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Remote Teaching of Philological Specialisations in the Light of Experiences During the Pandemic – In the Eyes of Students and Teachers

Abstract

The article compares the results of the research conducted at the end of the winter semester 2019/2020 with the results from March 2021 as an extended teaching for the validity of extending the teaching offer for modern language studies by including innovative solutions using distance learning methods and techniques, with additional comments at the end of 2021. The opinions of 50 second-year students on the usefulness and effectiveness of IT innovations in lectures, seminars and practical language learning exercises were surveyed. The research showed that the pandemic situation verified students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of remote working. The data are also commented on by lecturers. It turns out that in all three types of classes, the opinions of students and staff range from moderately neutral at the beginning of 2020 towards teaching innovations, through more sceptical in March 2021 after the large-scale introduction of e-learning, to more favourable towards online innovations after a year of experience gained in 2021. Despite this general trend, there are considerable differences in the opinions of students and lecturers depending on the nature of the classes.

Key words: language studies, remote teaching, pandemic

The first reports on various aspects of teaching in the pandemic period – a challenge for teachers and learners – have been published. At the end of 2020, it was mainly the situations faced by primary and secondary schools as a result of the pandemic that were diagnosed. In Poland, on the one hand, there were papers describing experiences, feelings and problems of teachers and students, and on the other hand, analyses of the effectiveness of working methods and available tools. The first nationwide study conducted by Digital Centre (Centrum Cyfrowe 2020, LIBRUS 2020) already revealed gaps and needs in the field of remote education, and outlined the prospects for the development of distance learning in Poland. An online training programme bringing together the community of teachers and carers – *EduAkcja* – published a work edited by Jacek Pyżalski (2020), consisting not only of texts diagnosing education in the era of the pandemic, but also of chapters containing proposals of pedagogical interventions in the existing situation. The University of Silesia has also produced reports on remote education in the Silesian Voivodeship. The latest report on remote education during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic as perceived by students, teachers and parents has been prepared on the basis of the research conducted by a team led by Ewa Jarosz and Dagmara Dobosz, Marcin Gierczyk and Edyta Nieduziak (cf. Grzywna, Hofman-Kozłowska, Stępień-Lampa 2021).

The same trend can be seen in many countries. Armand Doucet, Deborah Netolicky, Koen Timmers and Francis Jim Tuscano have produced the report concerning distance teaching methods and techniques recommended by the federation of teachers' trade unions *Education International* and by UNESCO (Doucet et al., 2020). Reports are also being prepared on teaching at university level. A collection of articles from 2021 in three issues of the 18th volume of the periodical *Revue internationale des technologies en pédagogie universitaire* (International Journal of Technologies in Higher Education) undoubtedly constitutes an extremely thorough coverage (see also Poellhuber et al. 2021).

All the important issues in these reports relate to general teaching principles and the new challenges revealed by the pandemic situation. It is now time to focus the analyses on specific types of schools and on (the nature of) individual subjects.

Among the most recent reports on language education, analyses by an international English-Italian-Russian-German team (cf. Radić, Atabekova, Freddi, Schmied 2021) as well as articles prepared in an English-speaking circle (Plutino, Polisca 2021), *Languages at work, competent multilinguals and the pedagogical challenges of COVID-19* are noteworthy. Webinars are a valuable complement to the reports. Suffice it to mention *The future of language education in the light of Covid. Lessons learned and ways forward*' at the initiative of the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe in April 2021 in Graz (ECML 2021). The meetings were aimed at exploring the extent to which experiences

gained in new realities can bring about beneficial, permanent changes in language teaching and learning.

The research presented in the present text also focuses on foreign language teaching in philological studies, using the specialisation of *Romance Philology* as an example. However, apart from analysing the general trend, the research focuses on the question of whether and to what an extent the opinions of students and lecturers differ depending on the type of a foreign language classes taught.

1. Conditions and nature of the research

Modern language studies differ in specific ways from other studies. They belong to the humanities and are based on communication in exolingual conditions simulating the real world. In addition to the practical study of a foreign language (cf. Council of Europe, CEFR 2001), the student acquires knowledge of linguistics, literature and culture, and general knowledge about the given language area. From this point of view, traditional forms of studying on campus in a face-to-face mode, enabling a constant exchange of ideas, seem attractive and effective. On the other hand, in the Internet era, it is impossible to cut oneself off from the opportunities offered by the modern world. The question is not whether, but when and how to use them. In the field of foreign philology, we deal with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), where substantive content is presented in a foreign language that is constantly being perfected by students.

This additional challenge opens up various teaching possibilities. The opportunity to fill individual gaps in content and language thanks to the possibilities offered by the Internet should not therefore be limited to the student's own efforts. Online tools provide scope for the teaching staff to ensure that the level of teaching can be evened out, especially in the first years of study. So, I posed a research question (**RQ1**) whether the type of subject taught online would affect the effectiveness of the teaching. Therefore, in January 2020, I conducted the research at the University of Silesia aimed at collecting the opinions of "Romance Philology" students of various specializations on the degree of approval for working with the use of distance learning techniques and methods, depending on the type of classes conducted (see also Półtorak, Gałan 2019). I started off with the assumption that the diversity of these techniques and methods does not allow for hasty generalization. So, I put forward the first research hypothesis (**H1**) that, in the eyes of students, the usefulness of the solutions will depend on the specific teaching aims and ways of conducting classes (cf. Widła 2021a).

