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Дистанционное обучение в условиях иноязычной среды глазами китайских студентов университета

Введение. С переходом университетов по всему миру на дистанционное обучение в период пандемии COVID-19 высшее образование стало глобальным и доступным, возросла конкуренция между университетами на международном рынке образовательных услуг. Мнения китайских студентов о дистанционном обучении в российском университете как альтернативной форме традиционному очному обучению является важным критерием оценки способности университета удерживать и привлекать иностранных учащихся для учёбы в России в условиях конкуренции, так как именно китайские студенты составляют большую часть иностранного контингента учащихся в российских университетах.

Цель исследования – выяснить мнение китайских студентов о дистанционном формате обучения в российском университете с точки зрения его влияния на формирование коммуникативной компетенции в русском языке и адаптацию к иноязычной среде университета.

Материалы и методы. В анкетировании приняло участие 100 китайских студентов 1-4 курсов Гуманитарного института (ГИ) и 57 студентов 1 курса Института промышленного менеджмента экономики и торговли (ИПМЭиТ) Санкт-Петербургского политехнического университета Петра Великого. Методы исследования: анализ и систематизация ответов студентов на вопросы анкет, контент- анализ.

Результаты и обсуждение. Результаты проведенного исследования показали: 1) китайские студенты в целом оценивают дистанционный формат обучения как более комфортный (89% – комфортно, 3% – не комфортно) по сравнению с очным (43% – комфортно, 54% – не комфортно) в психологическом аспекте, что связано с их национальными особенностями (75% студентов не боятся отвечать при других студентах в дистанционном формате, 89% студентов чувствуют себя более комфортно на дистанционных занятиях вне аудитории); 2) студенты не испытывают трудностей в использовании новых технических программ и Интернет-ресурсов (56% – нет трудностей; 24% – есть трудности; 20% – нет ответа); 3) формирование коммуникативных компетенций в русском языке во многом зависит не от формата обучения (68% студентов нравится изучать русский язык дистанционно, 59% студентов удовлетворены своими успехами в изучении русского языка), а от готовности и способности студентов к обучению (58% студентов отмечают, что используют знания русского языка на занятиях) и умения преподавателей работать в дистанционном формате (75% студентов отмечают важность презентационных материалов, которые готовит преподаватель); 4) трудности в адаптации к иноязычной среде университета связаны с уровнем владения русским языком и культурными традициями стран (74% студентов отмечают трудности в общении с административными службами университета, 64 % студентов не используют русский язык для решения учебно-административных вопросов).

Заключение. Полученные результаты и выводы могут быть полезны для преподавателей, а также сотрудников административных служб университета и всех заинтересованных лиц, работающих с китайскими студентами.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, онлайн-обучение, китайские студенты, иноязычная среда университета, иностранный язык, специальный язык, русский язык как иностранный

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Distance learning in the university foreign language environment through the eyes of Chinese students

Introduction. With the transition of universities around the world to distance learning during the pandemic of COVID-19, the higher education has become the global and accessible, and competition between universities in the international educational market has increased. The opinion of Chinese students about distance learning as an alternative form to the traditional in-person education at Russian university is an important criterion for the evaluation of university's ability to retain and attract the foreign students to study in Russia in an environment of competition among the universities, as the Chinese students exactly are make up the majority among the foreign students of Russian universities.

The purpose of the study is to find out the opinion of Chinese students about the distance learning format at the Russian university from the point of view of influence it on the formation of communicative competence in Russian language and adaptation to a foreign language environment of university.

Materials and methods. The 100 Chinese students of 1-4 years of the Humanitarian Institute (HI) and 57 students of the 1st year of the Institute of Industrial Management of Economics and Trade (IIMET) of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University took part in the survey. The research methods are analysis and systematization of student's answers to questionnaires, content analysis.

