Opportunities for Organization of Classes in Foreign Languages by Means of Microsoft Teams (in the Practice of Teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language)

Olha Hrytsenko
Language training department, Zaporizhzhia State Medical University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

Iryna Zozulia
Linguistic Department, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, Ukraine

Iryna Kushnir
Language Training Department 1, Institute of International Education for Study and Research, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Tetiana Aleksieienko
Language Training Department 1, Institute of International Education for Study and Research, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Alla Stadnii
Linguistic Department, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, Ukraine

Abstract—The characteristic aspects of learning a foreign language require special resources and tools for online learning. Criteria for choosing educational platforms depend on the key elements of an academic subject area. Microsoft Teams (hereafter, MT) educational platform is considered to be a competitive one because it meets most of the needs that arise during the formation of a secondary linguistic persona. Due to a large number of enterprise programs, there is a successful acquisition of language skills and the implementation of all types of oral activities for students. A significant MT advantage is the constant analysis and monitoring of participants' needs in the educational process by developers. The article highlights both MT advantages and disadvantages. The attention is drawn to individual programs, which, in the authors' opinion, are the most successful to learn writing, reading, speaking, and listening, as well as organising classes that meet the needs of modern foreign students.

Index Terms—Microsoft Teams, distance learning, speaking skills

I. INTRODUCTION

The epidemiological challenges faced by the world in 2020, the technology development, education internationalization and standardization determine new requirements for the educational process. The issue of ensuring a productive educational process, both blended and distance, in addition to new requirements for classroom work after quarantine restrictions, is at the top of the agenda. Recently, linguodidactics scholars have paid a lot of attention to various aspects of online learning: general issues of distance learning, software, implementation of control, etc. Teaching the humanities has particular characteristics, which lead to differences in organizing distance language learning, as well as choosing the resources involved, online tools, and instruments.

Learning a foreign language means acquiring theoretical linguistic knowledge of phonetics, word formation, vocabulary, grammar, as well and above all acquiring verbal skills. Registered by teachers as the most difficult language learning aspect for foreign students, speaking is not so much about memorizing words and learning grammar rules, but mostly about learning how to listen, read, speak, and write.

Knowledge of the Ukrainian language is a soft skill for foreigners. First, they interpret these skills as the opportunity to get the appropriate level of knowledge in special disciplines. Foreign students are also aware of the importance of communicative competencies. It will allow them to fulfil their professional capacity during the training. Therefore, the correct and appropriate choice of software for foreign language distance learning will help to make this process fully functional. *Zoom* enjoys the widest popularity among Ukrainian educators for online classes, owing to its, sufficient functionality, and general user-friendliness. To organize distance learning, Ukrainian institutions of higher education

turned to use online courses hosted by *Moodle* and *eDx* platforms. However, they have encountered a problem in creating and implementing platforms that could provide space for convenient work of the educational process participants. There are more than 700 LMS platforms on the world market (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020). However, nowadays, the most popular platforms in Ukrainian institutions of higher education are *Moodle*, *Google Classroom*, and *Microsoft Teams* (hereafter, MT). Each platform deserves the close and accurate attention of educators, anticipates the needs of the educational process, and has both advantages and disadvantages. In this article, we analyze the organization of foreign language learning using MT platform as a center for teamwork.

It is worth paying attention that the term "learning platform" is defined as "a comprehensive solution designed primarily to ensure the educational process", and "NOT messengers, e-mail and NOT a communication platform with LMS capability implemented as an add-on module and/or their combination" (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020, pp. 47-49). MT platform has been the study object of various academic and scientific-pedagogical kinds of research. Scholars and educators have revealed general issues regarding the use of MT in general (Savchuk, 2021) and in the education of different countries (Pal & Vanijja, 2020; Hubbardet et al., 2021; Rababah, 2020), as well as explained the peculiarities of the use of this learning platform in the study of individual disciplines. Some scholars have described the use of certain MT enterprise programs in their works. In particular, Zhelyazkova (2021) has described the work with the online whiteboard. MT adaptation to teach English is considered by Schneider, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of Microsoft Teams (Schneider, 2020). Calero (2020) has analyzed the use of Office 365 tools for educational purposes, particularly in foreign language teaching, in the context of higher education in Ecuador, and developed an English-language guide that improves Office 365 integration into language teaching. Bsharat and Behak (2020) highlight the MT impact on improving distance learning of English, and the role and benefits of e-learning during quarantine. Yen and Nhi (2021), Rababah (2020), and Ahmad (2020) reveal the practice of using MT platform in teaching English through the lens of students' perception. Describing students' attitudes to the use of MT in learning English, Rababah identifies three positive (convenience, efficiency, and common resources) and two negative (technical challenges and difficulties in performing certain exercises) platform features (2020). Pascan (2020) implemented the expediency of using MT platform for teaching Romanian to foreign medical students. The French language learning using MT is described in the article by Alabay (2021). The general analysis of the MT resources adaptation to ensure the teaching of a foreign language, in particular Ukrainian, has not attracted scholars' attention before.

The objective of the study is to determine the adaptability of MT tools to the organization of the educational process in a foreign language. The implementation of this objective will be facilitated by the following tasks: description of the resources of MT platform that can be involved in distance learning of a foreign language; analysis of the feasibility of using specific enterprise programs when working on students' verbal skills; identification of advantages and disadvantages, as well as ensuring synchronous and asynchronous work of participants using MT.

II. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the period between 2020-2021 at the premises of Zaporizhzhia State Medical University (hereinafter, ZSMU), Vinnytsia National Technical University (hereinafter, VNTU), and V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (hereinafter, KKhNU). Thanks to the favorable policy of the administration of these universities, an experiment was conducted to involve MT platform and separate interactive programs during distance, blended and classroom learning of foreign students from India, Morocco, Nigeria, Ecuador, and Tunisia.

The study used direct and indirect observation, pedagogical experiment, and repeated pedagogical experiment to determine the feasibility of using the proposed resources in foreign language education for adults, and the educational tactics of involving interactive technologies to improve students' motivation and lesson efficiency. The use of the comparative method enabled to determine the level of effectiveness of certain programs in the formation of specific types of oral activity. Quantitative and descriptive methods contribute to the generalization of the obtained results.

III. Results

MT is a space that contains a chat for meetings, file sharing service and enterprise programs that can meet almost any demanding educator's requirements. MT meets such criteria for choosing a learning platform as cross-platform and ergonomics (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020). To get full functionality, it is advisable to download MT application, as in the browser version, the functional kit is incomplete. However, the application overloads the computer. This platform provides free (with limited resources) and paid options, whose functionality depends on the package. An account can be either individual (created by an individual user, not controlled by an organization) or institutional.

The enterprise authorization service for users created by university administrators is mandatory for distance learning in higher education institutions (hereinafter – HEIs) in Ukraine. MT platform provides the personalization of the educational process participants (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020). The administration of the educational institution establishes the rights and controls of all enterprise participants.

The initial stage of work with MT means the creation of a team to which the educator invites students of an academic group. This process is greatly simplified due to the well-coordinated work of the university departments, in particular the timely creation of students' accounts, and the organization of academic groups on the platform by the dean's office.

If necessary, an educator can customize certain settings: change the name of a team, upload a team avatar, and set additional rights for team members (permission to respond, write messages, download documents, etc.). The option of uploading an avatar helps to improve the psychological atmosphere during language training. When students are added, an invitation letter is automatically sent to each participant in the enterprise Outlook, and this action is recorded in the *Activities* tab.

MT platform has different interface languages. The authors are pleased to remark that the developers have worked hard to support the Ukrainian-language interface which meets the mandatory requirements for training platforms defined by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (hereafter, MES) (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020).

The *Posts* tab, as well as starting page and home page, contains all the information about online classes, assignments, shared materials, etc.

Figure 1. 'Posts'Tab

Publishing is allowed by an educator and can be implemented in two options: only by an educator or by all participants. There are several ways to publish: announcements, important information, regular posts, polls, prizes, etc. The ad is different from other messages in the newsfeed: it has a title, topic and the message itself, important guidance information for the initial or final stage of the course.

Figure 2. Using the" Ads" Tab

The message marked *important* is also visually different, but stands out less than the previous type. In our opinion, the inability to pin a message in the newsfeed is a disadvantage. The survey report (which we will address later) allows us to quickly find out someone's thoughts on a particular issue. It looks like a test with a condition, a question and answers.

Figure 3. Using "Express Survey"

For instance, it can help an educator to find out about the performance of a task during group work with a project, incentify students' independent work, and control the mastery level of educational staff. One of the disadvantages of these surveys is the inability to offer an open answer, which can compromise the objectivity of the results. The message of praise (Prize) allows an educator to award students for certain achievements.

The correspondence function allows students to communicate with classmates and an educator in general or in private chat. Permission to respond to messages is also set by an educator. Students use emojis to express their opinion on the question, which cuts the distance between participants and allows them to express their emotions. We should note that while some students cannot afford certain behaviors during classroom work, the barriers in cyberspace are almost eliminated. This meets one of the mandatory requirements for the functionality of the educational platform, recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (Stadnyj & Nikolayev, 2020).

MT enables the educator to quickly schedule a lesson. This can be done on a team page or through the *Calendar* tab. By selecting a channel when planning lessons, the program automatically creates a similar event in the *Calendar* tab for the students.

During the meeting, each participant can turn on / off the video and microphone, set the desired background, and write in the chat. An instructor can invite any other participant by entering their name or account in the search bar on the *Participants* tab or by sending an invitation to the meeting. In the *Participants* tab, the educator can also download a list of meeting participants. MT developers have also suggested *Insights*, which gives an opportunity to easily control the work of each student, even taking into account homework and work with certain documents.
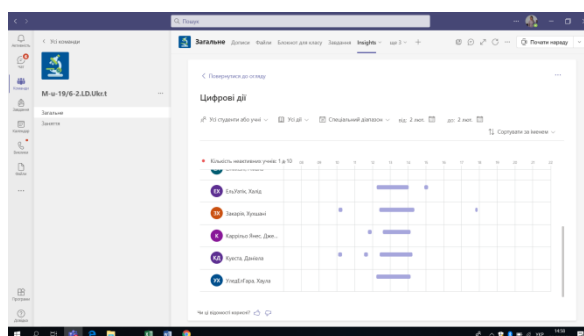
Figure 4. Working With the "Insights" Program

For an educator, the system secures useful functions for setting up space for the online lesson, such as the gallery, the large gallery and the virtual auditorium.

Since the formation of a secondary language persona involves shaping writing skills, it is appropriate to write messages in the chat. These can be short written answers to a topical issue or just short training exercises.

