ДИСТАНЦІЙНЕ Й ЕЛЕКТРОННЕ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

DISTANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING AS SCHOOL LEARNERS PERCEIVE IT

Fábián M.
fabmarta@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5549-1156

Huszti I.
huszti@kmf.uz.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1900-8112

Bárány E.
barany.erzsebet75@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8395-5475

Lechner I.
lechner.ilona81@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-7235-6506
Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Beregovo

Фабіян М., Густі І., Барань Є., Лехнер І. Дистанційне навчання у загальноосвітніх навчальних закладах із погляду учнів. Закарпатський угорський інститут імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ, м. Берегове
Анотація. У статті описано особливості дистанційного навчання у загальноосвітніх навчальних закладах із погляду учнів. За допомогою онлайн-опитування, проведеного серед учнів старших класів, досліджено питання ставлення учнів до дистанційного навчання та проблеми мотивації, а саме: що спонукало учнів до вивчення мов у цей період, як учителі мотивували школярів. Розглянуто проблему ефективності дистанційного навчання й оцінювання, часу, відведеного на навчання, та застосування цифрових додатків, які використовувались у цей період. Звернено увагу на відгуки вчителів. Описано труднощі, з якими зіткнулися учні в процесі вивчення іноземних мов, і в освітньому процесі загалом. Узагальнено позитивні й негативні аспекти навчання мов у онлайн-форматі. Звернено увагу на вплив фактора стресу на освітній процес у період дистанційного навчання.
Ключові слова: дистанційне навчання, онлайн навчання, іноземні мови, мотивація до вивчення, стрес, автономне навчання.

Фабиан М., Густи И., Барань Е., Лехнер И. Дистанционное обучение в среднеобразовательных учебных заведениях с точки зрения учащихся. Закарпатский венгерский институт имени Ракоци ІІ, г. Береговое.
Аннотация. В статье описаны особенности дистанционного обучения в общеобразовательных учебных заведениях с точки зрения учеников. С помощью онлайн-опроса, проведенного среди учащихся старших классов, исследованы вопросы отношения учащихся к дистанционному обучению и проблемы мотивации, а именно: что побудило учеников к изучению языков в этот период, какими методами учителя мотивировали щкольников. Рассмотрена проблема эффективности дистанционного обучения

и оценивания знаний, времени, отведенного на обучение и применение цифровых приложений, которые использовались в этот период. Обращено внимание на отзывы учителей. Описаны трудности, с которыми столкнулись ученики в процессе изучения иностранных языков и в учебном процессе в целом. Обобщены положительные и отрицательные аспекты обучения иностранных языков в онлайн-формате. Обращено внимание на влияние фактора стресса на учебный процесс в период дистанционного обучения.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, онлайн обучение, иностранные языки, мотивация к изучению, стресс, автономное обучение

Abstract. *Introduction.* The school breakdown in spring 2020 made both teachers and learners all over the world face new challenges: how to cope with distance learning (DL). It was not simple even in the well-developed countries. In Ukraine teachers tried to find different solutions. This period was a sudden but huge step towards implementing ICT into the learning process. *Purpose.* The aim of the present study was to get an insight into the way learners see distance learning, to hear their opinion and see their attitude to this form of education, the difficulties and challenges they encountered during this period in the learning process in general and in foreign language (FL) learning in particular. The focus was made on the learning habits, motivation, assessment, applications used, time spent on learning and stress students might have experienced. *Methods.* An online questionnaire containing closed-ended and open-ended questions was compiled and filled in by learners of the upper grades of different schools. The data analysis was interpretive and statistical. *Results.* The material was sent mainly in the form of written text or video links and recordings via Messenger, email or Google Classroom, very few online lessons were held. Most learners had difficulties; the most problematic area in FL learning was grammar. Feedback and assessment were mainly in written form. The attitude to learning was quite serious, learners developed their digital skills but some became demotivated. It was more time-consuming, more difficult but less stressful and also less effective than face-to-face learning. *Conclusion.* Despite all the difficulties faced learners developed learner autonomy, digital skills and gained experience in a new form of learning that can be useful for them in their future studies as in the digital age DL is gaining ground worldwide.

Key words: distance learning, online learning, learning FL, motivation, stress, autonomous learning.