In 2021, I had a chance to verify this hypothesis in the pandemic situation, when we had all been working remotely for a year. Paradoxically, the traumatic experience of the pandemic, forcing us to immediately put theory into practice on an unprecedented scale, provided an opportunity to look in detail at various aspects of online teaching and to develop solutions that we would otherwise have waited a long time for (cf. Widła 2021b, see also Lebrun 2011).

After completing the results of these comparative studies of students' views I extended the research question to the point of view of the persons conducting the classes (**RQ2**). After all, it is the teachers – the lecturers and persons conducting the exercises – who will have to look at the opinions and postulated changes, juxtaposing them with their own experience of the possibility of achieving all the teaching goals set for themselves.

The second research hypothesis (**H2**) assumes that, in the eyes of persons conducting the classes, the usefulness of Internet solutions will depend on the specific teaching aims and ways of conducting classes.

2. Course of the Research

A group of 50 second-year bachelor's degree and master's degree students of Romance philology at the University of Silesia were surveyed in January 2020. Based on the assumption that we are dealing with the generation of so-called digital natives (Prensky 2001, 2010), we should suppose that they will have expectations linked with the use of methods and techniques of distance learning on a larger scale than before.

A parallel research was conducted into opinions on three types of classes: lectures, practical language learning exercises, and diploma seminars (in Poland, these are small classes aimed at helping students to choose and write their bachelor's/master's thesis, during which students make presentations and are involved in discussions). Students were asked their opinions on the implementation of the following innovations in the three mentioned types of classes: computer-aided classes, *LdL* classes – learning through teaching (Martin 2004, Grzego, Schöner 2008), and virtual classrooms.

Thus, in total, the respondents considered nine potential teaching solutions in terms of their usefulness and effectiveness in philological studies. It should be added that the elements of these types of solutions had already been used in the classes, but only sporadically. This is important, as the research sought opinions on forms of work that were not unfamiliar to students, but on a larger scale (Widła

2021a). At the time, no one could have predicted how much reality would change in a few months and that all these solutions would find immediate mass application in practice.

The students were asked the following questions, and asked to justify their decision, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the mentioned didactic solutions:

- 1) Are you in favour of attending lectures/seminars/practical exercises in the so-called flipped classroom?
- 2) Are you in favour of teaching/ using distance learning methods and techniques during lectures/seminars/practical exercises?
- 3) Are you in favour of lectures/seminars/practical exercises in a virtual classroom?

The March 2021 study was also conducted on 50 students in their second year of a bachelor's and master's degree in *Romance Philology* at the University of Silesia. The first-year students had never worked in the on-site (face-to-face) system and so a comparison of systems would not have been possible. We were not able to copy the 2020 questionnaire completely, as the survey had to be adapted to the current conditions. However, this did not stand in the way of verifying views where this was feasible (cf. Widła 2021b: 187).

Students were asked a more general question and asked to justify their decision, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of each choice:

- 1) Are you in favour of lectures in a traditional or a virtual classroom?
- 2) Are you in favour of seminars in a traditional or a virtual classroom?
- 3) Are you in favour of practical foreign language learning exercises (as part of so-called integrated skills) in a traditional or a virtual classroom?

Compared to the first survey, the students had only 3 options to choose from, without division into specific choices within the approach taken. Students marked the given options in tables and then answered an open-ended question, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of particular approaches.

In the fourth quarter of 2021, the results of the survey were presented to persons conducting the three types of classes (various subjects), who were asked open-ended questions in face-to-face interviews about their attitudes to student opinions. Amongst persons asked to indicate the weakest and strongest aspects of remote teaching within the subject they were teaching, 14 persons were conducting practical exercises, 13 persons were giving lectures and 8 persons were conducting diploma seminars. It should be added that some of the respondents were conducting various types of classes. Amongst the 14 persons responsible for exercises, 7 were also giving lectures or conducting exercises for lectures, and 2 were conducting seminars. In turn, 6 supervisors of diploma seminars were also giving lectures.

3. Discussion of results of the questionnaires

In the first step, data collected from students in the two studied periods were compared. (They have been included in summary charts). Each of the three parts of the chart concerns one type of class that was subject to innovation – in other words, a comparison of classes in the traditional system and the innovative (i.e. remote) system – the virtual classroom. Then the answers to open questions (justification of the decision) were analysed. The conclusions were supplemented by the opinions of teachers conducting the given type of classes.