An online foreign language class primarily involves the educator's communication with students and students with each other. Therefore, it is better to replace grammar or language material with an express survey, which has already been discussed, and to allocate online time for more important tasks in terms of communicative practicality. The disadvantage here is that an express survey during a synchronous lesson can be created only by returning to the "Posts" tab, which takes an educator's time and is inconvenient.

Students' oral answers need to be corrected. To rationally use the time of the online lesson and to keep a friendly atmosphere, you can indicate a student's "active name" in the general chat of the meeting, record mistakes without interrupting him/her, and then allow analyzing. Mistakes can be recorded in the student's chat. Working on mistakes is mandatory when learning a foreign language, but the decision to publish mistakes with an indication of a specific person depends on the psychological climate in the group. A different way of error analysis is to assess each other's answers. Students listen, write down someone's mistakes in the chat, and then discuss them. This type of work intensifies writing, as well as listening skills. For the rational use of time during someone's speaking, it is necessary to offer another task to the rest of the students.

The option of screen sharing is available to the meeting organizer. Moreover, a lecturer can grant this right to other participants. Screen demonstration allows you to successfully organize audition exercises. For example, an educator launches a video or audio from his/her computer, and simultaneously gives a link in the chat to a pre-prepared test, creates a task in the 'Task' tab, or simply sends a photo of a multiple choice test (a test screenshot) and asks students to give answers in the chat. Students view the proposed materials together but do the test individually. The possible drawback here is that students might find the task video on the Internet and watch it with subtitles in their native language. Considering it, it is necessary to properly allocate time and set a time limit.

Numerous scholars drew attention to the expediency of using cards when learning a foreign language, emphasizing the involvement of different channels of perception. Flash cards may contain new vocabulary, grammar, etc. The authors have a positive experience with *Quizlet* software, which allows the creation of cards using both lexemes and pictures. Based on the translation method of teaching, you can submit a Ukrainian word and its equivalent from a student's native language. The other way of exposing the students to new words is through a visual stimulus. Cards comprising words (or phraseological units) and pictures will help them with mosaic thinking to master the material. For semantizing new lexical items, the descriptive method is successful. Therefore, on the one hand, you present a lexical unit or phraseme, and, on the other hand, give its interpretation. Such cards can be used at the stage of introducing new material, during memorization, for summarizing the already learned material, and for refreshing the old knowledge. In

addition, this program allows you to organize students' independent work. It combines all the material selected by an educator and presents it in the form of training exercises with intermediate results, and envisages a control test at the final stage. Besides, such tests can be printed out to keep track of the student's success during the lesson.
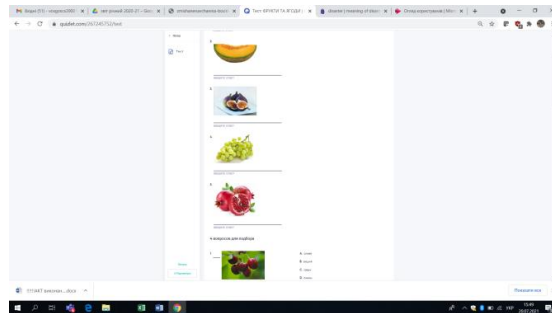

Figure 5. Automatically Generated Test in Quizlet

The program diagnoses the tasks performed and highlights problematic issues that should be addressed again. Its disadvantages are mandatory registration, no Ukrainian language option and low-quality translation into Ukrainian.

It is necessary to work on a whiteboard during online meetings. MT offers to use the *Whiteboard* tab. Instead, many educators use an empty Word document with the same purpose. The reasons for avoiding working with the *Whiteboard* are due to several inconveniences: its full functionality is available only after installing the program, and this overloads a computer; during an online meeting there is no access to pre-prepared layouts for the *Whiteboard*. You can use an instant blank board at the lesson, although the board created during the meeting is automatically saved in MT library.

Because of the constant updating of enterprise programs and figures, downloading documents and videos, creating blocks, comments or posts, etc. have become available. Only an educator can work with the online board, for example, to explain the material, or it can be used in collaboration with students. The disadvantage of shared use of the board is the inability to block certain objects on it, to quickly make links between objects with graphic tags, a small number of templates, and the lack of a general board layout, which complicates the search. The board created at the lesson can be saved and downloaded later, distributed to students for review, and used in subsequent classes to refresh knowledge.

In our opinion, it is more appropriate to use other interactive whiteboards, *Miro* in particular. The presence of the board layout in the lower right corner simplifies cooperative work, as well as searching for material on the board. When planning classes, an educator creates a board for which he/she selects several frames – stages of work or tasks, and then fills them with the necessary material. In addition to standard elements, there are many other interesting features: designed blocks, inserts, formatting, links between elements, etc. For example, as a warmer, the students are asked what they did at the weekend. While the students are talking, the educator is briefly recording the mentioned activities in the wrong order on a pre-prepared board with students' names on it. When all the students have shared their stories, the educator gives a link to the board for collaboration and suggests a matching activity to the student's name.
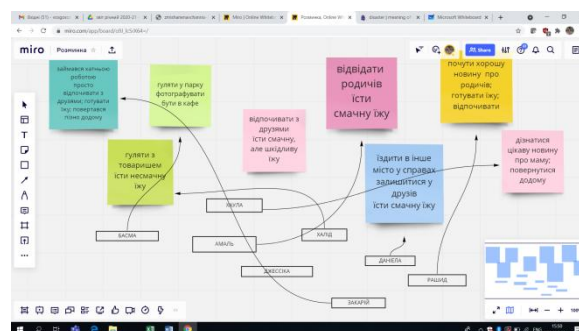

