

Teaching English as a Second Language in the Distance Education System

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ABSTRACT

As any other field in the system of education, the process of teaching a second language is changing due to the use of modern technologies. Integration of modern technologies and new media in the process of teaching a second language is a necessary step ensuring acquiring of language skills and competencies required in today's society. Innovative use of technologies increases the degree of flexibility in the content and organization of the teaching process. Despite the fact that the distance education system has been accepted by many public and private higher education institutions in the world, there are still certain doubts that such a system can achieve the same results as the traditional education system. These doubts are mostly related to the lack of direct contact between an educator and a student and the attitude that the technology can be successfully used for the design and delivery of educational content but can't inherently have an impact on results that should be achieved by the students. Such scepticism is especially present in the context of teaching a second language in the distance education system, what is confirmed by the fact that there are significantly less programs for online teaching of second language compared to other fields of education. The reason for that is not only the complexity of integrating all language skills into the virtual environment but also the doubts about whether the students can achieve language proficiency in the system of distance education. Better understanding of how the distance education system can be used in the context of teaching a second language can help resolving these doubts and dilemmas. Increasingly intensive integration of information and communication technologies in the process of education is radically changing the methods of second language teaching and learning and motivating educators to try to define new teaching models and strategies. Distance education imposes the challenge for the educators to evaluate and determine which teaching content is adequate for this system and to structure interaction between educators and students as well as among students with the aim of achieving effective learning. Distance teaching environment enables personalized approach to learning as well as planning and realizing activities adequate for different learning styles and levels of language proficiency. This paper presents main advantages and potential problems of teaching a second language in the distance education system and the model used at the Faculty of Information Technologies, University „Džemal Bijedić, higher education institution realizing its study program in both traditional and distance education form.