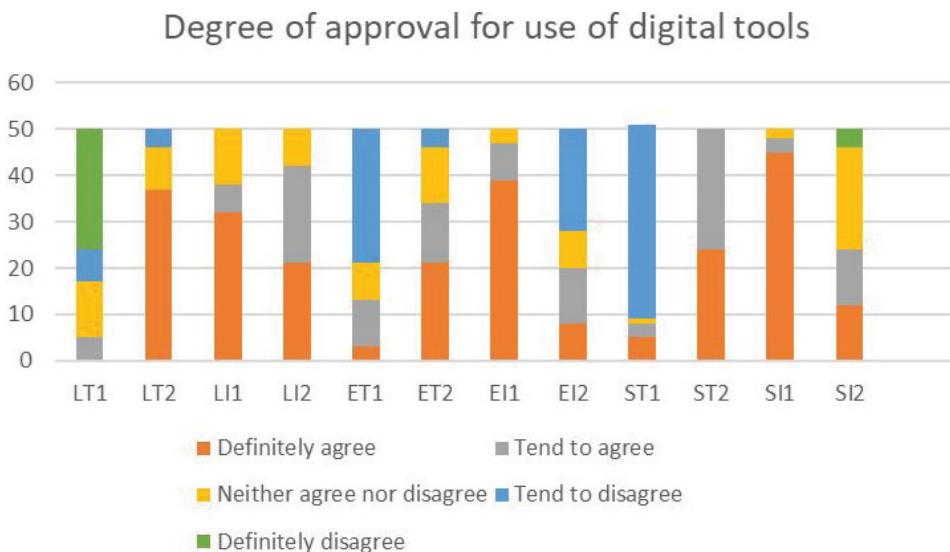


Figure 1. Visualisation of survey data (responses) collected according to a Likert scale, on the degree of approval for use of digital tools depending on the type of activity: lectures (L), exercises (E), seminars (S) in the traditional (T) vs. innovative system (I). (1 – January 2020, 2 – March 2021)

3.1 Lectures in the eyes of students

Students perceive the lecture as the easiest and most convenient type from the participant's point of view, irrespective of face-to-face or virtual participation. The traditional form of working with a large group of students based on presenting views ex cathedra – the cornerstone of university teaching since the Middle Ages – is not drastically different from online lectures. Lecture attendees prefer passive, individual learning, limiting interaction as much as possible. Surprisingly, replaying pre-recorded lectures at any given time does not gain general approval;

the possibility of following lessons in real time was advocated by 82% in 2020 and 76% in 2021. The synchronous mode of work (learning) is thus considered important – leaving the participant rather passive.

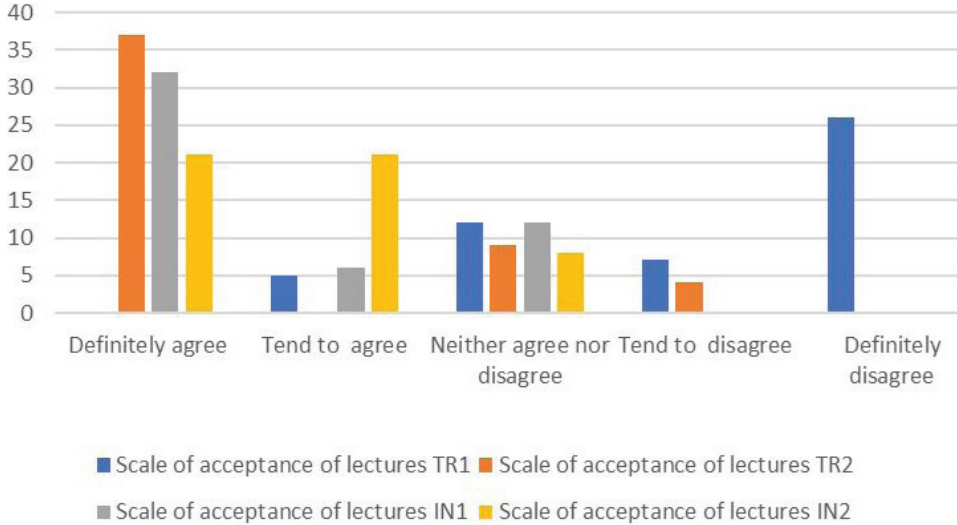


Figure 2. Visualisation of survey data (responses) collected according to a Likert scale on the acceptance of the use of digital tools in the classroom during a lecture: traditional (TR) vs online (IN). (1 January 2020 – 2 March 2021)

According to the respondents, reading lecture notes made available online allows you to learn individually and at your own pace, which saves a lot of time. Such online teaching materials are not limited to the traditional form, but may also be available as presentations, videos or files on distance learning platforms. According to the respondents, it is important that they are made available after the meeting (lecture), but the meeting (lecture) itself must be held in a synchronous mode. The possibility to watch pre-prepared recordings and take notes in an asynchronous mode – which is theoretically more convenient – does not attract much interest. Participants in virtual classes in 2021 enjoy lectures in real time similarly to the period before the pandemic. Those who cannot participate in a synchronous virtual classroom but only in an offline lesson would prefer to attend class sessions in accordance with a fixed schedule, asking questions directly to the teacher or via chat. The 2020 survey found that, according to the respondents, the fact that lectures can take the form of massive open online courses (MOOCs) reinforces attitudes that are limited to passively receiving content (cf. Anders 2015). Despite attractive forms and techniques of work such as multimedia lectures illustrated

and enhanced by animations, packages of materials for self-study, sets of interactive exercises, tasks, tests and quizzes for self-evaluation, the popularity of these solutions is decreasing. At this point, it is worth quoting Alain Roberge, whose research shows that French “MOOCs” have turned out to be more interesting for qualified workers who want to improve their skills than for students. MOOCs (massive open online courses) based on the acquisition of academic knowledge are gradually disappearing. Thus, the era of popularity of online lectures that can be replayed at any time is coming to an end (Roberge 2017, see also Corvet-Biron 2015). However, this does not mean that they have lost all their supporters (cf. Widła 2021b: 191).