Introduction (problem statement) The digital age has opened and is still opening new opportunities in the field of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it was the coronavirus lockdown that made both teachers and learners all over the world face a new challenge: how to cope with the difficulties of distance teaching and learning. Neither teachers nor learners were prepared for this form of education, also called remote learning, and they tried to find different solutions in this period. Learning foreign languages requires a lot of interactions and face-to-face communication, so the task of language teachers and learners was far from being easy in such an unusual situation.

The purpose of this study is to investigate some aspects of teaching and learning in the period of the first lockdown between March and May 2020 with special attention to foreign languages and to collect some information about the way learners studied and felt in this period. An online questionnaire was compiled with the purpose to get an insight into the learning habits, motivation, strategies, assessment procedures and difficulties of the learners in this period as well as applications used in DL. It contained four open-ended and 21 closed-ended (with single and multiple answer multiple choice and Likert scale) questions. The languages examined were English and German as in most schools English is taught as a FL but in some schools German is learnt either as a FL or a second FL. The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. learners take distance learning easy, their attitude is unserious because they feel that the period of quarantine (lockdown) is just for relaxing and not for serious studying;

2. learners can become demotivated easily for different reasons; for example, because they do not feel the demand of the teachers in the same way they do in face-to-face education;

3. the learning strategies of the students are limited as they apply mainly their digital skills;

4. online teaching is more time-consuming than face-to-face teaching;

5. online teaching is more stressful than face-to-face teaching;

6. distance learning has a positive effect on some leaners.

The questionnaire was filled in by 63 learners of Grades 10 and 11 in different schools of Transcarpathia in district Berehove in June 2020. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents were females and 35% were males aged 15 (38%), 16 (38%) and 17 (24%).

The analysis of recent research and publications. Distance learning (DL), in which the main elements include physical separation of teachers and learners, has changed greatly since its appearance in the 1800s. DL, which is synonymous with distance education (DE), according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2005, p.442) is 'a system of education in which people study at home with the help of special internet sites and television and radio programmes, and send or email work to their teachers'. Murray states that recently internet is becoming a dominant medium for distance education delivery and the terms 'distance' and 'online' are often used interchangeably (Murray, 2013). However, differences can be found between the two forms of education. Though they both require online learning tools, the first difference can be in the location. In online learning the teacher and the students can be in the classroom working through digital lessons or the assessment can be through an online platform while in distance learning the location is different. The other difference is in the interaction between the teacher and the learners. In online learning there is in-person interaction while distance learning does not require it. Other terms connected to distance learning are: e-learning (eLearning) or the electronic model which is another word for online learning, b-learning or blended learning which is a mixed face-to-face and distance learning and m-learning or learning with mobile devices (Sobral, 2020). A distinction should also be made between online learning and online őőlearning resources under which we understand any digital material used for supporting learning. Szűcs and Zarka consider distance learning in today's world to be an essential component of education (Szűcs & Zarka, 2006).

Children have an innate desire and natural ability to learn. Nevertheless, they have to be motivated by people around them as their motivation may weaken and the role of teachers in supporting their learners' motivation cannot and should not be underestimated. Among the new challenges teachers face in DL is supporting and encouraging students to learn, i.e. in enhancing learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Johnson (2017) summarises results of recent research about the role of teachers in motivating students and enlists the ways they can increase students' motivation to learn. Firstly, he states, teachers can do this by supporting learner autonomy and self-regulated learning, by supporting learners' freedom of choices and interests, by increasing students' responsibility and participation in their own learning through letting them create their own goals and objectives. Secondly, teachers can motivate by connecting learning to the personal world of the students by making learning tasks more relevant through relating instructions to learners' experiences. Thirdly, providing learners with positive feedback and recognizing learners' efforts to accomplish the task enhances motivation. Praising the learners, recognizing fewer errors, recognizing their strength and focusing on what is positive about their work are strategies that can make learners more motivated. When teachers provide feedback, they enable students to take control over their own learning and make them believe in their own abilities as well as make them feel that hard work can lead to achieving tasks. Furthermore, being enthusiastic and energetic, displaying interest and positive feelings about the subject taught can be another way to increase motivation. Finally, Johnson points out that building positive, caring and trusting relationship with their students influences them to learn. Good relationship and trust teachers can build by being open-minded, by sharing own experiences about struggles, failures and achievements. Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek (2000) also consider a positive attitude towards the educator as a factor contributing to the success of students in face-to-face as well as in DL. Holmberg (1986) highlights the importance of strong student motivation facilitating learning as one of the most important teaching principles of DE. Other principles mentioned by him are the joy of learning as it triggers motivation, participation in decision-making about the learning process

