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PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF DISTANCE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract
This article examines the psycholinguistic aspects of distance foreign language teaching to students of non-philological specializations. The study analyzes cognitive load theory, multimedia learning principles, speech production mechanisms, motivational and affective factors, metacognitive strategies, and multimodal information presentation in the context of online language education. The findings reveal that effective distance language teaching requires an integrated approach considering attention management, memory processes, psychological comfort, and the development of independent learning skills. Practical recommendations for designing instructional materials and creating psychologically supportive online learning environments are provided.

Keywords: Distance education, psycholinguistics, cognitive load, metacognition, autonomous learning, multimedia principles, affective factors, non-philological students.

Introduction

Nowadays, distance foreign language teaching has become an integral part of the global education system. The effective organization of this process requires not only knowledge of modern technologies and didactic approaches but also a deep understanding of the internal mechanisms occurring in human consciousness and psyche during language acquisition. It is precisely this necessity that determines the role and significance of psycholinguistics in distance education.

Psycholinguistics, as a discipline studying the interrelationship between human psyche and speech activity in the process of language acquisition, seeks to answer a number of fundamental questions: how does an individual perceive a foreign

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language, process it, store it in memory, and utilize it in speech activity [1, 4]. In a traditional classroom setting, these processes occur under the direct participation of the teacher, live interaction, and the influence of the social environment. In distance education, however, the situation undergoes a fundamental transformation. In the online environment, language material is primarily received through the screen that is, via visual and auditory channels; live interaction opportunities are limited, and the student is compelled to work more independently [5, 6]. These factors make psycholinguistic aspects a particularly pressing issue in distance education.

The importance of psycholinguistic factors in the online environment can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, in distance education, all instructional materials -video lessons, audio recordings, electronic texts, interactive tasks – directly affect the student's attention, perception, and memory. The more appropriately the material is designed, the more easily the brain processes and retains it [3]. Secondly, in conditions of reduced teacher supervision, the student's intrinsic motivation, emotional state, and self-regulation abilities acquire primary significance. As Brown emphasizes, motivation and emotional state constitute the central component of psycholinguistic influence, and the intensity of independent learning directly depends on learners' motivation [2]. Thirdly, sustaining focused attention for extended periods through a computer or telephone screen is considerably more challenging than in a traditional lesson, which directly affects the speed and quality of material processing [7]. Fourthly, due to the reduction of live interaction, psychological barriers, language-related fear, and anxiety may intensify in students. Zhang, in his research, identified that psychological anxiety among students in online foreign language courses exerts a negative impact on language learning effectiveness [8]. All of these circumstances render a psycholinguistic approach to distance language education a necessity. Based on the foregoing, the principal aim of this sub-chapter is to comprehensively analyze the psycholinguistic factors influencing the process of foreign language acquisition in distance education settings and to reveal their practical significance in creating an effective learning environment.

Mechanisms of Language Perception and Processing in Distance Education

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In distance education settings, the process of foreign language acquisition is determined, first and foremost, by how the student perceives and processes language material. Unlike traditional classroom instruction, in the online environment, information is primarily received through two sensory channels – vision and hearing. Video lessons, audio recordings, electronic texts, infographics, and interactive tasks all reach the student through these two channels. This circumstance necessitates particular attention to the design of language material in distance education, as improperly organized visual or auditory information can impede the student's perception and reduce learning effectiveness.

The human brain possesses the capacity to process a limited amount of information simultaneously. This principle was substantiated by the cognitive load theory developed by Australian scholar John Sweller [1]. According to Sweller, three types of cognitive load emerge during the learning process: intrinsic load – associated with the inherent complexity of the material being learned; extraneous load – additional load resulting from inadequate presentation of material; and germane load – productive load that directly contributes to learning. In distance education settings, the teacher's task is to minimize extraneous load as much as possible while maximizing germane load. To achieve this, instructional materials must be presented in a concise, logically sequenced manner, free from distracting elements.