Results and discussion. The results of the research showed: 1) the Chinese students in general assess the distance learning format as more comfortable (89% – comfortable, 3% – not comfortable) in comparison with in-person (43% – comfortable, 54% – not comfortable) education in the psychological aspect, which is associated with their national characteristics (75% of students are not afraid to answer in front of other students in a distance format, 89% of students feel more comfortable in distance classroom lessons); 2) the students do not experience the difficulties in using the new technical programs and Internet resources (56% – no difficulties; 24% – yes difficulties; 20% – no answers); 3) the formation of communicative competencies in the Russian language largely depends not on the format of learning (68% of students like to study Russian in distant format, 59% are satisfied with their success in learning Russian), but on the readiness and individual skills and abilities of the learner to study (58% of students note they use knowledge of the Russian language in the classroom) and on the teacher skills and abilities in the work in a distance format (75% of students note the importance of presentation materials prepared by the teacher); 4) the difficulties in adapting to the foreign language environment of the university are associated with the level of proficiency in the Russian language and the cultural traditions of the countries (74% of students note difficulties in communicating with the administrative services of the university, 64% of students do not use Russian to solve educational and administrative issues).

Conclusion. The obtained results and conclusions can be useful for academic staff, as well as employees of the administrative services of the university and all interested persons who works with Chinese students.

Keywords: distance learning, online learning, Chinese students, foreign language environment of the university, foreign language, special language, Russian as a foreign language

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Introduction

Distance learning, or online learning, which has become a necessity due to the pandemic of COVID-19, required higher education systems around the world to revise their approaches to educational process organization. The advent of a new learning format brought about a large number of new terms [15; 16]. Hodges C., Moore S., Lokee B., Trast T., Bond A. point out the fact that the term "online learning" has become politicized and can take on any number of meanings depending on the issue discussed due to the transition of all universities to the new remote learning format [15]. The authors draw a distinction between the terms "online learning" and "emergency online learning", explaining the former as a well-planned educational process using information and communications technologies (ICT), methods, techniques, organizational forms and learning tools that have been developed over a long time, and provide quality education [15]. "Emergency online training" is defined as a temporary form of training or training support during an emergency or crisis. However, such definitions have not spread beyond educational technologies and continue to be used mainly among researchers and professionals in the field of educational [15]. The terms "distance learning", "online learning", "distance learning format", "computer learning", "e-learning", "distance education", "online education" are taken as synonyms. In the new paradigm of time, "traditional classroom training" or "in-person training format" is presented in the "distance learning format" to international students as an alternative form of "remote traditional classroom training", that is, "outside the classroom", yet in the mode of scheduled online videoconferences via the Internet using electronic devices (ICT) and electronic educational materials, the purpose of which is to solve certain educational and methodological problems.

Most universities around the world were involved in the process of transition to distance learning, and St. Petersburg Polytechnic University was one of the most successful to provide the technical facilities, to develop the course programs for online learning, and to train teachers and university administrative services to work in new conditions in the shortest time possible as noted by Almazova N. and other authors in their work [2]. Today, the distance format as a necessary way of learning at a Russian university is not really new to international students. Most of the Chinese students enrolled in the main undergraduate programs were able to continue their studies regardless of location, which was an important criterion for testing the university's ability to retain international students what researchers Radu M.-C., Schnakovszky C., Herghelegiu E., Ciubotariu V.-A., Cristea I. talk about in their work [23], since the main task of the federal project "Export of Education" is to increase the competitiveness of Russian education worldwide [25, p.72]. "The development of online education for international students according to Vyazovskaya V., Danilevskaya T., Trubchaninova M. is one of the ways to achieve this goal" [25, p.72].

Asking for students' feedback on the online learning positive and negative aspects is very important, as it makes it possible to eliminate negative factors, and to identify and improve the positive factors affecting the quality of education and student satisfaction from learning.

Due to the wide-scale transition of universities around the world to distance learning, attracting international students is one of the major problems for the higher education system in all countries of the world.

Comparison of traditional in-person learning and online learning, which is now wide-scale and rapidly developing, according to Hodges C., Moore S., Lokee B., Trast T., Bond A. has become a "grand experiment" [15]. As stated by the authors the high-quality online learning has been discussed for many decades, and it has been the subject of numerous studies, theories, learning models, standards and criteria for students' academic assessment, and online courses [15]. Online education according to Paul J., Jefferson F. is not a new phenomenon, as the first educational distance learning programs were first introduced in the mid-1800s by the University of London [22]. Now that technological progress has facilitated distance learning and made it more available with the help of the Internet, an increasing number of students are looking for an opportunity to get their education online.

Many scientists around the world have been engaged in research comparing traditional and distance education and analyzing the opinions of students studying at universities remotely.

As noted by Kemp N., Grieve R. the both forms of education have many aspects, therefore, in their studies, scientists may come to different conclusions depending on which aspect or aspects they are studying. The authors note that in the process of distance learning the students like to do written work but at the same time they feel the deficiency of oral communication [17].