as being positive for student motivation and friendly, personal tone along with easy access to the topic as contributors to enjoyable learning. Enhancing motivation in DL is even more crucial than in face-to-face learning. Students motivated intrinsically are keener and perform better on a task (Dörnyei, 2001, Johnson, 2017).

Motivation can be closely connected with assessment for the reason that assessment can also motivate and encourage students. Assessment can be considered as one of the most problematic areas in DL. On the one hand, the digital age has made assessment easier as the results of a test taken online can be seen immediately; on the other hand, in distance education the old forms of assessment have to be reconsidered and extended. McKay underlines that 'assessment has the power to change children's lives; the effect of assessment may be positive or negative depending on a number of factors' (McKay 2006, p. 25). He points out that teachers can 'structure assessment procedures to encourage children by showing them what they have learned and to give positive feedback, motivating them to succeed' (McKay 2006, p. 23) by making sure that the tasks are appropriate, motivating and give some indication of success, however small. Assessment, thus, can become part of a learning journey. Jaczkovits (2020, p. 2) considers that in digital education, formative evaluation plays a role rather than summative evaluation. The author emphasizes that one form of assessing students' knowledge '… is live, real-time reporting, which can be accomplished using video conferencing or telephone applications. Another form is time-delayed, remote reporting (worksheets, tests, questionnaires, homework, presentation, mind maps, etc.)'. Another method of assessment that can be used both in distance and traditional teaching is gamification, or the incorporation of game elements into non-game settings (Barbarics, 2015). In DE the methods of assessment should be more creative and it is advisable to use formative assessment.

The results of the study. The answers show that during the DL in spring 2020 the most frequently used applications were Messenger (used by 79,4% of the respondents), e-mail (66,7%) and Google Classroom (57%). Redmint and Google Drive were also applied but their usage was less widespread and only two pupils used Zoom and Facebook Live. None of the respondents used Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Chromebooks, Brightspace or other applications.

Table 1

Use of applications during DL in spring 2020

Tools	Messenger	email	Google Classroom	Redmint	Goolge Drive	Zoom	Facebook Live	Google Meet	Microsoft Teams	Chrome-books	Brightspace
% of use	79,4%	66,7%	57%	23,8%	12,7%	3%	3%	0	0	0	0

The material was sent to the learners in different forms in the languages examined. The explanation of the new material and the tasks were sent in the form of a text in the vast majority of cases (52%). In both languages video links have been sent to some of the learners: in English 14 learners (22%) and in German one learner received links of videos. Some teachers made video recordings in order to send the explanations of the new material to their learners. Two learners of English and three learners of German have been sent the explanations in this form. In both subjects audio material has also been sent. However, the number of language lessons held online proved to be inconsiderable. In English the respondents had three online classes while in German only one lesson was given online.

The material sent by the teachers was read and watched completely only by 63% of the learners, 35% of the respondents partially read and watched the material and one learner admitted not having read or watched it at all; 60.3% of the respondents admitted that their attitude to learning and completing the tasks was different previously in face-to-face learning; the attitude of the other 39.7% did not change.

Time spent on studying in general, i.e. on all the school subjects varied. Fifty-two per cent of the learners studied between one and three hours a day, 25% spent between three and six hours with learning, 5% of the respondents studied for more than six hours, 3% for less than one hour and 14.5 % did not study regularly. From this time in general nobody spent more than three hours on learning languages, 19% spent between one and three hours, 9% less than an hour, 17% did not learn languages regularly.

One of the possibilities to cover the material during the breakdown was the media, both mass and online media. Material on the Internet was used for learning purposes by 87% while mass media, i.e. the special educational programs on television were followed only by 23% of the respondents.