American researcher Richard Mayer, who applied cognitive load theory to the multimedia environment, developed his multimedia learning principles [2]. Mayer argues that people learn better when words and pictures are presented together rather than separately. Based on this conclusion, Mayer proposed a series of practical recommendations: corresponding text and images should be placed near each other (spatial contiguity principle); text and images should be presented simultaneously (temporal contiguity principle); extraneous words, pictures, or sounds should be eliminated (coherence principle); complex material should be divided into smaller segments, allowing the student to learn at their own pace (segmenting principle). These principles hold significant practical value for preparing video lessons, presentations, and interactive exercises intended for language teaching in distance education.

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Another important psycholinguistic aspect of language learning in the online environment concerns the mechanisms of attention distribution and selective processing. When a student sits before a screen, numerous factors compete for their attention notifications, advertisements, other parallel open windows. In such conditions, directing the student's attention to the most important parts of the instructional material becomes a critical task. Researchers note that providing students with clear instructions, highlighting key concepts through color or font, and outlining the main issues to be learned at the beginning of each lesson are effective methods of attention management [3, 4]. Furthermore, interactive elements – in-text questions, short quizzes, clickable transcripts help maintain the student's active attention.

For effective assimilation of language material in distance education, two important strategies "chunking" and "scaffolding" are widely employed. The chunking strategy involves breaking information into small, meaningful units. Based on the classical principle that human working memory can hold approximately 5 to 9 units of information at a time, this strategy is particularly beneficial in distance education [5]. For instance, when teaching new vocabulary, grouping words thematically; dividing grammatical rules into separate mini-lessons; and segmenting text into meaningful paragraphs for study represent practical applications of chunking.

The scaffolding strategy, based on Lev Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, involves providing the student with greater support at the initial stage and gradually reducing this support as their competence increases [6]. In distance education, this strategy manifests in various forms: providing detailed instructions and ready-made templates in the initial lessons; subsequently reducing instructions and creating greater opportunities for independent work; and offering guiding questions and advice when completing complex tasks. This strategy holds particular significance for non-philological students, as they require additional support when applying the foreign language in professional contexts [7].

As mentioned above, the mechanisms of language perception and processing in distance education constitute a complex and multifactorial process. While Sweller's cognitive load theory and Mayer's multimedia principles provide clear

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guidance on how to present information, attention management, chunking, and scaffolding strategies support this process from a practical standpoint. All of these mechanisms serve to efficiently allocate the student's limited cognitive resources and, consequently, facilitate deeper assimilation of language material.

Speech Activity and Language Production Processes

In distance education, the formation of speech activity in a foreign language holds particular significance, as the student often remains in the role of a passive listener due to limited live interaction in the online environment. Understanding the mechanisms of speech production, however, helps to address this problem. In this regard, two authoritative approaches – A.A. Leontiev's psycholinguistic views and W. Levelt's speech production model – serve as an important theoretical foundation.

Russian psycholinguist A.A. Leontyev studied speech activity as one of the most complex processes of the human psyche. According to his theory, speech activity emerges from the interaction of perception, memory, and direct speech mechanisms [1]. Leontiev divides speech activity into four stages: the motivational stage (the need to speak), the thinking stage (formation of thought in an internal plan), the programming stage (transformation of thought into linguistic units), and the execution stage (production of external speech). In distance education, the motivational stage is particularly at risk of weakening, as the student's need for live interaction decreases. Therefore, creating artificial communication situations in online lessons is considered essential.

Dutch psycholinguist W. Levelt explained the process of speech production through a three-stage model [2]. The first stage- conceptualization or planning involves the speaker determining what they intend to say. The second stage - formulation involves transforming thought into words, grammatical forms, and sentence structures. The third stage - articulation involves the pronunciation of the formulated speech. Levelt emphasizes that these three stages occur in parallel, meaning that while the speaker is articulating one sentence, they are already planning the next. This model substantiates the necessity of providing students in the online environment with a brief preparation time before speaking.