Online learning, according to Comyn P., Muñoz A., is important in the context of globalization of space and pandemic, as it allows to exchange the knowledge and learn from each other. However, comparing the online and classroom learning the authors note that classroom learning is still valued more than online, and online learning cannot replace face-to-face classroom learning and practical skills training despite achievements in technology. [11].

In their studies Kawasaki H., Yamasaki S., Masuoka Y., Iwasa, M., Fukita S., Matsuyama R. talk about the advantages of face-to-face traditional education over distance learning. The authors believe that distance learning reduces the level of "student retention" compared to face-to-face traditional education, however, they do not deny that the results of the effectiveness of learning in limited areas, the quality of learning remains the same [16].

In their works Atchley W., Wingenbach G., Akers C. draw attention to the fact that distance learning is a modern requirement, since technologies are developing intensively that significantly affect the lives of young people, and higher education must "to keep up with the times" and introduce these technologies into higher education in all countries of the world [4]. In the studies of authors, it is noted that young people easily master and actively use the information and computer technologies, which is the norm for them. Calling them "digital addicts", "digital natives" many scientists note that there can be no education today without information and computer technologies [2; 4; 20].

The researches in the field of active implementation and use of MOOC in the higher education system as a form of distance education has shown that distance learning, according to Goh W. and other scientists, allows to create the limitless classes, which is positive certainly [13].

As a two-way process the distance learning like a face-to-face traditional learning requires the presence and guidance of the teacher and active participation from the students [1; 13]. Albelbisi N., Yusop F. note that the presence of a teacher and the provision of support to students from the teacher affects the increase in the level of self-regulation (SRL) of students in relation to learning, which in turn affects the quality of teaching and its effectiveness [1]. According to Albelbisi N., Gonzalez T. and etc. in the distance education the students with knowledge, skills, self-regulation will be more successful both in the classroom and in online learning [1; 14].

The opinions of students studying at universities about distance education occupies a key position. More and more students appreciate distance learning and find it more effective than teaching in the classroom. In researches of Paul J., Jefferson F. state the success of students in the learning does not depend on the format of training, but the motivation and interest of students depend on whether they like the teacher, whether they are satisfied with their results [22].

Gonzalez T. and others note the students were liked with the lectures, but the main problem was the poor Internet connection [14]. The problem of using the Internet is discussed in the work of Kawasaki H., Yamasaki S., Masuoka Y., Iwasa, M., Fukita S., Matsuyama R. The authors point out that the unequal use of Internet technologies is associated with different levels of development of countries [16]. As the negative side of distance learning, according to Albelbisi N., Yusop F., students also noted the high workload in learning MOOC courses and the need to regulate and coordinate the content of training with the teacher [1].

In the process of studying the views of university students on the perception and acceptance of online learning during the pandemic Patricia A., note that distance learning is a student-centered process, which requires active participation. Analyzing the opinions of university students on online learning during the pandemic, Patricia A. states that cross-country research in this area and comparison of results will help higher education institutions to identify similarities and differences, and develop the strategies for learning in a new environment [21].

The distance learning as a two-way process is assessed by both teachers and students, who express different opinions. The various factors influence the distance learning process and its perception.

Kemp A. and other authors described in their work a deep analysis and classification of factors are influencing the process of distance learning, as well as the attitude to technology of distance learning on the part of teachers and students, highlighting 61 indicators for measurements to exclude errors in research [18].

Wilson L. writes about the three areas of study (cognitive, affective and psychomotor), which are important both for the teacher from point of view to create holistic, interesting lessons, and for students it is important from point of view to assimilate and memorize the study material better [26].

The opinion of students about distance learning depends on many factors, among the most influencing the effectiveness and quality of education are:

1) the specialty which students study. So, for example, students of the humanities and social sciences in the majority assess the distance learning as positive, at the same time, students of medical and technical fields in the majority experience difficulties and dissatisfaction from the lack of practical training [4; 23];

2) the existence of technical means and skills of using Internet resources [22; 23];

3) the skills to self-organize of learning [7; 11; 16; 23];

4) the skills to manage by own time and regulate efforts [7];

5) the interest in the subject's studied [13];

6) the sympathy for the teacher [1; 13; 14; 16];

7) the motivation and involvement in the learning process. Including the motivating factor is the achievement of goals such as certification and improvement of their professional skills [24];

8) the satisfaction with their own successes from the educational process [27];

9) the critical thinking and own assessment of their results [7].