Learners often encounter difficulties and need help to overcome them. In a traditional classroom they can turn to the teacher in case they face them, ask for help or clarify if something is not clear. The teacher can see from the reaction and expression of the learners if there was something they were not able to grasp and can explain it again. During the breakdown it was more complicated to cope with the difficulties arising. Only 22% of the learners were able to cope with the material individually, 78% admitted that they needed help. The highest number of respondents (62%) asked their classmates to help, 38% asked either parents or friends, 13% were helped by private tutors, 3% by relatives and the same number (3%) turned to the internet for help. The main difficulties faced in learning the languages online were connected to grammar, vocabulary and the two receptive skills: reading and listening comprehension. The most problematic area was grammar: understanding and practising grammar structures was complicated for 48% of the respondents. Understanding and memorizing the meaning and pronunciation of the new vocabulary items was marked as difficult for 19% of the learners. Eighteen per cent had reading and listening comprehension difficulties and 8% of the students struggled with using the audio material. No hardship in language learning was experienced by 27% of the respondents.

Feedback from the teachers was given mainly in written form (84%). Some teachers provided feedback in both written and oral forms but the number of such cases was quite low. In two cases students received no feedback at all. Assessment also was predominantly in a written from (82.5%). In both written and oral form two learners of English and two learners of German were evaluated. No assessment at all was tracked in 5 cases (8%).

Eighty six per cent of the respondents had the necessary technical equipment for DL. The majority of respondents (36%) had a PC tablet, a laptop or a computer and 18% had smartphones. The rest are supposed to have shared technical equipment either with each other or with their parents or siblings.

In the last two sets of questions participants had to mark on a five-point Likert scale to what degree they agree or disagree with some statements. The descriptive statistics has been summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2

Attitude to learning during the school breakdown

	Mean	Standard Deviation
I took distance learning seriously as it provides a lot of opportunities for studying.	3.19	0,78
I lost my motivation during DL because I did not find this form of education serious.	3.06	1.02
I lost my motivation during DL because I did not feel directly the rigour of the teacher.	2.90	1.18
My learning strategies were limited, I used mainly my digital skills.	2.98	0.94
I was more successful in online learning as I followed my own pace.	3.42	1.17
I would like to participate in online learning in the future.	2.58	1.30

The first statement aimed at finding out the attitude of the respondents to online learning. The mean standing next to it (3.19) shows that the attitude to learning was predominantly honest. We can observe that 38% of the students agree with the statement that online learning provides many opportunities for studying. Five per cent completely agrees, so 43% of the respondents allege that they recognised in this form of teaching the potential and the opportunity to study a lot while others (25%) did not recognize it and quite a high number (32%) could not decide. Thus, the first hypothesis was refuted.

The next two questions touched upon the learners' motivation. Two possible reasons for losing motivation were examined. It was supposed that in online teaching students can become demotivated for the reason they do not feel the direct demand and rigor of the teacher. The other reason might be the learners' unserious attitude to this form of education. In both statements the mean values – 3.06 and 2.90 – indicate that most learners have become demotivated in this period. Thus, the second hypothesis was proven. The number of those who lost motivation for the reason they could not be controlled in the same way as in face-to-face teaching outscores those who lost it as a result of their unserious attitude. However, if we take into account the answers of those who completely disagree (21%) and disagree (22%) with the first reason examined, altogether 43% of the students state they did not become demotivated due to the lack of rigour while 38% became unmotivated and 19% was hesitant. The numbers are, again, quite close, but what can definitely be stated is that though the hypothesis was proven, for a considerable number of students not feeling the same strictness of the teachers as in offline teaching was not demotivating.

The learning strategies were supposed to be restricted in the period of the breakdown because learners had to use mainly their digital skill. For this statement the mean is 2.98, so the statistics show that the third hypothesis was also proven. A high percentage (40%) agrees with the statement, 33% disagrees and 27% is hesitant.

In a traditional mixed classroom learners study at different pace. Fifty-two per cent of the respondents feel to have been more successful during DL for the reason that they could learn at their own pace with 29% from them completely agreeing with this statement. 26% is of the opposite opinion – they are more successful in face-to-face learning and 22% could not decide. In this statement the mean is 3.42 and the highest number of respondents marked the completely agree' answer. So, most learners consider the possibility to study at their own pace as one of the keys to successful learning.