Figure 6. Working With Miro Board

You can use the *Miro* board for the material of any format. Moreover, you can select and save separate elements (pages, slides) from the attached document. The function of blocking elements facilitates the organized students' work, as it does not permit to move elements on the prepared board. For example, while learning new vocabulary, students are asked to sign photos in a frame with sticker words. This way, new lexical material is mastered and writing skills are improved. An educator can see what a student is doing (having an active marker with a participant's name), what part he is working on, and who has made writings (there is a remark about the performer) while staying in touch with the other students.
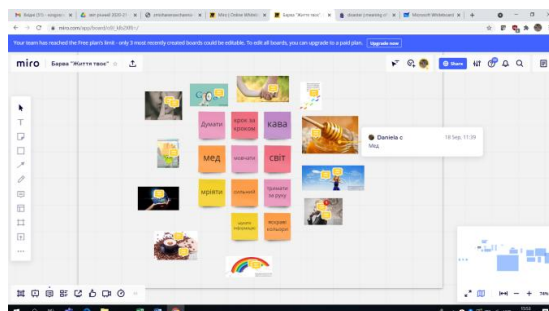
Figure 7. Organization of Cooperation on Miro Board

Miro board allows for creating knowledge maps of different types and complexity. While working on a specific topic or problem, an educator creates a blank card, and then students who are responsible for a particular element in this card, improve it. For example, an educator adds all the learned topic vocabulary to the board and creates blocks with questions, parts of speech or generic concepts, and assigns the students in advance to group the words correctly.

An educator can also give students the task to create a map together on a certain topic: first, foreigners get acquainted with the material and identify possible groups and subgroups. This work has several advantages: it activates the thinking process, helps to organize students, requires communication and information analysis, as well as improves skills in the use of information technology. Unfortunately, since 2021, there are free and cost options for Miro use. However, the free version has become considerably limited.

Since 2021, MT has acquired the opportunity to create separate rooms during meetings. It is important when developing foreign language competence, as it helps to improve oral speech as well as to build friendly relations in a group. MT suggests dividing the meeting participants into the required number of rooms automatically or manually. A meeting organizer has the right to open a room and resume the general meeting. The disadvantages are the inability to inform all students in the chat at once because each room has its chat, so the educator is unable to control the work of all subgroups. Therefore, he/she has to visit each room in turn. When dividing students, educators should make sure that those gathered in one room have only one intermediary language (Ukrainian). Certainly, the character of each student and their relationship affect the productivity of such work.

Another way to organize the collaboration between students in class is to use *OneNote* application. It is an online notebook divided into several sections. There is *Library* where you can store all the necessary learning materials. *Only for Educators* is a space where a teacher can accumulate the materials and notes. *Space for cooperation* is a space where team members can work. Besides, there are individual pages for each group participant. For collective work, the section *Collaboration space* is used, and the remaining notes are signed by the name of the author.

The *Note* page can be shared on each participant's page. For example, an educator explains the rules for the genitive case using a page in *Note*: drawing pictures, texting elements, highlighting with color, using handwritten inscriptions, etc., and then distributing this page to students. The created document can serve as material for refreshing knowledge in self-revision or generalization in-class learning. *Note* can also be employed for lexical and grammatical exercises, especially those involving gap-filling.

The use of information technologies in the educational process aims to create a favorable learning environment, increase motivation, as well as systematize students' independent work. That is why teachers often use software to create interactive exercises for online classes and students' self-studies. The most popular are *LearningApps* and *Wordwall*. They enable learning and practising certain skills in a fascinating way. In our practice, such exercises are most often used to memorize lexical and grammatical material at the initial stage of foreign language learning, because they use the strategies of gamification, presenting the material in a simple and learner-friendly way. Nevertheless, we consider them useful even for advanced level students.

Distance learning and the 21st-century educational process, in general, require supporting material for classes, as well as videos, which would briefly present the basic theory and rules. It should be mentioned that a meeting held on MT platform can be recorded and then used to create content for a course unit. MT values the personal confidentiality of participants, and therefore, upon entering the recorded meeting, everyone is informed about the recording process. Yen and Nhi (2021) also note the value of video recording, emphasizing that students can adjust the speed of viewing recorded material.

Successful language mastery depends on the educator's skills, and the appropriateness of methods and tools used. However, it primarily depends on the persistent regular work of those who want to start speaking. Therefore, self-education, which includes homework, is important. Each MT command has the *Tasks* tab, through which students are assigned tasks. It presumes the opportunity to assign a tag, such as "test", "homework" or "class work", as well as to organize all students' assignments. You can choose between such options as "tasks", "test" and "choose from the available" in the mentioned tab.

When using the "tasks" option, a teacher can specify the name, write down their tasks and tips on performance, add any necessary resources, specify a rating scale, as well as assign tasks to the whole team or individually, and set the starting point and end time of work. The function of determining the evaluation criteria allows students to clearly

understand the requirements for performance and an educator to give a reason for the grade. For committed educators, this option is advantageous as it provides the ability to plan tasks.
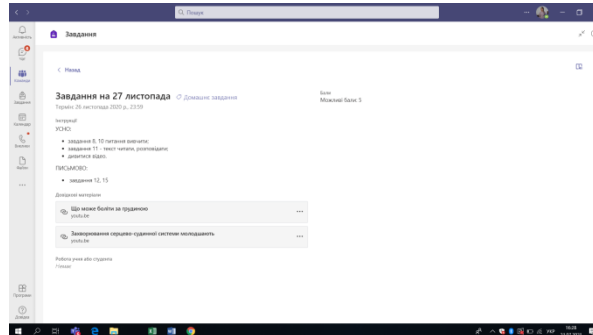

Figure 8. View of Assignment on Student's Page

While correcting a test, a teacher can comment on work, highlighting a mistake and adding a comment. By selecting the "review" function, all remarks and marks made by a teacher during a test are highlighted in red in the student's work.