3.2 Lectures as perceived by staff

The lecturers unanimously confirm that they do not feel that there is a big difference in the way of presenting content or in the amount of time needed to convey a particular piece of knowledge. They also consider that they do not see a significant difference in educational results. They admit that traditional lectures are more pleasant, but online lectures are more convenient. However, there are questions about keeping the attention of attendees throughout the whole class (cf. Jean, 2021). They are aware that students’ opinions are divided on this issue. They do not see any obstacles to broadcasting lectures held at the university for those who cannot attend.

Comparing the results of the surveys, I conclude that it would be ideal to organise bimodal lectures at philological studies, namely delivered in class and streamed in real time over the Internet.

3.3 Seminars in the eyes of students

In the virtual system, the (diploma) seminar often resembles a SPOC (Small Private Open Course). Of course, there can be no question of abandoning the old university tradition; students tend to expect hybrid studies. During seminars, many activities can be carried out in the form of individual consultations, which can easily be done online. The form of work with the whole group varies depending on the topics covered in the seminar, such as purely theoretical activities, discussions, reports from various stages of work, participant presentations, etc. In contrast to the strong emphasis on all possible forms of interaction during practical activities, seminar participants rarely feel such a need. An undoubtedly sad discovery concerns the egoistic attitude that is limited to the goal of solving one’s own problem. This leads to the paradoxical situation of “private lessons given by a lecturer/tutor”. When discussing the issues surrounding a bachelor’s thesis and especially a master’s thesis, one notices absences during the presentations of other class participants. Thus, some people perceive seminars as classes dedicated only

to their specific objective and only enriching general knowledge in this area. The discovery of such a possibility has therefore probably reinforced the enthusiasm of some towards innovative practices; some of them are enthusiastic about innovative practices because it helps them to achieve their egoistic goals, but it also enables some of them to avoid the egoistic practices of others.

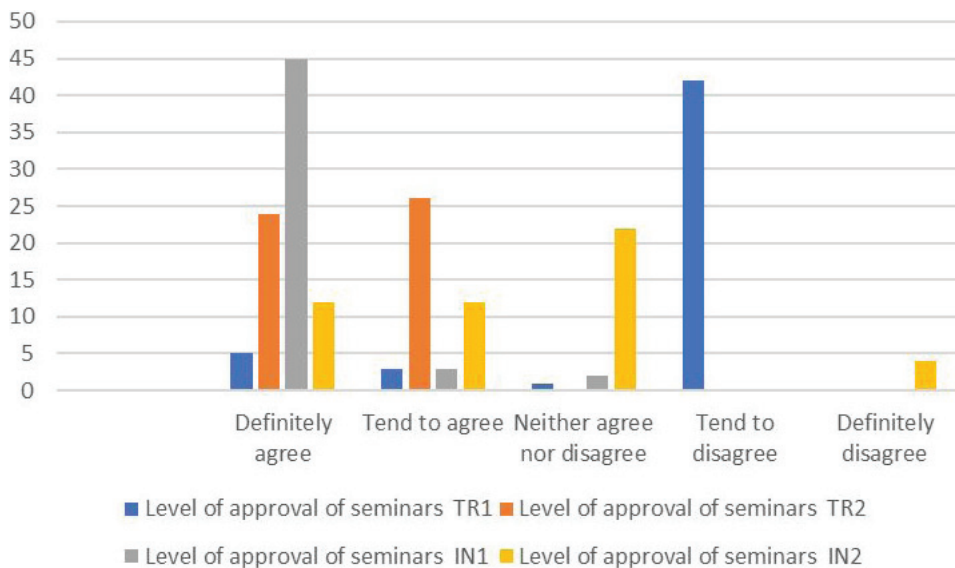


Figure 3. Visualisation of survey data (responses) collected according to a Likert Scale on the use of digital tools during seminars: traditional (TR) vs. online (IN). (1 January 2020 – 2 March 2021)

In the eyes of the respondents, attendance does not seem mandatory for 90% of seminar participants and should be reserved for forms that are conducive to traditional collaboration (cf. Widła 2021a, 2021b: 192). Experiences gained during two semesters of learning using the flipped classroom approach (Martin 2004, Grzega, Schöner 2008, Fiorella, Mayer 2013, Widła 2020) have shown that taking into account individual student expectations in the consultative mode is extremely important. In 2020, the majority of participants in diploma seminars favoured an innovative approach to online work. Currently, students are taking a more ‘cautious’ approach.

3.4 Seminars as perceived by staff

The biggest problem, as unanimously pointed out by the lecturers, is to motivate the seminar attendees to devote due attention to the presentations of progress and achievements by other attendees.

This is a big challenge for the supervisor – not so much logically as didactically. The lack of interest in other people’s achievements and solutions indicates an immature and fanatically pragmatic approach to studying. It does not matter much whether the classes are held in the traditional system or online. Lecturers use a variety of strategies. Some state that physical attendance at traditional classes, which forces attendees to listen to others, increases interest in the case of interesting presentations. Others draw attention to the possibility of raising the level of scientific discourse – which motivates students not only for cognitive reasons, but also for purely pragmatic ones, connected with better preparation for the defence of a master’s thesis. Both mentioned elements work better in the traditional formula.