Chinese students make up the majority of international students studying at Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, therefore, we consider the student community in the context of the country's higher education policy, and the differences between Western and Eastern educational systems [19; 28]. China's national policy has always been aimed at educating the population. Since the time of Confucianism, education has been considered highly important as vital for the progress of the nation. It is suggested that the appropriate age for higher education is from 18 to 24 years old. Currently, China is developing the system of distance learning, the goal of which is to create a world-famous university [12]. Therefore, competition among highly qualified personnel in the country is, in our opinion, an important motivating factor that makes Chinese students choose the best universities around the world. In their studies, Coates H., Wen W., Shi J., state that China, among other countries in the world, relies on online learning to provide educational services and online learning will be intensively promoted [10]. Since a new "global education economy" has now been born, online education has become firmly attached to mainstream education, globally affecting higher education and requiring the coordination of new rules with universities [10].

An important factor influencing the learning process is the students' readiness for online learning, which implies their ability to use mobile tools and computer programs, to master new Internet resources as well as the ability to self-regulate the learning process.

Based on numerous studies on the readiness of Chinese students to online learning, we assume that they are good at using ICT as students are already prepared for such forms of education.

As the authors of the studies note: the rapid economic development in China implies the use of information and computer technologies in higher education [6], Chinese students have good skills in using the IT [2; 20], in addition, they enjoy to participate in e-learning as well as in well-planned lessons, which in turn are uniting students in the classroom during the online class [27].

As for the issues of self-regulation of the educational process and the willingness to organize their study time, there are contradictions. On the one hand, according to Azitova, G. and other researchers, Chinese students are distinguished by self-discipline, discipline and hard work [5], on the other hand, as noted by Almazova N., Parkes M. and other researchers, Chinese students are faced with a lack of organizational planning skills and self-regulation [2; 20].

Distance learning of Chinese students at a Russian university implies communication in a foreign language in a foreign language educational and professional environment. Since the goal of learning a foreign language online is to develop the communicative competence of international students, the teacher as an instructor, must coordinate the correlation between the instructor's participation and the participation of students in the class. Based on the theory of transactional distance, as described by Nordin N., Norman H., Embi M., Mansor A., Idris, F., distance learning includes three aspects: the syllabus structure; dialogue between teachers and students; and student autonomy [19]. According to this theory, the transactional distance between teacher and student increases or decreases as the autonomy of the student increases or decreases. An instructor or teacher should be present during the class and fulfill their duties, and at the same time activate the performance and communication of students not only within the learning process, but also outside the distance classroom [19].

To achieve these goals, the learning process uses various courses created on the basis of massive open online courses, as well as electronic materials and teaching aids.

When creating e-learning materials, it is necessary to take into account the involvement of international students in order to maintain motivation to learn the language [9]. The attention should be paid to the development of educational materials for language classes, since it is the presentation, according to researchers Chen, L.-L. and others, that makes it possible to engage students in the educational process [9]. We share the opinion that well-prepared educational presentations help to activate memory, and, therefore, the ability to process more information, which is necessary for language learning. We also hold the opinion that the use of two sensory channels has a positive effect on learning results. Thus, employing audio and video materials in the process of learning a foreign language through the use of mobile devices and personal computers which like to Chinese students, positively influence and would be useful are for effective language learning [8; 9].

Problem Statement

Due to the global transition of higher education to distance learning in the context of intense competition among universities around the world, the problem of attracting international students to Russian universities is currently one of the urgent issues. For international students the ability to get high-quality and affordable higher education is a decisive factor in choosing a university.

The feedback of students who have chosen the Russian university to study at in the competitive environment of universities is of great importance, since it allows the university to track various factors that affect the increase in the number of students and the quality of distance education. Due to the lack of research into international students' distance learning process, the world universities conduct surveys to find out students' attitudes and solve current problems and get high rankings among universities in the world.

Research Questions

To obtain information on the attitudes of Chinese students the study considers the following questions:

- How Chinese students rate distance learning versus face-to-face traditional education in terms of the psychological aspect.
- To what extent Chinese students are ready for distance learning in terms of organization and technology.
- How distance learning affects the development of communication skills in the Russian language and adaptation to a foreign language educational and professional environment of the university.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to examine the conditions of distance learning, which Russian university offer as an alternative to in-person education, to identify the opinions of Chinese students who make up the majority of the university international students, and to assess the positive and negative aspects of distance learning in new conditions for Chinese students in the university foreign language environment.