However, when the task presumes the students to do it on paper and then take a photo and attach it to a special slot, the process of grading and commenting slows down dramatically. Since any corrections and comments can be done only after downloading, it takes time and reduces computer performance. Each grade given for task performance is put into a general gradebook hosted in the "Grades" tab.

Figure 9. "Grades" Tab

You can also assign homework using *OneNote* enterprise application mentioned above. Since the vast majority of time is spent on lexical and grammatical exercises, it is advisable to use such types of exercises which can be distributed to all students simultaneously, such as multiple choice or gap filling. It saves time on rewriting. You can grade the work by adding a mark at the bottom or inserting a sticker meaning 'excellent', 'good', etc. We consider the first proposed option (using the *Tasks* tab) of assigning more convenient because all the exercises are ordered systematically, and grades are recorded, which makes it easy to use. Thus, a variety of exercises to practise language skills, and improve writing, reading and listening skills can be implemented using MT.

Checking vocabulary and grammar knowledge, as well as reading, writing, and listening, can be implemented using Microsoft Forms. An author of a test can adjust its special background and supplement it with a video or audio.
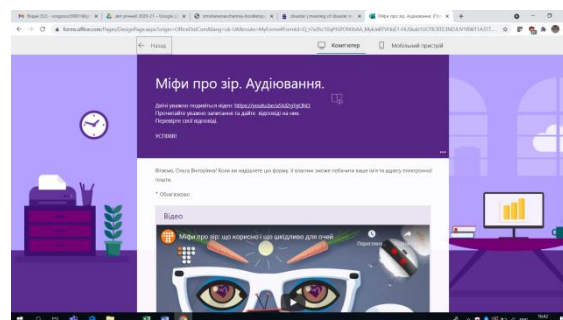

Figure 10. Sample Test in Forms

Microsoft Forms offer a wide range of options: they enable to create single- and multiple-choice tasks, true/false tests, gap filling, sentence completion, and open cloze tasks. Every item of the test can be adjusted individually – changed, designed, or removed. When creating test tasks, an author sets the score for each question, as well as indicates the

correct answer or in the case of open cloze tasks, writes it in a special bar. This automates and simplifies the process of checking. Additionally, the settings for test performance, deadlines, feedback, the way to notify about the score, etc. can be adjusted. Moreover, you can add the *Upload File* element which allows a student to upload only one document of any format to a test. You can share a Microsoft Forms test through the *Tasks* tab or by sharing the link. However, the drawback of this application is that it does not distinguish between uppercase and lowercase letters, and ignores punctuation marks, which are essential for the Ukrainian language and might be less mandatory in other foreign languages. The enterprise application also allows you to analyze tasks for their relevance and correctness. Microsoft Forms provides complete analytics on the number of correct and incorrect answers, the complexity of tasks, etc.
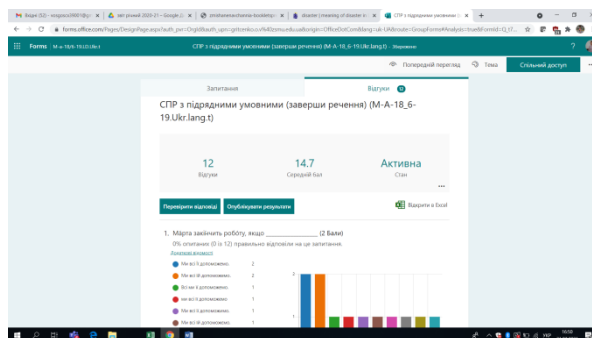

Figure 11. Analysis of Answers in Forms

The application advantages include the laconic design. With personalization only through Microsoft, the Forms tool can be used for designing final tests.

For the formative assessment, it is more appropriate to use the *Classtime* application, which has a nice interface and wide functionality. A teacher needs *Library* (to save tests) and *Sessions* (to organize group work). Educators can create their tests, copy the existing ones in the system, or use materials shared by colleagues. *Classtime* advantages include many task types, no registration, and recording session results.
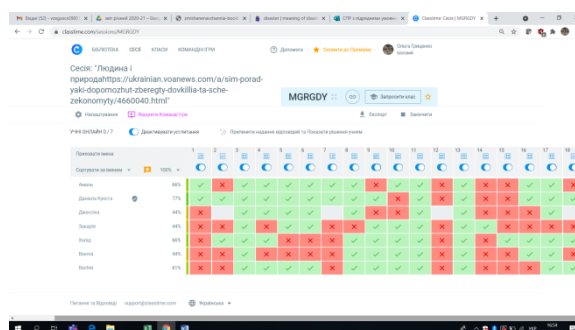

Figure 12. View of Answer Sheet of Session

Answers are checked automatically, although open answers to questions still require a manual check. However, the system is more adaptable than Google or Microsoft Forms. For instance, listening can be arranged the following way: the teacher offers to watch a video, shares the screen, and sends a link to *Classtime* test in the chat. Students may be assigned a regular test or the game mode. In any case, a teacher collects group results, which enables a brief assessment of the performance and error correction in the classroom.