3.5 Practical language learning exercises as perceived by students

I started our study by comparing the strengths and weaknesses of practical exercises in the compared periods.

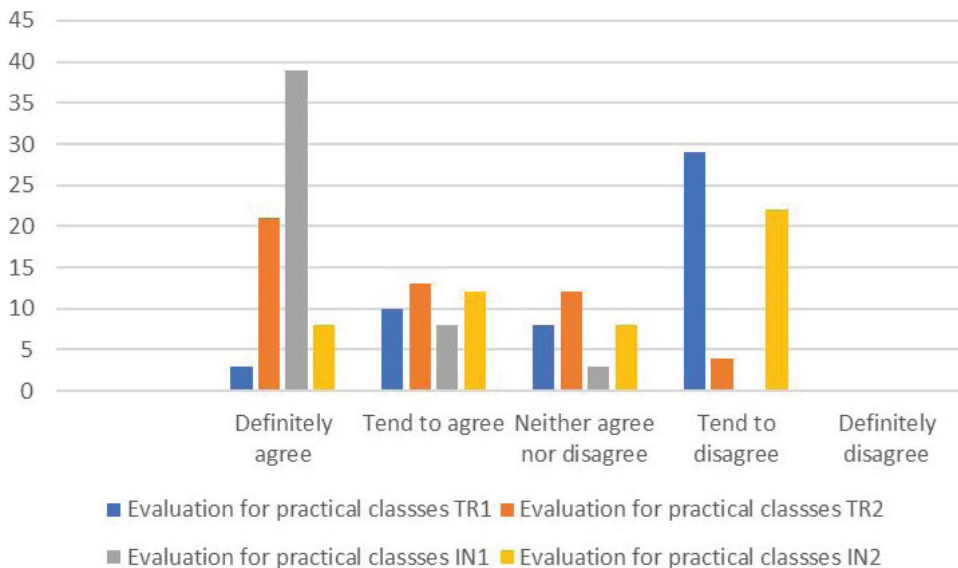


Figure 4. Visualization of survey data (responses) collected according to a Likert scale, on the level of approval for using innovative digital online tools during practical classes: TR – traditional vs IN – innovative). (1 – January 2020, 2 – March – 2021)

Practical language learning exercises seem on the surface to be less complicated (in general) for the students than monographic lectures or diploma seminars.

Undoubtedly, the degree of difficulty of the exercises seems to be the lowest compared to the other types of classes. However, in this paper, we evaluate the practical exercise classes not from the point of view of their substantive content, but from the point of view of the didactic effectiveness of the practical language exercises conducted online. These exercises consist of several modules devoted to the reception and production of the spoken and written language. All of them should be correlated by a group of lecturers, for which the class coordinator has an overall responsibility.

In 2021, the respondents noted the advantage of on-site (face-to-face) exercises over remote ones. As many as 75% appreciated the value of direct contact with the person conducting the class and the group as a whole, suggesting that the Internet should only be treated as a reservoir of educational resources supporting the classes. Confrontation with the reality of 2021 resulted in a more favourable outcome – with only 28% of negative evaluations. At the same time, a lot of criticism was made by the persons conducting the classes in direct interviews. Before the pandemic, according to 76% of respondents, it was more appropriate to “reserve for the virtual space the role of information storage, while at the same time setting aside valuable working time in language classes for activities simulating interactions in the natural environment” (cf. Widła 2021b: 189).

In 2021, although the proportion of negative opinions of potential beneficiaries of these courses slightly decreased in relation to traditional courses (from 32% to 28%), the percentage of persons considering moving the exercises online changed thanks to the undecided, and those who, despite the weak points of this solution, saw certain advantages in it. According to the respondents, online course participants often face organisational difficulties during mutually correlated classes. On the one hand, distance learning platforms and collaborative software (groupware) allow various functionalities, such as working in any given team or in an individual mode, but, on the other hand, organising and planning a live event takes more time than in a conventional mode.

The second problem reported by students relates to the management of ongoing classes. Conversation becomes a real challenge; online conversation kills the spontaneity of expression. Sometimes several people respond at the same time, so the lecturer is forced to filter the flow of words, determining the order of speaking. Taking into account the different levels and expectations of students is even more difficult. On the one hand, teachers try to create conditions for more advanced learners to further deepen their knowledge; on the other hand, they feel obliged to spend more time with those who have difficulties. It is much easier to meet these somewhat conflicting needs in traditional settings.

w ramach wykładów korzystnym rozwiązaniem byłoby stworzenie klas internetowych. Studenci często opuszczają wykłady nieobowiązkowe, więc takie rozwiązanie byłoby rozsądne pod względem zaoszczędzenia czasu wykładowcy, jak również uczyszczających. Wszyscy chętni mogliby skorzystać z wygodnej alternatywy i w pełni skupić się na prezentowanym materiale.

Najlepszym rozwiązaniem w zakresie ćwiczeń będzie pozostanie przy tradycyjnej formie, z wprowadzeniem narzędzi interaktywnych. Na zajęciach w klasie studenci mogą skorzystać z doraźnej pomocy w razie wątpliwości, a sam tryb prowadzenia ćwiczeń obliżyje do obecności.

