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MODERN ONLINE PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING LINGUISTICS IN THE US HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE

Abstract. The article deals with the problem of applying modern online platforms and digital technologies to teaching linguistics students in the US experience. It has been highlighted that nowadays it is imperative to discover new approaches to enhancing the quality of education process, in particular, professional training in linguistics, using prominent achievements of the leading countries, namely, the USA. The country is worldwide recognized as the main centre of linguistics and applies the most advanced and innovative technologies to teaching linguistics. Recent researches and publications on the topic have been analyzed. It has been found that digital learning is viewed in different contexts, may have different terms and interpretations, however most scholars agree it promotes digitality of the education process and sets innovative trends in the education of the future. It has been stated that future linguists should be able to effectively apply linguistic theories and methods for fulfilling standard professional tasks, in particular developing scientific and technical and special terminology, linguistic software, conducting research in the field of psycholinguistics, forensic linguistics, communicative linguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, applied linguistics, etc. Therefore, it has been specified that the US experience of professional training in linguistics aims to strengthen the education process with the use of innovative digital technologies so that future linguists may confidently implement the acquired knowledge and skills into professional activities. It has been found that content management systems are widely applied in professional training in linguistics, since they are aimed at making study time more flexible so that the students may efficiently organize their learning and successfully achieve learning goals. It has been clarified that online/distance learning, which includes videoconferencing software and massive open online courses, is actively implemented to eliminate geographic barriers and connect learners all over the world. It has been specified that modern linguistic multimedia laboratories play the leading role in making professional training in linguistics more digital. Based on the research findings, relevant conclusions have been drawn and optimal recommendations have been outlined how to enhance the quality of professional training in linguistics worldwide through applying modern online platforms and digital technologies.

Keywords: linguistics; linguist; professional training; digital learning; digital technologies; online platforms; the USA.

1. INTRODUCTION

Problem statement. The structural transformation of economy, the introduction of the latest technologies into production, the growth of labour migration, the intensification of intercultural cooperation and the intellectualization of economic and social life have caused the need for highly qualified specialists, who generate innovative ideas under the conditions of scientific integration, apply advanced information and digital tools, speak several foreign

languages and strive for self-development and professional growth. The challenges of linguistic globalization, the proactive guidelines of information space, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the computerization of all sectors have prioritized the quality of professional training in linguistics. Indeed, the process of mastering the latest technologies for processing linguistic information requires acquaintance with theoretical and practical developments in linguistics (as a complex system of linguistic areas and disciplines), psychology (a study of mechanisms and strategies of communication), computer sciences (computer linguistics and lexicography) etc. In this regard, the problem of professional training in linguistics is rather relevant. One of the ways to increase the efficiency of professional training in linguistics is to apply advanced online platforms and digital technologies. Therefore, prominent achievements of the USA are of great scientific importance, since the country has been the main center of linguistics in the world for over a century already and has gained global recognition for high standards of professional training in linguistics. The multiaspect and objective study of the most significant teaching achievements in the US experience will contribute to enhancing the quality of professional training in linguistics worldwide due to an efficient application of the most advanced online platforms and digital technologies.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. As C. Wang & L. Winstead, Professors from the University of Northern Iowa and California State University Fullerton, USA, rightly note in the Handbook of Research on Foreign Language Education in the Digital Age, “language is generally understood as the medium of communication of ideas and thoughts” and modern technologies contribute to the effectiveness of language communication processes [1, p. xxvii]. Therefore, when one speaks about technologies, they refer to computers, namely, digital forms of interaction. One can easily access information due to an immediate access to the Internet and make connections with others. D. Crystal indicates that the Internet currently provides the most powerful tools for linguistics development and “only two things are certain: it is not going to go away, and it is going to get larger” [2, p. 149].

Some scholars state, “digital language learners should have opportunities to move beyond traditional and rigid barriers of traditional language teaching and learning; ... language should mirror their informal learning modes as experienced via Internet technology, computer games, social media and mobile devices” [1, p. xxxi]. However, they mention a certain disadvantage of rapid technological innovations, which consists in the fact that it is difficult for individuals “to keep pace with novel technology, some of which becomes outdated before audiences can adapt to it” [1, p. xxxi]. Other scholars support this statement, too. L. Bilbatua & A. Herrero de Haro [3] and F. Gallardo del Puerto & E. Gamboa [4] believe that the teacher’s role is challenged, since they are feeling less and less qualified when applying modern technologies of language teaching and learning in the classroom.