The function of step-by-step accomplishment is very useful when the teacher gives access to every following task. For example, having read a text, students start doing a reading comprehension test. A teacher shares a link to a *Classtime* test which is arranged so that students can only perform that task, the access to which is permitted by the moderator. The option of step-by-step accomplishment is expedient during the memorization of new material, preparation for the test, error correction, etc. The advantage of this program is a functionally elaborated undemonstrative design. However, all extra features like setting the completion time, exporting students' answers, etc., are only available in the paid package. There is also no option to add a document. This application enables one to check vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, and partially writing.

In our opinion, the 'game' function, mentioned in *Classtime*, is significantly inferior to the capabilities of the *Kahoot* application, integrated into MT. It does not require any additional registration. When creating a test, an educator should take into consideration students' ability to choose 'game' names. It is unacceptable for the final test, but great for a relaxing atmosphere at a regular lesson. As with two previous applications, *Kahoot* boasts numerous options for creating tasks, but its design style is still distracting. *Kahoot* tests mostly serve as entertainment or motivation because test participants compete to get the highest result. We find the analytics tab suggested in this app useful.

A considerable meaning in learning a foreign language is given to speaking. It has a multifaceted character in the

course of a foreign language. First, it is pronunciation, and correct articulation; then it is the ability to convey thoughts with simple and complex sentences, and the ability to use communicative tactics and strategies. *Flipgrid* is a space for discussions and debates. From the point of view of language didactics, this program is effective for organizing work on pronunciation, forming a statement, group discussion, etc. *Flipgrid* allows organizing a lot of activities to improve the speaking of students with different levels of language proficiency. Thus, they can be encouraged to learn new vocabulary, and read poetry or tongue twisters at the initial stage of mastering Ukrainian as a foreign language. Thus, a teacher does not waste precious class time but controls the process of mastering speaking competence. Moreover, all students practice speaking in a relatively comfortable atmosphere.

For instance, learning the topic *The Respiratory System. Diseases of the Respiratory System*, students of medical universities perform an extra task which is voicing the video "Breathing Exercises for People with Diseases of the Respiratory System". The figure shows that students are exposed to the video to be voiced (on the right), useful tips (on the left), and the recordings below. The opportunity to get peer critique motivates students to achieve better results. At the advanced level of language learning, one can offer to review classmates' records, spot mistakes, and comment on them.

Students who have a higher level of foreign language proficiency can organize a discussion. Working on the topic *Art*, a group should get acquainted with any Ukrainian film (mentioned at the lesson or recommended by someone). Then, they should record a short video, preferably with a movie frame (compulsory elements are explained at the instructional lesson in advance). The next stage is to review the classmates' work and comment on it with recorded impressions or a video question followed by the author's answer.
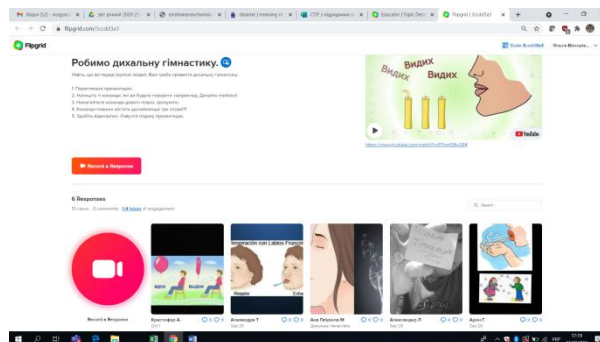

Figure 13. Working With Flipgrid

This platform operates quite simply. A teacher creates a discussion by indicating the topic or task name, providing explanations and tips for implementation, and adding photos, audio or video material for clarity and convenience. An educator also sets the discussion parameters: the type of discussion (the private or public one), the duration of an answer, the speakers, participants' ability to comment, evaluation criteria settings, etc. A student receives an invitation to a discussion, where he/she has the opportunity to record a video, watch other participants' footage, comment/like it, etc. At the end of the term, a teacher checks the video grading each of the criteria, and leaving a written or video comment. Guests (for example, parents, other teachers, or the administration) can be invited to join the discussion group with a guest password. It expands the range of task options. What is most important is the possibility of organizing work with groups from other countries and continents. A teacher must find common interests that are shared by a group of students. The advantages of this platform include convenience, similarity to social networks, and emotionality. It is also worth mentioning that *Flipgrid* allows educators to create, save and distribute short videos that can be used as valuable content for a self-study course (Hrytsenko, 2020).

When learning a foreign language, students also have to learn to read and comprehend what they have read. Students first prepare to get acquainted with a text, read it, and then perform reading comprehension tasks. The formation of a secondary language persona also implies learning to express thoughts and ideas in writing. Shaping and perfection of these communication skills can be secured with MT platform in several ways, many of which have already been considered in this paper. It is worth focusing on the enterprise application *Chekhov Story*, whose developers emphasize that reading is the basis of learning. In the context of USL teaching methods, it is a tool for writing and recording a text. In addition to text, one can add images, record voice guidance, etc. Reading the material designed with this program makes students more motivated to further learning. When creating a story, an educator can additionally provide a translation, voicing either each word individually or a page as a whole.

The purpose of creating stories in *Chekhov Story* is to update, review and summarize what has been learned, to improve writing and speaking skills, etc. For example, after working on the topic "Family", it is suggested to write an interesting story about a student's family. Foreigners should use as many words from the topic vocabulary as possible, build sentences correctly, follow the style, take into account readers' interests, etc. Additional motivation may be boosted by story competition or cooperation with a parallel group from any (especially foreign) university. All this is time-taking and requires a lot of effort both from a teacher and students but the result exceeds expectations.