Seminarium mogłoby łączyć oba podejścia, jednak klasy interaktywne nie zastąpią w pełni tradycyjnej konsultacji z promotorem.

Figure 5. A fragment of the answer by a second-year student of French (January 2020):

As part of the lecture programme, a beneficial solution would be to create online classes. Students often miss optional lectures, so such a solution would be reasonable in terms of saving time for the lecturer as well as the students. All those willing would be able to use the convenient alternative and fully concentrate on the presented material.

The best solution for exercises would be to stay with the traditional form, with the introduction of interactive tools. In the classroom, if students have doubts, they can benefit from ad hoc assistance, and there the mode of conducting exercises obliges [students] to be present.

The seminar could combine the two approaches, but interactive classes will not fully replace the traditional consultation with the supervisor.

The opinions expressed in the responses to the open questions directed at students in 2021 have evolved significantly in relation to the expectations expressed in 2020 regarding innovative digital practices. Students were expected to collaborate and interact in the (online) language classroom while at the same time maintaining the pace of learning and the pace of feedback, which proved more difficult than it seemed in theory. In particular, coordination of (online) work was identified as the most difficult challenge. There is the problem of adapting to the new style. This includes coordinating the work of persons responsible for teaching the pronunciation of foreign language learners at the phonetic and prosodic level, oral exercises (reception and production) and written expression (reception and production).

Implementing conceptual and organisational changes of this magnitude exceeded realistic possibilities. According to 52% of the respondents, the functionalities available online, such as the possibility to organise work in any given group, meetings on general and individual channels, chats, the possibility to send and share files, screen sharing or exchange of recordings and notes, the possibility to

access a virtual whiteboard during a chat or meeting, do not really alleviate the impression of chaos. It should be noted, however, that in 2021 the concerns of virtual class members working synchronously diminished significantly. It seems that the conclusion of 2020 that „students, repeating their desire to learn in an organised, planned, and coordinated way, based on rather traditional assessment criteria, fear investing too much time and effort at the expense of regular language progress” remains only partially valid (cf. Widła 2021a).

3.6 Practical language learning exercises as perceived by the lecturers

Teachers conducting classes unanimously stressed the positive difference in work comfort after a year of training in distance learning methods and techniques. Such training was organised in almost every unit. An emphasis was placed on coping with remote learning platforms, MS Teams, and instant messaging. Tutorial videos were produced that were user-friendly for novice users of the platforms. There were forums for the exchange of interesting experiences. However, no one trained teachers in subject-related didactics. Therefore, they adapted their classes to the new conditions without methodological support.

Numerous remarks were made by teachers about difficulties resulting from the lack of possibility of observing students' reactions to the way a problem was explained (online). Those teaching alternately in the traditional and online systems said that they cope with it in the following way. They make use of the experience of working with a stationary (face-to-face) group, and transfer (apply) it to online classes. Others, who have taught a subject for several years, refer to previous experience and observation of student reactions. Debuting lecturers who have started their teaching practice with online exercises feel lost, and state that trying to guess the audience's reactions tires them out.

The conclusions stemming from this research are moderately optimistic; the online solution should be applied, but when there is no other option. Traditional practical exercises in exolingual settings work better. It is worth mentioning a fact without notice of the students that the size of the groups, although small (about 12 persons), is still too large in conditions of practical online learning. Teachers talk about optimal results when working with four people. Online language learning will therefore work best in a personalised course environment. Undoubtedly, from the lecturers' point of view, coordinated online classes are a very great challenge, greater than traditional methods, which were not easy to apply anyway. Students, despite a change in attitude and consent to virtual classes, are afraid of chaos, and teachers point to the difficulty of evaluation. In 2021, teachers were more willing to conduct synchronous classes using the task-based method, which is much more beneficial in the case of practical language learning. It works especially well for conversations in small groups, e.g. in the so-called rooms on MS Teams or on the

Moodle platform. They notice quite a big difference between reception and production exercises. It is effective in developing reception skills, both written and oral, but production skills cause greater difficulty. Meanwhile, as Zofia Chłopek emphasises, 'production enables the personalisation of linguistic material much better than reception (i.e. using it to describe one's own reality, to express one's own thoughts), which induces a positive emotional attitude of students towards this material' (Chłopek 2016).

Conclusions

The conducted research, due to its narrow nature, does not allow for overgeneralisation. By intention, however, it was limited to a specific group of respondents. By looking at the problem as a case study (Wilczyńska, Michońska-Stadnik 2010), it is possible to identify elements that are essential for teaching success, which escape the attention of researchers in questionnaires addressed to a classical representative group of students (cf. RQ1).

I also decided not to draw conclusions on my own. In addition, the persons conducting classes that were the subject of the cited analyses were also asked to comment on the data in face-to-face interviews (cf. RQ2).

The picture that emerges from the research confirms the validity of analysing the effectiveness of teaching activities in relation to different types of classes (cf. H1, H2). The conclusions, depending on the type of classes, concern various forms of distance learning, but not necessarily full e-learning. The practical exercises are presented in a way that is undoubtedly closest to the definition of e-learning. Teachers work not only on the MS Teams platform, but also use the Moodle platform (both are recommended by the University of Silesia). Apart from these, they use many additional digital tools in a synchronous and an asynchronous mode; exercises are fully interactive. In the case of lectures and seminars, despite the possibilities created, not all the criteria were always met (asynchrony only in some seminars, interactiveness only in some lectures).