M. Carrier defines digital learning as “an umbrella term to refer to the tools, techniques, methodologies and activities we have inherited from the researchers and practitioners of previous disciplines, such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL), technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), computer-mediated communication (CMC) and many other historical subdivisions of digital learning” [5, p. 9]. In our opinion, of great significance are the scholar’s ideas on *the role of the digital teacher*. He indicates that despite the still-existing view the teachers should not necessarily become the experts in technology. However, they should possess knowledge of digital components of the learning and teaching process so that they may increase the students’ interest in following it. Importantly, the teachers should become the facilitators and the guides of the education process rather than the mere knowledge transmitters. C. Kramsch believes that “the digital classroom can meet the

changing aspirations of students who are aching for more autonomy, agency, collaborative learning and distributed creativity” [6, p. xi].

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) characterizes digital learning as follows: “digital learning technologies can enable students to grasp concepts more quickly and fully, to connect theory and application more adeptly and to engage in learning more readily, while also improving instructional techniques, leveraging instructor time and facilitating the widespread sharing of knowledge. Digital technologies will enable this process in new and better ways and create possibilities beyond the limits of our current imagination” [7].

However, providing linguistic training becomes global due to Internet technologies, C. Wang & L. Winstead urge course designers and instructors to take into account the factor of accessibility while designing curricula [1]. L. Blinn-Pike indicates that the mobile phone is the tool that is providing more access to people and information than other sources, such as computers. Thus, educators should be able to apply this approach to formal traditional and online learning situations, since the phone is generally the most accessible and affordable device for language learners [8]. Finally, L. Kamhi-Stein states that if linguists-to-be should learn how to use technology effectively in the future, “they must use it for learning while they are students [9, p. 424].

Having considered the US experience in maintaining digitality of professional training in linguistics, we can conclude that US educators optimally and rationally implement the elements of the above-mentioned digital modes of learning into such training, so that future linguists may acquire valuable knowledge and skills they will surely need taking into account vast computerization and digitalization of professional activities in any field.

Therefore, **the research aims** to present positive aspects of the US experience in applying modern online platforms and digital technologies to professional training in linguistics.

2. METHODS

In order to fulfill the research aim, we have applied *theoretical methods* to analyze scientific, pedagogical and methodological literary sources, educational and methodological documents and consequently identify whether the problem under study has been properly explored; *analysis and synthesis* – to justify the categorical apparatus of the research; *induction and deduction* – to specify the connection between the basic concepts and their main features; *exploratory method* – to formulate general conclusions, to highlight rational and scientifically significant aspects of researches on the topic; *prognostic method* – to justify innovative ideas of the US experience in applying modern online platforms and digital technologies to professional training in linguistics and outline relevant recommendations to enhance the quality of professional training in linguistics worldwide due to implementing innovative digital technologies into the education process in higher education institutions.

3. RESULTS

Professional training in linguistics at US universities is of an applied nature and is, in many respects, adaptive to individual characteristics and needs of the students. It flexibly responds to sociocultural changes in the environment, which, in our opinion, can be successfully implemented into higher education systems worldwide, since it will be easier for the students to adjust to the conditions of a rapidly changing life and, essentially, the labour market.