Fluent speech in a foreign language largely depends on processing speed and automaticity. Native speakers do not consciously think about grammatical rules

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these processes have become automatized. Achieving a similar level of automaticity in a foreign language is the primary condition for fluent speech [3]. The most effective means of achieving this is through repetitive practice based on authentic materials. Authentic materials - natural videos, podcasts, and interviews created for native speakers bring the student closer to a real language environment [4]. When working with such materials, merely listening or watching is insufficient: systematic exercises such as initially understanding the general content of a short video, then focusing on specific phrases, and finally repeating aloud yield effective results [5, 6].

Furthermore, listening and speaking skills are closely interconnected. According to Levelt's model, speech production and speech perception rely on common mechanisms in the brain [2]. Therefore, exercises such as immediately repeating aloud a newly heard phrase, retelling an audio recording in one's own words, and answering questions based on an authentic interview develop both skills in parallel. A. Makhmudov's research noted that students who participated in online collaborative projects significantly improved their speech fluency through working with authentic materials [7].

In conclusion, the development of speech activity in distance education must be based on Leontiev's and Levelt's models. Systematic repetitive practice aimed at increasing processing speed and automaticity, especially when combined with authentic materials, constitutes a reliable path to shaping the student's speech fluency.

Motivation, Emotional State, and Affective Factors

The effectiveness of foreign language acquisition in distance education depends not only on cognitive abilities but also directly on the student's emotional state and motivation. In the online environment, deprived of the live interaction and direct teacher support characteristic of the traditional classroom, it is precisely these factors that acquire primary importance. Research in this direction has comprehensively illuminated the influence of factors such as motivation, psychological anxiety, self-confidence, and affective support on the language learning process.

American researcher H. Douglas Brown, in his fundamental work on principles of language learning and teaching, evaluates motivation as the central component

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of psycholinguistic influence [1]. According to Brown, success in foreign language acquisition largely depends on the level of the student's intrinsic motivation. He distinguishes two main types of motivation: intrinsic motivation – deriving pleasure from the language learning process itself, interest in new knowledge; and extrinsic motivation – motivation based on external incentives such as passing examinations, obtaining good grades, or securing employment. Brown emphasizes intrinsic motivation as the primary force producing long-term and sustainable results. In distance education settings, due to reduced external control, the role of intrinsic motivation increases further. Therefore, when designing online courses, selecting content that arouses the student's interest, aligns with their professional needs, and is personally meaningful holds significant importance.

One of the factors exerting a negative impact on the language learning process in distance education is psychological anxiety or language use apprehension. Chinese researcher X. Zhang, in a study published in 2021, investigated the level of psychological anxiety observed among students in online foreign language courses and its impact on learning outcomes [2]. The research results demonstrated that high levels of anxiety seriously impair the student's ability to receive language material, retain it in memory, and particularly their oral speech ability. Anxious students avoid active participation in lessons, excessively fear making errors, and lack confidence in their abilities. Zhang recommends a series of effective strategies to address this problem: establishing group learning and peer collaboration, helping students accept errors as a natural part of the learning process, creating opportunities for anonymous questioning, and providing regular encouraging feedback from the teacher. These recommendations serve to create psychologically comfortable conditions in the distance education environment.

Self-confidence and psychological support factors are closely linked to motivation and anxiety. The student's confidence in their language ability determines their activity in learning, their resilience in the face of difficulties, and their readiness to assimilate new material [3]. In distance education settings, especially for students compelled to communicate through a screen, the fear of being ridiculed for speech errors or being misunderstood may intensify. Therefore, the teacher's supportive stance and constructive approach to errors

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hold significant importance. M. Ashurova, in her research, emphasizes that tasks with relevant, engaging, and professionally meaningful content increase students' self-confidence and enhance their cognitive activity [4].