Another advantage of MT platform is the ability to provide fast access to all the necessary information on the main

team page and fast transition between applications, which meets the criterion of ergonomics. When learning a foreign language, referring students to the material they need for independent work is important. This means employing additional literature, guidebooks, dictionaries, and other resources. For instance, work with monolingual and bilingual dictionaries is very significant. Therefore, in our opinion, it is advisable to add links to e-dictionaries of the Ukrainian Language, as well as a link to "Horokh" ("Peas") website to the main page. Moreover, students need to have access to authentic texts. The Ukrainian Language Corpus and the "Listen!" audio library are useful. As a rule, teachers who use other online programs during distance learning only have the opportunity to send a link in the chat or by any other means. However, over time the link may change and this creates certain difficulties in finding it. On MT, one can pin a link in a tab on the main page. Tabs are generally customized for each team on MT platform. You can add web pages to the standard tabs such as *Posts*, *Files*, *Notepad*, *Tasks*, and *Grades*. Team members do not have to scroll the newsfeed for the link but simply click on the corresponding tab.

IV. Conclusion

Thus, MT platform is a space for cooperation between educational process participants. It was designed keeping in mind many requirements for the learning process in mind. Besides, new challenges and needs are taken into consideration and the options are constantly updated. During the pedagogical experiment, it was observed that MT platform generally meets the requirements of foreign language learners. It has been concluded that in teaching a foreign language, MT has certain advantages in comparison to other educational online platforms. The considered platform provides all necessary tools for shaping and perfecting four main types of communicative activity. It has been proved that MT facilitates the best organization of distance thanks to the availability of a calendar, recording and tracking of student activities by the *Insights* app, etc. The applications that are used for language acquisition, work on listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, during the lesson and for the final control, have been outlined. The analysis of alternative programs demonstrates their advantages and disadvantages for different learning purposes and for students with different language proficiency levels. Possibilities of emotional expression, convenience and familiarity for students, flexibility, and a "student-centered" approach provided by MT, allow us to turn language learning into a pleasant and fruitful process.

Acknowledgements

References

[1] Ahmad, R. R. (2020). Exploring EFL Students' Perception of Online Learning via Microsoft Teams: University Level in Indonesia. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *3*(2), 163-173.

[2] Alabay, S. (2021). Students' Views on Learning French Online with Microsoft Teams® during COVID-19 Pandemic. *African Educational Research Journal, 9*(2), 333-338.

[3] R. K. Bsharat, T., & Behak, F. (2021). The Impact of Microsoft Teams' App in Enhancing Teaching- Learning English during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from the English teachers' perspectives' in Jenin city. *Malaysian Journal of Science, Health & Technology*, *7*, 102-109.

[4] Fursenko, T., Bystrova, B., & Druz, Y. (2021). Integrating Quizlet into Aviation English course. *Advanced Education, 8*(18), 118–127.

[5] Haro Calero, R. D., & Yépez Pullopaxi, G. C. (2020). The usage of Office 365 tools in the process of English language teaching. Manual proposal // *Revista Universidad Y Sociedad, 12*(5), 525-530.

[6] Hrytsenko, O. (2020). Development of students' communication skills with the help of the Flipgrid platform in Ukrainian as a foreign language class. *Current issues of improving the quality of the educational process: materials of the scientific method. conf. with international participation*. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://cutt.ly/yRVIDqb

[7] Hubbard, M., Bailey, M. J., Hess, D., & Hellebro, M. (2021). Teams for Education. In *Mastering Microsoft Teams* (2nd ed., pp. 183-204). Apress, Berkeley, CA. 183–204.

[8] Pal, D., & Vanijja, V. (2020). Perceived usability evaluation of Microsoft Teams as an online learning platform during COVID-19 using system usability scale and technology acceptance model in India. *Children and Youth Services Review*. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7527281/

[9] Pascan, A. (2020). Using Microsoft Teams for Teaching Romanian to Foreign Medical Students – A Comparative Skill-focused Analysis of Online vs Onsite Progress in Learning. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Virtual learning*. 192-198.

[10] Rababah, L. (2020). Jabara University Students' Attitudes towards the Use of Microsoft Teams in Learning English as a Foreign Language. *Studies in Linguistics and Literature, 4*(4), 59-64.

[11] Savchuk, H. (2021). Microsoft Teams app as an instrument of organizing online studying. *Pedagogy and Psychology in the modern world: the Art of Teaching and Learning,* 76-78. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from http://www.baltijapublishing.lv/omp/index.php/bp/catalog/download/104/2732/5850-1?inline=1

[12] Schneider, C. (2020). Setting Up a Language Learning Environment in Microsoft Teams. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal, 11,* 263–270.