M. Macaulay and K. Syrret state that many topics are studied under the umbrella of linguistics. The latter encompasses such issues as humans' unconscious knowledge of language, first and second language acquisition, the structure of language in general and particular languages, variety of languages, languages' influence on human interaction, etc. Future linguists can acquire expertise in many areas, including the computer industry, education, teaching English as a second language, academia, translation / interpreting, language documentation / fieldwork, the publishing industry, educational attainment assessment, lexicography, consultancy on language, the advertising industry, etc. [10]. Therefore, they should be able to deal with such professional activities as recognizing speech, synthesizing text-to-speech, processing artificial language, maintaining computer-mediated language if they choose *the computer industry*; develop various educational material, develop effective assessment techniques, discover optimal approaches to teaching general and specific linguistic topics – *education*; possess innovative knowledge of language pedagogy and be ready to implement it using advanced educational technologies – *teaching English as a second language*; teach core academic subjects (e.g. Linguistics, Speech/Communication Sciences, Anthropology) – *academia*; have a high level of proficiency in the relevant language – *translation / interpreting*; document, analyze and preserve languages, especially endangered ones, – *language documentation / fieldwork*; possess relevant editing, publishing and writing skills – *the publishing industry*; design and assess examinations – educational attainment assessment; possess consolidated knowledge of core linguistic branches, namely, phonology, morphology, etymology, to compile dictionaries – *lexicography*; process linguistic aspects of evidence to work in law enforcement agencies – *consultancy on language*; conduct researches on customer appealing sound chains and links – *advertising agency*.

Consequently, professional training in linguistics in the US experience aims to strengthen the education process with the use of innovative digital technologies so that future linguists may efficiently master the above-mentioned aspects of linguistics and confidently implement the acquired knowledge and skills into professional activities.

According to C. Wang & L. Winstead, key aspects that promote a successful learning experience for the language student in a technology-enhanced environment, especially a web environment, include the following: 1) institutional support with appropriate technology to meet a learner's needs in the language learning environment (e.g. software and hardware requirements, high speed Internet); 2) specific instruction and learner training to ensure continuous learning (e.g. technology software, trouble-shooting ability); 3) authentic digital opportunities for student-to-student language interaction; 4) student training and support to troubleshoot software and hardware technology failures [1, p. xxxi-xxxii]. It must be noted that the teachers can also benefit from these innovations, since they can engage in digital learning themselves and dedicate more time to self-study and, as a result, professional development.

Innovative online platforms and digital technologies in professional training in linguistics in the USA can be classified into 1) learning content management (LCMS) and learning management (LMS) systems, 2) software applications, 3) social media, 4) videoconferencing software, 5) massive open online courses, 6) modern linguistic multimedia laboratories.

US educators widely apply *LCMS* and *LMS* to professional training in linguistics. These systems are aimed at making study time more flexible so that the students may efficiently organize their learning and successfully achieve learning goals. The most typical activities of such learning include engaging in discussions with their peers, taking online tests and quizzes, accessing course syllabi, grade charts, learning audio and video materials, etc. Importantly, linguistics students may use digital technologies to prepare group and individual projects,

presentations, reports. It must be noted LCMSs specialize in digital learning content, whereas an LMS is a platform that allows managing a wide range of learning experiences. E-learning is one of them, but an LMS also manages more traditional forms of learning and training such as scheduling face-to-face workshops, facilitating learner conversations through social forums and sharing resources. LMSs, like Docebo, Cornerstone or Administrate, allow combining these different learning experiences into a blended learning path (see Figure 1) [11].



Fig. 1. Blended learning path provided by the LMS platform

Google documents allow both teachers and students to work online simultaneously or asynchronously. Digital devices, such as digital and video cameras, as well as mobile phone cameras, can be used to create movies and dramas, including creating audio, video and graphics, 3D cartoon figures (Nawmal, Animoto, etc.), adding subtitles, transitions and animations. Special attention should be also paid to an interactive white board, called the Smartboard, since it encourages linguistics students to interact with their teachers and peers. C. Wang & L. Winstead emphasize on its interactive projection, which allows creating scenarios for language learning. They also note that digital markers allow multiple learners to collaborate during storytelling [1]. In our opinion, the main advantage of such a digital technology consists in the possibility of saving notes in the digital format. In such a way, the participants in the education process have the opportunity to revise the studied material, detect mistakes and eliminate them in the future.

Special attention should be paid to *software applications*, which allow holding text message polls and mobile voting through smart phones, for instance, *Kahoot*. With the help of this application, the teachers can motivate students to express their opinions on relevant linguistic topics and, most importantly, quickly and interactively assess their knowledge. Due to the immediate feedback shown on the screen after, the students become aware of their performance results and can either consolidate their results or improve missing points.