The next statement to be analysed is whether the respondents would like to take part in online learning in the future or not. The mean is 2.58 and the 'completely disagree' answer was marked by 49% of the respondents: almost half of the respondents were not ready for this form of learning, 32% is willing to study online in the future and 19% could not decide.

The second set of questions where the answers had to be given on a five-point rating scale included four statements concerning language learning and one statement was about the learners' digital skills.

Table 3

Attitude to language learning during the school breakdown

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Online language learning is more time-consuming for me than face-to-face learning.	3.26	1.22
Online language learning is more stressful for me than face-to-face learning.	2.50	1.04
My digital skills have considerably improved in the period of the quarantine as I had to acquire the use of technology quickly during DL	3.39	0.96
Online langue learning is better and more effective for me than face-to-face learning.	2.57	1.15
Online languge learning is more difficult for me than face-to-face learning.	3.01	0.90

The first two statements touched upon the questions of time and stress in language learning and the statistics shows that the hypothesis connected with the first statement was proven: 55.5% of the learners find online teaching to be more time-consuming than traditional teaching (20.6% completely agrees, 34.9% agrees), 38% disagrees or completely disagrees and 6% cannot decide. The highest number of the respondents agrees with this statement and study longer hours. What concerns feeling more stressed in distance language learning, the mean is 2.50. For 28.4% of the respondents it proved to be more stressful (25.4% agrees 3% completely agrees) 12.8 % cannot decide while 57.6% (22.2 % completely disagrees, 35.4% disagrees) found it less stressful than traditional teaching. The highest number of the respondents does not agree with the statement, so most learners feel more relaxed with this form of language learning. The hypothesis that DL is more time-consuming than face-to-face learning was proven but the results do not confirm that it was more stressful.

The period of the quarantine was found to be useful for developing digital competencies of the learners, as the mean (3.39) show. Fifty one per cent of the respondents considers that their digital skills have considerably improved, 19% do not think so and 30% could not decide.

Definite disagreement can be traced with the statement that online language learning is better and more effective. Only 19% think they can be better at language learning at home than in a traditional classroom, 27% could not decide and 54% disagree with this statement.

Whether online language learning is more difficult or not was the hardest to decide for most learners, as the highest number of the respondents (32%) marked the "cannot decide" answer. Altogether, 38% completely agree or agree that it is more difficult, 30% did not agree with the statement. The mean, however, is 3.01, so, learning languages online for most of the respondents proved to be more difficult.

The questionnaire ended with four open-ended questions. The first question attempted to find out if the respondents were eager to study online and what they liked or disliked about learning the languages this way. This question was left unanswered by some respondents. The answers formulated by the learners have been divided into three groups. In the first group the reasons of those students have been enlisted and summarised who were eager to study the languages online. The second group contains the answers of those who did not feel like learning languages in this form. The answers of those who were not sure are in the third column. The following reasons have been formulated by the respondents:

Table 4

Pros and cons of DL: opinions of the learners

Reasons for	Reasons against	Unsure
- more comfortable, flexible and easier - all the teachers tried to help in everything I needed and this made it motivating and interesting; - every teacher had a different approach and this made it interesting and motivating - there were interesting videos - it was more exciting - I think I had more opportunities to a acquire the language online I was curious how things change in distance learning	- I had no motivation - it is not interesting to study online - it was more difficult - it was difficult to understand on my own - online teaching is more difficult and less efficient but I was obliged to study - the explanation of the teacher is interesting and one has more desire to study face-to-face - to successfully acquire knowledge explanation is necessary - I could not understand the material to such an extent than at school it is easier to understand the material when the teacher explains it personally	– in the beginning yes, but later, towards the end I had no desire - in the beginning I thought it would be easier to keep pace but later it became clear it was harder - yes and no, partially it seemed interesting and it was good to use the technology,

