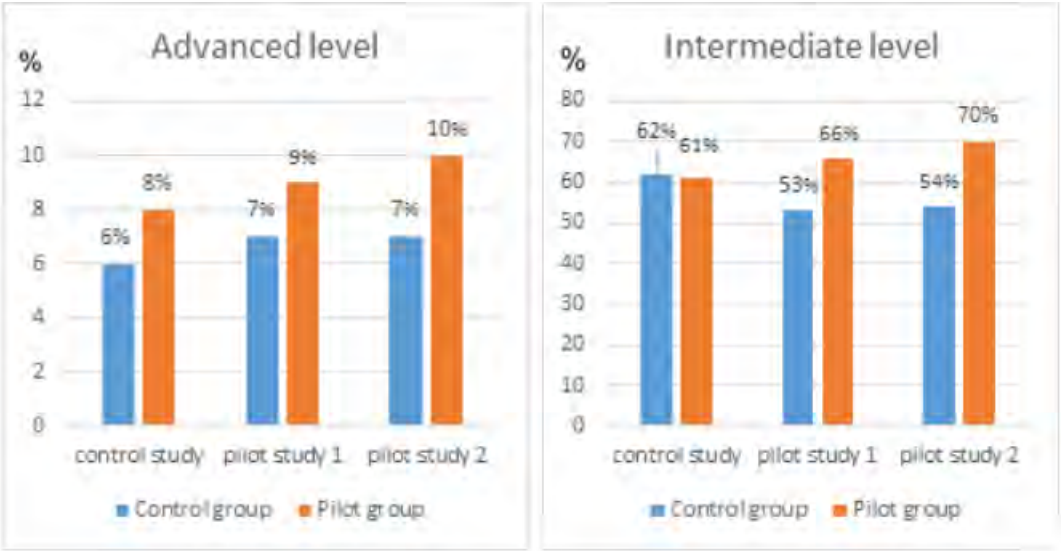
Therefore, the use of information presented on the Internet resources allows the teachers not only to improve students' foreign language communication competence but also to develop their motivation to learn a foreign language. Finally, the material presented on the websites can be selected according to the training direction and adapted to a variety of innovative teaching methods and current needs of learners.

However, the e-learning is not free from some drawbacks, which we'll describe briefly further. As teaching practice and experience has shown, lecturers and students may face the following problems: the presence of a number of technical problems with both technology and Internet access; there are certain difficulties and misunderstandings with the rules/specifics of the use of information technology, when not all participants of the educational process have sufficient experience in using educational sites, in conducting and organizing online conferences, offline pairs and in creating tasks, etc.

Hence, here are the results of applying of information technologies in the foreign language education on regular basis and during pandemic COVID-19 at MGIMO and Plekhanov University of Economics, Russia.

In order to differentiate students by the level of language proficiency during e-learning, we have compiled an appropriate grading scale including advanced, intermediate and pre-intermediate levels. The dynamics of changes in these levels is shown in the Figure 1 below.

The data presented in the figure proves that systematic work with the students of the pilot groups improved the level of language proficiency during e-learning. We fixed an increase in the advanced level of language proficiency – from 6 % (according to the results of the control study) to 10 % (according to the results of the 2nd stage of the pilot study) and the corresponding increase in the intermediate level – from 61 % to 70 %; moreover, a decrease in the pre-intermediate level – from 32 % to 20 % according to the results of the II stage of the pilot study at MGIMO and REU named after G.V. Plekhanov, Moscow and Moscow region, Russia.



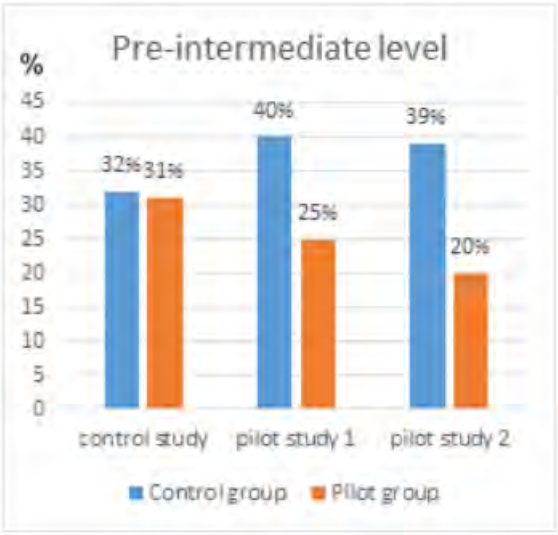


Fig. 1. Dynamics of advanced, intermediate and pre- intermediate of language proficiency in the course of e-learning at different stages of pilot study

In order to identify the coefficient of change in the English level of the students of the Plekhanov Russian Economic University and MGIMO in the course of implementation of the Table "Information technologies in the implementation of language education" developed by us, we used a modified methodology proposed by V.F. Soroka and G.V. Rubina in "Information technologies in professional training of University students" (see Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in the English level of students of the Plekhanov Russian Economic University and Moscow State Institute of International Relations during the implementation of information technology in the implementation of language education