It turns out that, following the outbreak of the pandemic, the digital revolution in university teaching still remains difficult to accept, even though many networking practices already existed. The idea that in the long run all teaching should be done remotely turns out to be an unimaginable solution both for future philologists and for lecturers. The experience gained, however, shows that digital natives would be happy to retain many innovative solutions in addition to the traditional offer. Irrespective of whether the type of student participation is active or pas-

sive, or whether it requires a significant or minimal investment of time, the use of a digital platform seems inevitable from now on (see also Eude 2021, Sujecka-Zajac 2021). So, we should not expect a complete return to old habits. After the end of the pandemic and a period of euphoria caused by a return to normality, the value of certain elements of distance learning will be appreciated and they will become a permanent part of modern academic teaching. Students of philological specialisations also expect this, but in reasonable, balanced proportions, which is illustrated by characteristic answers:

1) Students of the 2nd year in 2020 (on the basis of written questionnaires)

“For lectures – the traditional form with elements of IT tools or virtual classroom”
“As for traditional lectures, I think that they could be completely replaced by innovative methods, e.g., a course on a platform with attached materials, without the participation of a lecturer”.

“The traditional method definitely makes it easier for students to organise”

“As for the completely virtual classroom method, I am against it”

“When it comes to the seminar, I also support the traditional method with the possibility of using study aids or the flipped classroom method from time to time”

2) Students of the 2nd year in 2021 (on the basis of virtual face-to-face interviews on MS Teams)

“Working in practical classes is the most difficult, we are not spontaneous in what we say, it often gets chaotic, it’s worst in conversation”

“I definitely prefer traditional seminars, although previously I was in favour of remote ones”

“You also remember a lecture better when you hear the professor online but live, and not from a recording”

„When it comes to the form of the diploma seminar, I’m not bothered”

„The important thing is that after listening to the lecture, there is still access to the accompanying multimedia presentation”.

The awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning has increased not only among students, but also – above all – among (university) employees. There is no shortage of training courses and tutorials. The attitude of the administration has changed. The little problem of outlay of energy and resources remains. Lecturers emphasise that they did not realise how time-consuming it is to prepare and monitor classes in a remote system, to make materials available, and to evaluate student’s work.

3) Lecturers – based on direct interviews

„It is important that we have adapted to remote working; the training and experience gained mean that it is easier for us now and we think less about technical matters and focus on the substance”

„ The IT training has made it easier to adapt the teaching offer to the nature of the classes”

„It is difficult to assess to what extent the students have understood the message, because many do not want to admit their lack of understanding, and the teacher does not see their reaction”

„An experienced teacher working for a long time in the stationary [face-to-face] mode will predict the reactions of students online to a given difficulty”

„The comfort of working online is higher, but with the exception of classes requiring translation. It is difficult to develop this skill whether in oral or written form as effectively as in the traditional form.”

„I will describe working on the online platform in the briefest way: reception YES production NO. The division into competencies is key.”

„Grammar test results are comparable, which is a big but pleasant surprise for me.”

„A task-based approach is most effective. Students prefer working divided into groups in rooms on Teams”.

A skilful goal-setting and consistent implementation of goals keeps students' attention (Jean 2021). It is worth mentioning at this point the role of the task-based approach emphasised by lecturers (Prabhu 1987, Ellis 2003, Puren 2002, 2011, Ellis, Skehan et al. 2019). It works very well in remote teaching. As Iwona Janowska reminds us, sometimes in pedagogical practice the goal is identified with the result. Meanwhile, in task-based didactics, the goal and the result are two different concepts:

*„The goal should take into account the pedagogical intentions of language education, e.g. the development of speaking skills. The outcome/result should relate to the specific *product* of the given task, e.g. describing the way to the city centre. Language, taking the form of a defined linguistic activity (reception, production, interaction or mediation), serves as a means of achieving a result that is different from the use of language itself” (Janowska, Ducourtioux 2021: 75).*

The role of the task-based approach is also emphasised by thesis supervisors, who advocate replacing e-learning with hybrid teaching (cf. Widła 2020). Lecturers,

on the other hand, place less emphasis on this form of work, seeing no special differences in the effects of checking the level of knowledge.

Theoretically, it might seem that recording lectures could be a good investment for a busy lecturer. However, as seen from the research, students of foreign philology definitely value real-time remote lectures more highly, treating recordings as an optional script. This is also confirmed by my own observations: out of 86 people regularly attending my applied linguistics lecture in the summer semester 2021, only 65 made use of the additional teaching aids available on the *Moodle* platform.

What was attractive and innovative was mostly appreciated by the respondents. Unfortunately, the frantic pace of implementation of innovations discourages their use. In the case of innovations using remote teaching methods, we are still looking for the most reasonable ways to supplement the teaching offer. Many gaps could be bridged with online solutions. We should therefore warn authorities of teaching institutions against throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Introduction of new methods and techniques – yes, but on the condition of on site (face-to-face) learning at the university headquarters. Such a message emerges from the analysis of the presented data. There is no doubt that the objectives for the academic year 2019/2020 – still rather timid – of assigning a more important place to distance learning methods and techniques, will be re-considered positively after the pandemic.