Reasons for	Reasons against	Unsure
- it was easier to learn at my own pace - I had more free time as I was able to schedule my time - one feels like doing something in case one enjoys it and knows it will be necessary once in life - I could read the material several times and I was able to understand it better this way - it was new and I wanted to try it - beside the textbooks I could learn from videos, films and other sources - I wanted to develop - I need the languages - it was my duty	- there was always something I was more interested in - my attention was distracted - I knew I would not be able to concentrate for 100% - I could not pay as much attention as at school - it was strange and sometimes I felt I lost track - I do not see much rationale - I had no desire, it's easier to study face-to-face, it is more productive - I had no desire, there were a lot of things I could not understand and had good marks only because I found the answers on the internet - I felt indifferent when I sat down to study because some teachers simply 'threw' the material to us - the demands were too high, too much material was sent and I did not pay attention to which tasks I completed and which were the ones not completed	but I missed the explanation of the teacher and it discouraged (demotivated) me -yes and no, sometimes yes as I killed the time by studying, sometimes I found it useless - what I learned myself was interesting but the homework was either too difficult or pointless - I did not know what to expect

The aim of the second open-ended question was to get an insight into the way the teachers motivated their students in distance learning. Among the responses given both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be found. According to the answers it is intrinsic motivation that prevailed: praising, sending interesting tasks the learners liked doing and language games connected to the topic, sending audio-material and videos the learners watched with interest, giving creative tasks, encouraging, telling students to try this way of learning because it is interesting, giving advice and a helping hand when it was necessary have been mentioned by the respondents. Several learners underlined that they could always turn to their teacher in case they needed help and it made them feel very grateful. Being tolerant, sending accurate and well-explained material simplified in order to make it easier to understand, not giving much homework and trying to do their best to help learners have been mentioned as qualities of the teachers that were motivating. One respondent wrote that the great deal of time and effort teachers put into distance teaching motivated him/her to do the tasks honestly. Another fact mentioned as encouraging was that the teachers corrected the tasks in time and seeing the results the learner had more enthusiasm to study. Enhancing extrinsic motivation can also be traced in the respondents' answers. Teachers drew learners' attention to the importance of concentrating on reaching their goals and learning the material anyway, to the importance of learning the same way as in face-to-face teaching or even better as they will need the skills and the knowledge in the future. They also encouraged by telling learners to look at distance learning as an opportunity to try something new, by explaining that learners have to develop for their own sake, by asking to hold on and think about their future. In addition, teachers encouraged to learn the material individually thus strengthening learner autonomy. Empathizing with their learners, being considerate to them but at the same time trying to make them understand how important it is to learn the material has been pointed out as a way of motivating. Grades have also been mentioned to be motivating. One

learner considers that "no motivation is necessary for DL" (Learner 24). Another respondent believes "the most important thing is to have a strong will to study" (Learner 17). Some short and simple answers were given like "the same way as in face-to-face learning" or "well". In ten cases (6.3%) the respondents allege not having been motivated at all. Material and homework was sent every fortnight but "we were not praised only the expectations were higher and higher" (Learner 41). "I will fail in case I do not fulfil the tasks and do not study" was written by Learner 33. In a few cases no feedback has been sent. Taking all the responses into account, it can be concluded that except for a few cases teachers motivated their learners both intrinsically and extrinsically.

The respondents have been asked if they would like to continue learning distantly or not, to give reasons in case of a positive answer and to point out the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning if their answer is negative. First, the reasons of those who gave a negative answer will be summarised. The most frequent argument for traditional teaching is connected to the live explanation of the teachers: it is easier to understand the material if a teacher explains and clarifies the details in case something is not understandable, especially in grammar or when clarifying the meaning of words. Apart from the lack of live explanations learners suffered from, the second most frequently mentioned reason was that there were no online lessons and learners were simply expected to send in the tasks. The other reasons mentioned were: "It was not useful, it was not effective and caused a lot of stress" (Learner 12), "It was more difficult, we could not master the material properly" (Learner 43), "I did not have enough motivation, I became lazy, my attention was often distracted" (Learner 30), "Though my grades became better my knowledge did not improve" (Learner 39), "I simply found the answers on the internet" (Learner 15). Furthermore, some learners found that there were too many tasks with short deadlines and they also consider it was not possible to really assess what they have mastered. They state that it is more exciting and more motivating to study in the classroom and DL was more complicated, less useful and in general it was not well-organised. Finally, the importance of the community, friends and personal meetings has been mentioned. Those who could not decide claim that both forms of learning have advantages and disadvantages at the same time. The advantage of DL is that one can schedule one's time, the disadvantage is that it is more difficult to understand without face-to-face explanation. It was also added that from some subjects it is good while from others it is more difficult. Those who would like to study online state that DL was easier and less stressful for them; they could learn more and had more time to do the tasks. One respondent states that in the beginning it was strange to have so much time and he/she was not able to handle it but soon he/she got into the new routine, had more time for herself and for others, there was no stress and pressure in his/her life and he/she did not have to listen to the vexation of the classmates every day, there was less pressure (Learner 18). He/she admits, though, that she needed help of a private tutor in mathematics. Another respondent feels that it is more convenient to study from home with gadgets and one does not have to bother about travelling or care about the weather (Learner 22). Respondents also state that they were able to learn everything in time, there was no lagging behind. One learner could concentrate better because he/she could study at his/her pace while another one considers that in DL he/she would be more successful and would have more time. Two respondents think that for a certain period of time it is good but not for long.