One of the practical mechanisms of psychological support is affective "scaffolding" a support system aimed at providing emotional assistance. Affective scaffolding is implemented through two main sources: the teacher's encouraging feedback and peer mutual support. The feedback provided by the teacher should include not only pointing out errors but also highlighting the student's strengths, acknowledging achieved progress, and providing clear directions for further development [5]. In distance education platforms, this task can be accomplished through automated assessment systems, personal messages, and video communications.

Peer mutual support serves as an effective means of reducing social isolation in distance education. A. Makhmudov's research noted that students who participated in online collaborative projects increased not only their language skills but also their self-confidence through mutual assistance and exchange of ideas [6]. Activity types such as forums, group discussions, pair work, and peer assessment allow students to compare their knowledge with peers, solve problems collaboratively, and share the experience of success. This, in turn, reduces language learning anxiety and strengthens intrinsic motivation.

In conclusion, motivation, emotional state, and affective factors constitute an integral component of language acquisition effectiveness in distance education. Brown's views on motivation substantiate the primacy of intrinsic motivation, while Zhang's research demonstrates the negative consequences of psychological anxiety and ways to overcome them. Affective scaffolding teacher feedback and peer support serves as an effective tool for creating a psychologically comfortable learning environment for the student. Distance education organized with due consideration of all these factors strengthens not only the student's language knowledge but also their self-confidence and readiness for independent learning.

Metacognitive Strategies and Independent Learning

In distance education settings, the student's success largely depends on how well they can manage their own cognitive processes. In the online environment, where teacher supervision is reduced and the proportion of independent work is high, it

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is precisely this ability that is, planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning – that acquires primary significance. This ability is termed metacognition in psychology, and its scientific foundations were developed by American psychologist John Flavell.

In his research published in 1979, Flavell defined metacognition as "knowledge about one's own cognitive processes and the ability to manage these processes" [1]. According to him, metacognition consists of two main components. The first is metacognitive knowledge – the individual's awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, and of which strategy is effective in which situation. The second is metacognitive control – encompassing practical actions such as planning the learning process, monitoring it, and evaluating results. The importance of metacognition is particularly high in distance education, as the student often works in isolation and is compelled to independently choose their learning path.

Among metacognitive strategies, three methods are the most widely used and proven effective: predicting content, summarizing, and self-questioning. Predicting content involves hypothesizing about the content of a text or audio material before engaging with it – for example, predicting what a text will be about based on its title or recalling prior knowledge on the topic. This method prepares the brain to receive new information and facilitates comprehension [2]. Summarizing involves extracting the main ideas of read or heard material and expressing them in concise form. Self-questioning involves the student asking themselves questions while working on material, such as "Did I understand this correctly?", "What is the main idea of this section?", "How does this information relate to my prior knowledge?" [3, 4].

N. Abdullaeva studied the effectiveness of applying metacognitive strategies in online English language modules [5]. Her research results showed that students who received specialized training in strategies such as predicting content, summarizing, and self-questioning achieved significantly higher results compared to the control group. They understood texts better, retained key information longer, and completed tasks with fewer errors. According to Abdullaeva, metacognitive strategies are not innate abilities but can be developed through specialized training.

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Reflective prompts and self-assessment on digital platforms constitute another important tool for shaping metacognitive skills. S. Mamatkulova, in her research, demonstrated that reflective prompts integrated into digital platforms – that is, questions and tasks that encourage the student to analyze their own activity – significantly increase students' self-assessment skills [6]. Among such prompts, questions such as "Which part of this topic was the most difficult for you to master?", "Which strategy helped you the most?", "What would you do differently next time?" hold a special place. Such questions, delivered automatically on the platform, encourage the student to regularly reflect on their learning process.