Foreign philology students call for a flexible approach, taking into account the types of classes and the nature of the subject. However, such solutions are being introduced in a systemic way at universities, even though it is difficult to compare lectures in physics, history or linguistics. It is also difficult to ignore the fact that lectures are often given in foreign languages. Therefore, an interesting move would be to create opportunities to introduce detailed proportions of face-to-face and online classes at the stage of drawing up syllabuses. However, this is an ideal postulate which does not correspond to the reality from the point of view of constructing timetables. When classes are held at the university, they cannot be synchronised in the hybrid model in any other way than in class blocks, and it is necessary to get used to this. For the time being, the safest solution remains not the virtual but the traditional class group, making a skilful use of network resources during classes and individual support, depending on needs. Now that we have all passed the stage of IT support for classes, we should place an emphasis in training on the methodology of e-learning and b-learning, taking into account the specificity of classes and fields of study.

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Halina Widła

Nauczanie zdalne na specjalnościach filologicznych w świetle doświadczeń w czasie pandemii – w oczach studentów i prowadzących zajęcia

Streszczenie

Artykuł porównuje wyniki badań przeprowadzonych w końcu zimowego semestru 2019/2020 z wynikami z marca 2021 roku na temat zasadności poszerzenia oferty dydaktycznej na studiach filologicznych o innowacyjne rozwiązania z wykorzystaniem metod i technik kształcenia na odległość. Zbadano opinie 50 studentów II roku dotyczące przydatności i skuteczności informa-

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tycznych innowacji na wykładach, seminariach i ćwiczeniach z praktycznej nauki języków obcych. Wynika z nich, iż pandemia zweryfikowała wyobrażenia studentów nt. zalet i wad zdalnej pracy. Dane te zostały skomentowane z punktu widzenia prowadzących zajęcia. Okazuje się, że we wszystkich trzech typach zajęć opinie studentów i pracowników wahają się od umiarkowanie neutralnych z początku 2020 roku wobec innowacji w nauczaniu, poprzez bardziej sceptyczne w marcu 2021 po wprowadzeniu e-learningu na szeroką skalę, do bardziej przychylnych innowacjom po roku doświadczenia zdobytego w 2021. Mimo tej ogólnej tendencji widać spore różnice opinii studentów i prowadzących zależne od charakteru zajęć.

Słowa kluczowe: studia językowe, nauczanie zdalne, pandemia

Халина Видла

Дистанционное обучение по филологическим специальностям в свете опыта во время пандемии – глазами студентов и преподавателей

А н н о т а ц и я

В статье сравниваются результаты исследования, проведенного в конце зимнего семестра 2019/2020 гг., с результатами за март 2021 г. о правомерности расширения дидактического предложения в филологических исследованиях инновационными решениями с использованием методов и приемов дистанционного обучения. Были изучены мнения 50 студентов второго курса о полезности и эффективности ИТ-инноваций во время лекций, семинаров и практикумов в области практического изучения иностранного языка. Они показывают, что пандемия подтвердила представления студентов о преимуществах и недостатках удаленной работы. Эти данные были прокомментированы с точки зрения преподавателей. Оказывается, что во всех трех типах занятий мнения студентов и сотрудников варьируются от умеренно нейтральных в начале 2020 г. к педагогическим инновациям, до более скептических в марте 2021 г. после введения электронного обучения в более широких масштабах, до более дружественным к инновациям сети мнений после года опыта, полученного в 2021 г. Несмотря на эту общую тенденцию, существуют значительные различия во мнениях студентов и преподавателей в зависимости от характера курса.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: языковые исследования, дистанционное обучение, пандемия

Halina Widła

La enseñanza a distancia en las especializaciones filológicas a la luz de las experiencias durante la pandemia. La perspectiva de estudiantes y docentes

R e s u m e n

El artículo presenta la investigación sobre la pertinencia de ampliar la oferta didáctica de los estudios de filología con soluciones innovadoras utilizando métodos y técnicas de aprendizaje a distancia. Se comparan los resultados recibidos al final del primer semestre del curso 2019/2020 con los resultados de marzo de año 2021 a los que se añaden los comentarios adicionales de finales de 2021.

Se encuestaron las opiniones de 50 estudiantes de segundo curso sobre la utilidad y eficacia de las innovaciones de Tecnologías de la Información en clases teóricas, seminarios y clases prácticas de aprendizaje de idiomas. La investigación mostró que la situación de pandemia verificó las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre las ventajas y desventajas del trabajo remoto. Los datos también son comentados por los profesores. Resulta que en los tres tipos de clases, las opiniones de los estudiantes y el profesorado van desde moderadamente neutrales a principios de 2020, pasando por más escépticas en marzo de 2021, después de la introducción a gran escala del aprendizaje electrónico, hasta más favorecidas después de un año de experiencia adquirida en 2021. A pesar de esta tendencia general, existen diferencias considerables en las opiniones de estudiantes y profesores según la naturaleza de las clases.

Palabras clave: estudios de idiomas, enseñanza a distancia, pandemia