In the last open-ended question the respondents were also asked to write about any other experiences and difficulties they had during DL. Thirteen respondents had no difficulties while others mention the huge amount of material that had to be covered, preparing the tasks in time, not being able to understand the material completely from the sources sent without face-to-face explanation ('I still don't understand a lot' Learner 58), falling behind in the subjects they are not good at and becoming demotivated as they had difficulties. Technical problems have also been mentioned like slow internet or long videos that could not be downloaded to the end at once. Learning at an educational establishment is considered to be more effective by one respondent especially in case of languages,

mathematics and other difficult subjects. Some answers given are close in content to the answers for the previous question: the demands were too high as teachers demanded twice as much as usually; it required a lot of time and energy; it was hard to make a lot of notes, work out the material and study individually. Two learners admitted neglecting doing the tasks regularly which piled up while others, on the contrary, point out the possibility to schedule their time and study without worrying about homework for the next day as an advantage. The positive experiences and feelings the respondents shared were connected with the abilities they developed during DL and they view this period as a step to becoming autonomous learners, it became much easier for them to find important information. Some respondents learnt to appreciate school and expressed a strong desire to go to school again: 'when next time we will have the possibility to go to school we should rethink how good it is to study there' (Learner 31). The same thought can be found in a short, simple sentence: "I want to go to school" (Learner 7). Finally, turning to each other for help was mentioned as a positive experience that welded the classmates and schoolmates.

Discussion and interpretation of the results. Having analysed the answers given in the questionnaires we can examine and discuss several areas of DL.

The prevailing applications were Messenger, e-mail and Google Classroom. The number of online lessons was not high but attempts have been made in both languages so, the asynchronous form of teaching prevailed. The explanation of the new material was done mainly in written form, in the form of video recordings prepared by the teachers as well as online learning resources (audio materials and video links) sent to the learners which they found to be very useful and motivating. The material sent by the teachers in written, audio or video forms was completely read or watched by the majority of learners; however, a considerable number of students did not work profoundly on it. Thus, on the one hand, the main drawback of presenting the new material in the above mentioned asynchronous ways can be the careless, negligent attitude of certain learners; on the other hand, these forms of presentation can serve as useful material available any time for revising for those whose attitude is serious. Teachers have expanded their teaching resources, learnt how to make video recordings for teaching purposes and how to use different applications in teaching. Nevertheless, this area still has to be improved, especially in the field of delivering online lessons and choosing applications that can be the most suitable for online teaching.

The learning habits of the respondents in Grades 10 and 11 have remarkably changed during the breakdown. Modern techniques, online resources and online applications have been involved in the learning process and were used along with the traditional ones. The roles of internet resources and of the media have considerably increased and internet resources were preferred to special lessons given on television. DL was found to be more time-consuming than face-to-face learning by the majority of the respondents. However, only part of the learners devoted much time to learning; in a considerable number of cases no regularity was traced. The worrying tendency is that certain respondents admitted not having studied on a regular basis or spent less than an hour a day on learning. As a result, they would fall behind their more diligent mates.