[13] Stadnyj, Je., & Nikolayev. Ye. (2020) *Recommendations for the introduction of blended learning in institutions of professional higher and higher education.* Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://cutt.ly/MRVIZ4I

[14] Thi Thu Huong Ho, & Satomi Kawaguchi. (2021). The Effectiveness of Quizlet in Improving EFL Learners' Receptive Vocabulary Acquisition. *Asiatic-Iium Journal Of English Language And Literature, 15*(1), 115-159. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://journals.iium.edu.my/asiatic/index.php/ajell/article/view/2314

[15] Tran Vu Mai Yen, & Nguyen Tran Uyen Nhi. (2021). The Practice of Online English Teaching and Learning with Microsoft Teams: From Students' View. *Asia CALL Online Journal, 12*(2), 51-57. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://asiacall.info/acoj/index.php/journal/article/view/41

[16] Zhelyazkova, M. (2021). Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Whiteboard – Between Reality and Opportunities. *Pedagogical Forum, 9*(1), 3-10. Retrieved December 27, 2022, from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QLx6ulLQO0b8lwM5XfZuzf43QvmOfK0Q/view

Olha Hrytsenko born in 1987 in Zaporizhzhia (Ukraine). 2004 – 2009 – Zaporizhzhia National University, Philological Faculty. Speciality "Ukrainian Language and Literature". Holds PhD in Philology (Ukrainian Language) from Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, 2016. The topic of the thesis is "Text-forming and stylistic functions of etiquette lexis and phraseology in the language of Ukrainian folk songs". From 2016 till now works as at the Zaporizhzhia State Medical University, First International Faculty, Department of Language Training.

She is an Associate Professor in the Language Training Department, First International Faculty, Zaporizhzhia State Medical University. She was a writer of the test tasks (Ukrainian language as foreign) in the Ukrainian Center for Education Quality Assessment (Kyiv, Ukraine), 2020–2021. She is the author of 30 scholarly articles and 20 manuals on Ukrainian for Foreign Students. Her research interests are in the field of communicative linguistics and methods of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language.

Iryna Zozulia born in Dresden (Germany), 1985. Associate Professor of Vinnytsia National Technical University (Ukraine), 2021. Holds PhD in Pedagogics (thesis "Multicultural Education of foreign students of higher educational technical institutions") from Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University (Ukraine), 2012. She is an Associate Professor in the Linguistics Department, at Vinnytsia National Technical University (Ukraine). She is the author of 75 scholarly articles and 14 manuals of Ukrainian for Foreign Students. Her research interests are in the field of multicultural education of foreign students in Ukraine; methods of teaching phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar of Ukrainian as a foreign language; problems of intercultural communication in learning Ukrainian as a foreign language; educational and methodological support of the Ukrainian language learning process for foreigners, Ukrainian as a foreign language in terms of learning speech activities.

Associate Professor I. Zozulia is a member of the Vinnytsia regional branch of the All-Ukrainian society "Prosvita named after Taras Shevchenko" (2017), the public organization "Ukrainian World" which maintains the projects "Free Ukrainian language courses" and "E-language – an online platform for learning the Ukrainian language" (2018), the public organization "Association of Teachers of English "TESOL-UKRAINE (2019), the National Association of experts in the Ukrainian language and literature (2019), the Center for Ukrainian and European Scientific Cooperation (2021), and "International Foundation for Scientists and Educators" (2021).

Iryna Kushnir born in Kharkiv (Ukraine), 1983. Doctoral researcher (Methods of Teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language) at Kherson State University (Ukraine), 2018–2020. Associate Professor at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine), 2016. Holds PhD in Pedagogics from Kherson State University (Ukraine), 2012. She is an Associate Professor in the Language Training Department 1, Institute of International Education for Study and Research, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, 2014–present; Assistant Professor in the Language Training Department, Center of International Education, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, 2005–2014. She was a writer of the test tasks (Ukrainian as a foreign language) in the Ukrainian Center for Education Quality Assessment (Kyiv, Ukraine), 2020–2021. Associate Professor I. Kushnir is a member of the scientific organization "The Center for Ukrainian and European ScientificCooperation" (2021). She is the author of 100 scholarly articles and 10 manuals in Russian and Ukrainian for Foreign Students. Her research interests are in the field of methods of teaching Ukrainian as foreign languages, adaptation of educational migrants, problems of intercultural communication, and linguistic conceptology.

Tetiana Aleksieienko born in Constantia (Romania), in 1955. Holds Master's Degree in Philology from M. Gorky Kharkiv State University (Ukraine), 1978. She is an Assistant Professor in the Language Training Department 1, Institute of International Education for Study and Research, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine), 1979–present.

She created special courses "Fundamentals of Translation" and "Language of Business Communication" for educational migrants; lectured on the Methods of Russian as a Foreign Language Teaching; taught the Advanced Training Course for teachers of Russian as a Foreign Language at Kharkiv University from 1989 to 1991. She worked as the General Secretary of the Kharkiv "School of Young Lecturers".

Assistant Professor Tetiana Aleksieienko is the author of 150 scholarly articles and 50 manuals of Russian and Ukrainian Languages for Foreign Students. Her research interests are in the field of development of curricula and textbooks on grammar, scientific style and conversational practice for foreign students of non-philological specialties.

Alla Stadnii holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees with honours from Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University in 1999 and 2001 respectively. Her PhD thesis was defended in 2012.

She worked as a teacher of Ukrainian at a school from 2001 to 2006. Having worked as an assistant in the Department of the Ukrainian language at Vinnytsia National Technical University from 2006 to 2021, she was appointed an Associate Professor at Vinnytsia National Technical University in 2021. Her research interests include actual problems of semantics, lexicology, cognitive linguistics, multicultural education of foreign students in Ukraine; methods of teaching phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar of Ukrainian as a foreign language; problems of intercultural communication in learning Ukrainian as a foreign language; educational and methodological support of the Ukrainian language learning process for foreigners, Ukrainian as a foreign language in terms of learning speech activities.