The object of the research is the process of teaching Chinese undergraduate students through distance technologies in the Russian language course.

The subject of the research is the factors influencing the communicative competence development in the process of distance learning of the Russian language and the adaptation of Chinese undergraduate students to the foreign language educational and professional environment of the university.

Materials and methods

The research material was 100 questionnaires of 1st-4th year students of the Institute of Humanities and 57 questionnaires of 1st year students of the Institute of Industrial Management of Economics and Trade of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, which were developed in order to find out the opinions of foreign students about distance learning format in the university foreign language environment. The average age of students is from 18 to 24 years old. All students are Chinese citizens, speak one language, and have no experience of studying in another country, which indicates the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the respondents.

Among the students of the Institute of Humanities, the respondents presented the following groups: Russian language: basic course – 27 1st year students; Russian language: specialized course – 26 2nd year students; Russian language: professionally oriented course – 24 3rd year students and 23 4th year students.

There were 57 1st year students of the Institute of Industrial Management of Economics and Trade who are enrolled in the course of Career adaptability: Russian language.

The research methods were questionnaires and interviews of Chinese students, analysis and systematization of students' responses, content analysis of respondents' answers according to certain criteria. The students were asked to answer the questions of the questionnaires. The response time was unlimited.

Analysis of the answers allowed us to evaluate distance learning as seen by Chinese students in psychological, organizational, technical, educational and adaptation aspects.

Results

In the course of the experiment we obtained the following results:

Questionnaire1. "Comparative characteristics of in-person and online learning in the psychological aspect"

Questions:	In-person learning	Distance learning
1. Comfort level in the classroom amongst other students	comfortable - 43% not comfortable - 54% no answer - 3%	comfortable - 89% not comfortable - 3% no answer - 8%
2. Apprehension towards responding in front of other students	I'm not afraid - 25% I'm afraid - 63% no answer - 12%	I'm not afraid - 75% I'm afraid - 14% no answer - 11%
3. Flexible time management	little time - 21% a lot of time - 33% no answer - 66%	little time - 38% a lot of time - 53% no answer - 8%
4. Competitive spirit in the group	present - 79% absent - 11% no answer - 10%	present - 34% absent - 62% no answer - 4%

5. Interest during the class	yes - 58% no - 12% no answer - 30%	present - 79% no - 16% no answer - 5%
6. Convenience of technology during the class	yes - 42% no - 23% no answer - 35%	yes - 96% no - 4% no answer - 0%
7. Misunderstanding of the teacher's speech	I understand well - 33% I don't understand well - 64% no answer - 3%	I understand well - 58% I don't understand well - 24% no answer - 18%
8. Perception of speech intonation	yes - 79% no - 6% no answer - 5%	yes - 88% no - 3% no answer - 9%
9. A clear model of communication with the teacher	not always - 59% always - 16% no answer - 25%	not always - 14% always - 78% no answer - 8%
10. Transparency of test materials and assessment	present - 3% absent - 85% no answer - 12%	present - 90% absent - 10% no answer - 0
11. Convenience of access to information resources in a familiar form	present - 49% absent - 13% no answer - 38%	present - 100% absent - 0 no answer - 0

Questionnaire 2. "Readiness of Chinese students for distance learning in terms of organization and technology"

Questions:	Yes	No	No answer
1) Availability of technical means	95%	-	5%
2) Availability of the internet	100%	-	-
3) Skills in using the internet and technical means	100%	-	-
4) Difficulties in mastering new programs and internet resources	24%	56%	20%
5) Convenient and familiar information search	82%	15 %	3%
6) Fatigue from distance learning	44%	49%	7%
7) Fatigue due to the time difference, or having to study in the evening.	16%	51%	33%
8) Ability to plan one's time	46%	36%	18%

Questionnaire 3. "Distance learning of the Russian language and adaptation to a foreign language educational and professional environment of the university."