There are several effective ways to implement metacognitive strategies in daily learning practice. The first is maintaining learning journals. The student briefly records each day or each week the new words they have learned, the difficulties they have encountered, the strategies they have employed, and the achievements they have attained. This not only consolidates memory but also allows the student to monitor their own development [7]. The second is setting weekly goals. Writing down specific, measurable, and achievable goals at the beginning of each week and checking their completion at the end of the week strengthens the student's self-management ability. The third is regularly using platform-integrated quizzes and self-assessment tests. Such tests allow the student to objectively assess their knowledge level and identify which topics need to be reviewed [4].

G. Karimova, in her research, studied the effectiveness of specialized tasks aimed at developing metacognitive skills [7]. In her view, tasks such as "What strategies did you use to understand this text?" or "Summarize the errors made and suggest ways to correct them" gradually cultivate in students a conscious attitude toward their own learning process. Such tasks encourage students not to limit themselves to merely reading or listening, but also to analyze their own cognitive activity.

In conclusion, metacognitive strategies constitute the primary tool for developing independent learning skills in distance education. The concept of metacognition, scientifically grounded by Flavell, demonstrates that the ability to understand and manage one's own cognitive processes is an essential condition for successful learning. While strategies such as predicting content, summarizing, and self-questioning help process language material more deeply, learning journals,

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weekly goals, and regular self-assessment practices serve to transform these skills into daily habits.

Multimodal Information Presentation and the Role of Context

In distance education, presenting language material not merely through text or audio alone but by simultaneously appealing to multiple sensory channels yields considerably more effective results. This approach is precisely termed multimodality, and it is based on the integration of auditory, visual, and textual information.

S. Omonov, in his research, emphasized that students understand and retain information more effectively when auditory, visual, and textual input elements are used in combination [1]. Materials such as video interviews, subtitled recordings, infographics, and interactive simulations transmit information through several channels simultaneously, helping to form richer mental representations of language in the brain. M. Isroilova, in her experiment with natural science students, demonstrated that the combined use of lecture videos, authentic datasets, and discussion forums not only reinforced comprehension but also developed independent thinking [2].

Another important aspect of the multimodal approach relates to the role of cultural knowledge and context. In order to learn to use language not merely as vocabulary and grammar but in specific social and professional environments, the student must be familiar with the context characteristic of that environment. Tasks such as analyzing professional emails, scientific annotations, business correspondence, or interviews simultaneously activate linguistic, cognitive, and cultural knowledge in the student [3]. Through such tasks, the student learns not only linguistic units but also how they are used in real situations.

The significance of social interaction in the language learning process is also considerable. As D. Sharipova notes, activity types such as asynchronous discussion forums, collaborative writing tasks, and peer assessment develop in students not only language skills but also the ability to substantiate their own opinions and respond to the opinions of others [4]. G. Akhmedova found that students who participated in online peer feedback cycles demonstrated better results in subsequent tasks by analyzing and correcting their errors [5].

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In conclusion, multimodal information presentation and context-based approaches constitute an essential condition for enhancing the effectiveness of language learning in distance education. The integration of auditory, visual, and textual channels, materials appropriate to professional contexts, and social interaction provided through forums and collaborative tasks all serve to facilitate the student's deeper assimilation of the language.

The analyses presented above have demonstrated that the effective teaching of a foreign language in distance education requires that psycholinguistic factors – attention, memory, speech production mechanisms, motivation, emotional state, and metacognitive strategies be taken into account as an integrated system. Due to the fact that language material in the online environment is primarily received through audiovisual channels, appropriate management of cognitive load, utilization of multimodal presentation, and ensuring the student's psychological comfort were identified as fundamental conditions for enhancing educational effectiveness. Furthermore, the formation of independent learning skills in students, particularly teaching them to consciously manage their own cognitive processes, was designated as an important task of distance language education. The psycholinguistic aspects elucidated in this chapter are inextricably linked with the theoretical foundations and didactic principles set forth in the preceding sections of the dissertation, thereby serving to create a holistic conceptual basis for distance English language teaching to students of non-philological specializations.

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