№	Language levels	Summative study				Pilot study			
		G.V. Plekhanov		Moscow State Institute of International Relations		G.V. Plekhanov		Moscow State Institute of International Relations	
		C*	P*	C*	P*	C*	P*	C*	P*
1	Pre-intermediate	0,7	0,9	0,7	0,7	1,1	1,9	1,0	1,7
2	Intermediate	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.7	1.0	1.8
3	Advanced	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.8	1.1	1.8

* C – control group P – pilot group *

To assess the change in language proficiency (Table 2), we identified the efficiency coefficient (η, formula 1), fixed by the ratio of the number of correctly completed training tests in pilot groups to the arithmetic mean of the same tasks in control groups, i.e., the number of tasks in control groups (formula 1). According to the calculations of the sample (see Table 2) we got the following the results of the study. So, we obtained a value of $\eta = 1.7$ in the pilot groups, compared with $\eta = 1.0$ in the control groups, while at the starting stage, both groups recorded $\eta = 0.9$. Characteristic of the efficiency coefficient of changes in the English level development ($\eta > 1$) allows us to admit the effectiveness of the information technologies in the foreign language teaching.

To prove the statistical reliability of the obtained experimental results, we used the Khi-square χ^2 criterion, defined by the formula (2). The proposed method is to evaluate the difference in distributions of empirical and theoretical frequencies in order to compare the number of students who have improved their level of language proficiency with those who have remained

unchanged (Tables 3, 4, 5). Table 3 shows that the level of empirical frequencies in the experimental group is higher than in the control group.

Table 3. Empirical frequencies

Groups	Findings (students)		Total
	language proficiency has improved	language proficiency has not improved	
Pilot	19	8	27
Control	6	21	27
Total	25	29	54

Table 4 shows calculations of theoretical frequencies using this method.

Table 4 Theoretical frequencies

Groups	Findings (students)		Total
	language proficiency has improved	language proficiency has not improved	
Pilot	$\frac{25\times 27}{54}$ =12,5	$\frac{29\times 27}{54}$ =14,5	27
Control	$\frac{25\times 27}{54}$ =12,5	$\frac{29\times 27}{54}$ =14,5	27
Total	25	29	54

Comparison and conversion of empirical and theoretical frequencies allowed us to obtain the following data (Table 5).

Table 5. Calculation table x^2

Groups	E	T	(E-T)	$(E-T)^2$	$\frac{(E-T)^2}{T}$
Pilot (language proficiency has improved)	19	12,5	6,5	42,25	3,67
Pilot (language proficiency has not improved)	8	14,5	- 6,5	42,25	3,13
Control (language proficiency has improved)	6	12,5	- 6,5	42,25	3,67
Pilot (language proficiency has not improved)	21	14,5	6,5	42,25	3,13
					$\sum_{i=1}^{m}$ 13,6

Thus, we got = 13.6 > = 12.6 (see Table 4), so the null hypothesis is disproved at a high level of significance (P < 0.05, number of degrees of freedom 6). This allows us to admit that the difference in the frequency of the pilot and control series is the result of purposeful activity.

To study students' readiness and intention to use the opportunities of a foreign language knowledge, including after e-learning, we conducted a survey, the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' readiness and intention to use the opportunities of a foreign language knowledge, in % ratio

Future opportunities of foreign language usage	Pilot groups		Control groups	
	Moscow State Institute of International Relations	G.V. Plekhanov	Moscow State Institute of International Relations	G.V. Plekhanov
Reading/browsing professional literature in a foreign language	51	46	12	5
Reading professionally oriented literature/Internet sites in a foreign language	36	29	7	-
Learning a language through distance education	17	12	4	2
Independent study of a foreign language	38	27	6	13
Participation in professional Internet forums	41	34	7	5
Establishing/maintaining contacts with foreign students abroad	53	46	10	11
Travelling abroad for study purposes	35	35	10	9
Participating in scientific events in remote format in language	37	39	15	12
Organizing of online meetings in a language of interest	16	19	-	-

* The data in cells of Table 2 are presented in % ratio of the total number of students who participated in the pilot study.

The data of Table 2 prove the fact that systematic work with students allowed us to state the efficiency of information technologies used by us in the implementation of language education, as they contribute to the formation of readiness to use the opportunities of a foreign language in their future life, including in the conditions of expected professional activity.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays information technologies are being actively introduced in the educational process of modern universities as well as in foreign language education. Practice of MGIMO and REU named after G.V. Plekhanov proves that today, especially during the pandemic, it is possible to use information technologies at training as following: educational platforms allow to organize off-line e-classes; conducting classes in a real mode by means of on-line conferences; free educational sites and applications where teachers can create tests, handouts and use them for assessment and evaluation.

The use of information technology undoubtedly generates a lively response among students and increases their learning motivation. The use of information technology can help to improve students' language skills. However, with the forced 100 % shifting to distance learning due to the pandemic mentioned above, all students have expressed the desire to return to traditional face-to-face education with the partial use of information technologies, which cannot but please the lecturers. Thus, information technologies have quite a rich potential in foreign language learning, and its usage is aimed at achieving the goal of language teaching in general.

The authors do not claim to provide an exhaustive solution to the issues identified in the paper. This research is considered by us as an attempt to reveal the main scientific approaches to solving of the problem of improving language training, based on the results of theoretical analysis and pilot study, to outline ways to further solvation of this problem in higher professional education.

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