Questions	Yes	No	No answer
1) Do you like learning Russian remotely?	68%	12%	20%
2) Do you like to study the following aspects remotely: - reading, - speaking, - listening, - writing, - vocabulary, grammar	95% 47% 84% 73% 53%	5% 42% 14 % 13 % 32%	0% 11% 2% 14% 15%
3) Is the presentation of the class material important?	75%	17%	8 %
4) Do you have any difficulties in communication with the university services?	74%	15%	11%
5) Do you do assignments?	68%	19%	13%
6) Do you have any difficulties in completing assignments?	12%	83%	5%
7) Do you use your Russian in the classroom?	58%	23%	19%
8) Do you speak Russian out of class?	24%	64%	12%
9) Are you satisfied with your progress in learning Russian?	59%	33%	8 %

The results of the experiment have revealed the attitude of Chinese students toward distance learning. On the whole, Chinese students appreciate the distance learning format, considering it more psychologically comfortable than in-person education, which is explained by the national characteristics of the students.

Evaluating the willingness of Chinese students to study remotely through the use of new technical programs and Internet resources, we concluded that the majority of students, whose age is from 18 to 24, do not experience any difficulties, or rather, they are happy to use ICT for their studies. Problems can arise due to the lack of opportunities to have the necessary technical facilities or poor quality of the Internet.

The Russian language poses the greatest difficulty, as it is a means of communication not only in the classroom with the course teachers, but it is also necessary for communication with the university services. Communicative competence largely depends not only on the students' readiness and capabilities, but also on the teachers' proficiency in organizing and preparing presentation materials for classes. The teacher must play the role of an instructor and motivate active participation of the students, and maintain their interest in learning. The foreign language environment of the university causes the most serious problems in the adaptation of Chinese students. Nevertheless, they choose to study at the Russian university, since they believe that here they can get high quality education.

We have identified the following distinctive features causing difficulties in the process of adaptation of Chinese students to an in-person format, which is excluded or to a lesser extent manifested in distance learning.

The students confirmed our assumptions:

1) In China the foreign language classes are held in large monogroups (same nationality students) of 50-70 people, while in Russia we have smaller international or monogroups. It has a positive effect on the students' academic performance. In a distance format, the opportunity to stay in one's private space, not in front of the audience, your classmates and the teacher, gives students the opportunity to feel comfortable, which allows them to focus on mastering the academic material. 95% of respondents confirmed our assumption.

2) In China the main models of learning are silent reading and memorizing large volumes of information, while in Russia it is reading and listening to lectures in a foreign language. Listening and speaking are especially difficult for Chinese students. Distance learning allows them to record video lectures and master teaching materials more effectively. 93% of respondents confirmed our assumption.

3) In China, active participation is not encouraged: the pattern is – "don't speak, just listen", anticipating the teacher's instructions. In Russia, on the contrary, students need to "be active, show their learning initiative", and communicate with the teacher and students in a foreign language – "speak, answer, ask". It causes difficulties in terms of psychology and communication. 54% of 1st year students confirmed our statement. 16% of 2nd and 3rd-4th year students who speak Russian and are familiar with the education system in Russia partially agreed with it.

4) In China, the respectful attitude to the teacher can be described as "vertical", i.e. "the teacher's position is always higher than that of the student" and the teacher's authority is undisputable. In Russia we adopt "horizontal attitude", i.e. an unfamiliar pattern of students and teachers' behavior, which can be described as "partnership with the teacher". Students refer to the teacher "by their name and patronymic", and not just "teacher". 46% of 1st year students noted the difficulty in getting used to the behavior pattern, as well as 32% of 2nd and 3rd year students, including students with a low level of Russian language proficiency.

5) In China, students are exposed to a monolingual environment and the usual closed group communication. They prefer "to stay in the usual environment of linguistic communication", and communicate in Chinese. This is the preference of 83% of respondents, while 17% prefer to communicate in Russian or another foreign language.

6) The need to use a foreign language not only in the classroom, but also for solving administrative issues causes difficulties due to the lack of listening and comprehension skills. 76% of respondents were 1st and 2nd year students, as well as those with a low level of Russian language proficiency, agree with this statement.

Discussion

The carried out scientific research let possible not only to obtain results for internal use by the university itself but also to take part in the project of an international "grand experiment" of universities to assess higher education in a distance format, about which the authors Hodges C., Moore S., Lokee B., Trast T., Bond A. talk in their work [15].

We share the opinion of Patricia A. that researching students' opinions on distance learning and comparing research results will help the higher education institutions to identify similarities and differences and solve the emerging problems associated with distance learning [21].