The attitude to DL was ambiguous. It was taken seriously by a considerable number of the respondents who noticed an opportunity in this form of education. A high percentage could not decide about the usefulness of this form and a large number of the respondents did not take it seriously enough. This attitude implies us that teachers should draw their learners' attention to the opportunities lying in this form of education, should raise the learners' awareness and motivate them. As to stressfulness, the majority of the respondents felt less stress in this period while a small percentage found it more stressful than traditional teaching. The number of those for whom it was more difficult prevails over those who were able to cope with it quite easily. One of the advantages of this form of learning proved to be that students can study at their own pace and those who learnt to schedule their time well found distance learning effective. Thus, the hypothesis about the positive effect

of distance learning on some students was proved. Highly motivated students with high learner autonomy who can schedule their time preferred this form to face-to-face learning. Thus, they can be the winners of DL.

The difficulties emerging in that period in language learning were in the field of grammar structures, new vocabulary as well as understanding written texts and audio materials. Classmates, family members, friends and private tutors helped the learners facing hardship to overcome them. The high percentage and the answers given prove that distance language learning is more difficult online than face-to-face. However, it was found better and more effective by a certain number of the respondents. The reasons enlisted in the open ended part of the questionnaire are connected with the novelty in the way of learning, new and motivating learning resources as well as more time they can spend on studying. The learners were curious about this new, digital way of learning and wanted to try it, found it exciting. Both external (extrinsic) and internal (intrinsic) motivations have been mentioned: "It was my duty" (Learner 4), "I need the language, I found it necessary' (Learner 14), "I wanted to develop, I found more opportunities" (Learner 37), and "I enjoyed it" (Learner 8). The attention of the teachers and their willingness and attempt to help was mentioned to be motivating. From the learning resources interesting videos, films and sources other than the textbook have been mentioned. Being able to schedule the time, read the material as many times as it was necessary, study at an own pace and be flexible were the reasons enlisted that made them enthusiastic to learn. The arguments of those learners who were not delighted with online language learning underlined the necessity of interesting explanations in order to fully understand the material and successfully acquire knowledge, the role of personal, live explanations as they make understanding easier and the hardships they encountered in concentrating on the material. In addition, the high demands and the huge amount of material sent by the teachers were mentioned. What concerns language learning in general, the answers given prove that it is of paramount importance for most respondents.

Assessment is an essential component of the learning process. In the examined period it took place mainly in written form. In a few cases no assessment was tracked. This area deserves a special attention as in DL the methods of assessment should change and they can be either live, real-time reporting with the help of applications or time-delayed, remote reporting like e.g. project work.

Having found online learning more time-consuming, more difficult and less productive most respondents would not like to study this way. In spite of the attempts of most teachers to motivate learners, a lot of students became demotivated in this period. Some of the learners are not against this form of teaching and would like to continue to study this way,

Conclusions and pedagogical implications. Distance learning has advantages and disadvantages at the same time, but all in all, the experience gained in this period can contribute to the learning and teaching process in the future. It can be a considerable step towards implementing ICT into traditional teaching as both teachers and learners have improved their digital skills to a certain extent. Involving digital and video technology into teaching in general and into language learning motivates learners, as the respondents claim. Video recordings made by teachers themselves or carefully selected online resources can be used any time later even in traditional teaching.

As to motivation, we can state that DL was both motivating and demotivating at the same time. On the one hand, involving digital technology, video resources and films made learning more exciting and motivated learners intrinsically. The positive attitude of teachers and their attempt to help learners in this situation was also motivating for the learners. On the other hand, the lack of live explanations and of regular face-to-face control, the huge amount of material that had to be coped with along with the difficulties the learners faced proved to be demotivating. Teachers should pay a lot of attention to developing learner autonomy, motivating learners, should find more efficient ways of assessment and have to find ways to increase the number of online lessons.

During the period of the first school breakdown learners faced a lot of difficulties and experienced a new form of learning for which they were not prepared. Those learners, whose attitude was serious

enough and were able to manage their time well have coped with these difficulties and gained experience in a new form of learning that can be useful for them in their future studies as in the digital age online learning is becoming more and more popular and widespread.

In the second phase of the research we are going to compare the first, sudden school breakdown with another period that schools might face and are seeking answers for the questions arising from the first phrase of the research as well as for any changes taken.

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