We also share the opinion of Kemp N., Grieve R. that the comparison of results cannot be accurate, since distance learning is multifaceted and the results obtained depend on many factors [17].

As the results of our research show, influencing factors include not only the factors indicated in the works of scientists, such as the specialty that students receive, motivation, ICT skills, enthusiasm for the learning process, satisfaction with their results, and so on, which are mentioned by the researchers [1; 4; 7; 8 etc.], but in our opinion, also on the national characteristics of students, which significantly affects their ability to adapt the conditions of study at the university in a foreign language, the ability to study, the level of proficiency in Russian, as well as skills and possibilities of using information and computer technologies and readiness to use programs in Russian.

We agree with the opinion of scientists [2; 4; 20, etc.] that higher education today is impossible without the introduction of information and computer technologies, our results show the use of ICT is effective for teaching Chinese students the Russian language.

We also share the opinion that distance learning is student-centered and requires active participation from him [1; 13; 14]. However, according to the results of the experiment, we concluded that the activity of students in a foreign language environment of the university depends on the teacher's activity and the teacher's ability to make the learning process exciting, meaningful and controlled.

We believe that the results of the scientific research will complement the number of scientific researches concerning not only the issues of obtaining the higher education by students in universities in a foreign language, but also the choice of students in the context of the variety of offers on the educational market, but also the issues of distance learning of Chinese students in universities in a foreign language, which make up the majority of foreign students not only in Russia, but also in other countries of the world.

The results of research problem of teaching Chinese students in a distance format show the application of a nationally-oriented approach to teaching, which takes into account

the national characteristics of students, will help to teachers to achieve the most effective results in teaching of this contingent of students.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, we made the following conclusions:

1) The distance learning format is suitable for Chinese students enrolled in the language courses. It is useful for developing a foreign language communicative competence during the Russian classes.

2) In the distance learning format, it is necessary to adapt Chinese students to the educational and professional environment of the university, taking into account their national characteristics and the new post-pandemic reality.

3) The adaptation process of Chinese students cannot be identical for all categories of students, since some of them are not familiar with the in-person education system at the Russian university due to the fact that they have never been to Russia and they have entered the university to enroll in the remote educational programs. Other students have studied in Russia for a short time and are not very familiar with the higher education system. In addition, the students' Russian language proficiency, which is necessary to be enrolled in most educational programs, varies. It also poses difficulties for obtaining information.

4) There are different systems of education in Russia and China. In Russia, patterns and forms of communication are abundant. However, the students are unwilling to enter into a dialogue with a teacher or with employees of the university services, and they are reluctant to communicate outside the university.

5) Considering the mentality, national and psychological factors of the "vertical communication" between a student and a teacher in China, the "horizontal communication" in Russia seems unusual, new, and incomprehensible for Chinese students. The behavior model of Russian students is perceived by Chinese students as unusual and they cannot quite adopt it.

6) Chinese students perceive the teacher as a leader in the behavior model, respect the authority of the teacher, waiting patiently for their turn when reporting on their assignments. They eagerly adopt the models: "do not stick out without permission", "wait for your turn", "wait for permission", "listen to the teacher".

7) To maintain and increase the motivation of students in the classroom it is necessary to take into account the following:

- any information should be provided concerning organizational and educational issues at the university in an accessible form in a foreign language;
- the syllabus should be provided for each course, explaining its long-term purposes and class-based objectives, and determining the teaching materials and forms of control;
- distance learning classes should be well thought out and thoroughly organized (the presentations, use of translation, visual materials). National characteristics should be taken into consideration, such as the fear of answering questions in front of the teacher and classmates. The different behavior of students is explained by their cultural education and the instilled patterns: "sit quietly and do not stick out", "be quiet and listen", "do not ask questions", "do not show off in front of the teacher". In Russia the patterns are different: "be active, show learning initiative", "do not be

silent, but speak”, “get involved in communication”, “ask more questions”.

- the teaching materials should be available; the teacher's attitudes, their treatment of students should be encouraging: such concepts as “the new is always interesting”, “the new and incomprehensible, which I can understand” contribute to the students’ motivation;
- the knowledge assessment should be compulsory, with a clear grading system, constant reminders and clarification of students' responsibilities;
- the role of the Russian language in education should be explained, and the assistance should be provided in learning a foreign language using special teaching methods - these are the factors of successful and motivated learning.

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