We believe nowadays nothing can engage the students in the learning process more than the up-and-coming social media. In the USA, they actively implement *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *LinkedIn* into professional training in linguistics, since these online platforms allow students to share their views on popular linguistic topics and discuss them with professionals and peers, discover call for papers of relevant linguistic conferences, seminars, forums, journals, etc. Video-sharing websites, such as *Youtube*, *Vimeo*, provide linguistics students with an enormous amount of language learning channels, so that they may acquire modern knowledge of the relevant language, listen to correct pronunciation of native speakers, practice speaking online, etc. Indeed, they can also create their own channels and stream their own videos, be creative. Website content builders (*Weebly*, *Wixs*, *Worldpress*) provide the teachers and the students with the platform, on which they can develop their personal websites with the help of embedded functions and templates for videos, document, audio, discussion board, text display. Most importantly, they do not need programming skills for this activity.

Special attention should be also paid to such digital services as a web-quest that is a form of the inquiries, using which students can obtain basic information from Internet sources, and a cyberguide, that is a specially organized unit based on standards and transmitted over the network. Web-quests assist linguistics students in adapting to the opportunities and challenges of the Internet and subsequently developing their own web-

quests in the context of linguistic problems under study. As a result, they exchange them during collaborative activities with peers. At the same time cyberguides consist of certain instructions intended both for students and teachers, who work with special scientific literature. They also contain a description of the task, a step-by-step instruction for achieving the goal and the Internet resources necessary for obtaining the results and assessing them in the context of several relevant aspects.

In addition to material learning facilities, online/distance learning in the digital age, which includes videoconferencing software and massive open online courses, should be taken into account, since they allow eliminating geographic barriers and connecting learners all over the world. One cannot deny the revolutionary influence of *videoconferencing software* (*Adobe Connect, Zoom, Skype, etc.*) on language teaching and learning and, in particular, professional training in linguistics. This technology provides virtual platforms, which can reinforce practical training, since linguistics students can collaboratively learn linguistics and foreign languages with their peers without the limitations of traditional linguistic classrooms. In addition, videoconferencing allows involving those students who cannot participate in face-to-face learning, thus promoting inclusivity of the education process for the sake of students with special educational needs. So, the advantages of videoconferencing are the following: high efficiency of teaching and learning in comparison with traditional methods, increasing the role of students in the education process, using interactive teaching and learning methods and approaches, fast feedback, multiple access to electronic information, peer-to-peer learning, changes in the role of tutors (to facilitate the education process rather than control it). However, there are certain disadvantages of virtual linguistic conferences that impede their mass dissemination, namely, they are emotionally “poorer” than conferences that involve live communication; information overload related to complexity of linguistic concepts.

Network learning, such as *Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)*, aims to engage linguistics students in self-study, peer collaboration and knowledge sharing. This system provides access to various linguistic and other courses online and ensures digitality, connectivity, diversity and informativity of the education process. It must be noted that MOOCs can be either maintained by universities or be independent. In our opinion, MOOCs should be actively used within the settings of a linguistic classroom or environment, since they contribute to enhancing the quality of the education process due to a faster way of learning and the possibility to choose those courses, which mostly correspond to educational and scientific interests of linguistic students, as well as their personal needs, motives and professional strivings.

In the USA, the leading role in informatizing professional training in linguistics is played by *modern linguistic multimedia laboratories* (data processing laboratories, forensic linguistics laboratories, sociolinguistics laboratories, observation laboratories, psycholinguistics laboratories), which are not only intended for conducting lessons, but also for independent work of students. These laboratories meet all the psychological, hygienic and ergonomic requirements. As a rule, they are equipped with personal computers for students and teachers, servers, printers, scanners, TVs, digital cameras, video cameras, webcams, interactive whiteboards, digitizers, hardware and software for international conferences, digital databases with exam materials files, a software package for continuing student control, electronic educational materials, information support tools for the education process, etc. [12, 13, 14, 15, 16].

The Annual Report: the State of Linguistics in Higher Education published by the Linguistic Society of America in 2018 proves that more and more students are pursuing and completing degrees in linguistics [17, p. 21] (see Figure 2), which can be explained by the fact that professional training in linguistics in the US experience incorporates creative and

flexible use of online platforms and digital technologies caused by the increasing complexity of the practices and issues of linguistics as a profession, which “seems to be what is needed in the profession” as rightly noted by C. Chapelle [18, p. 32].

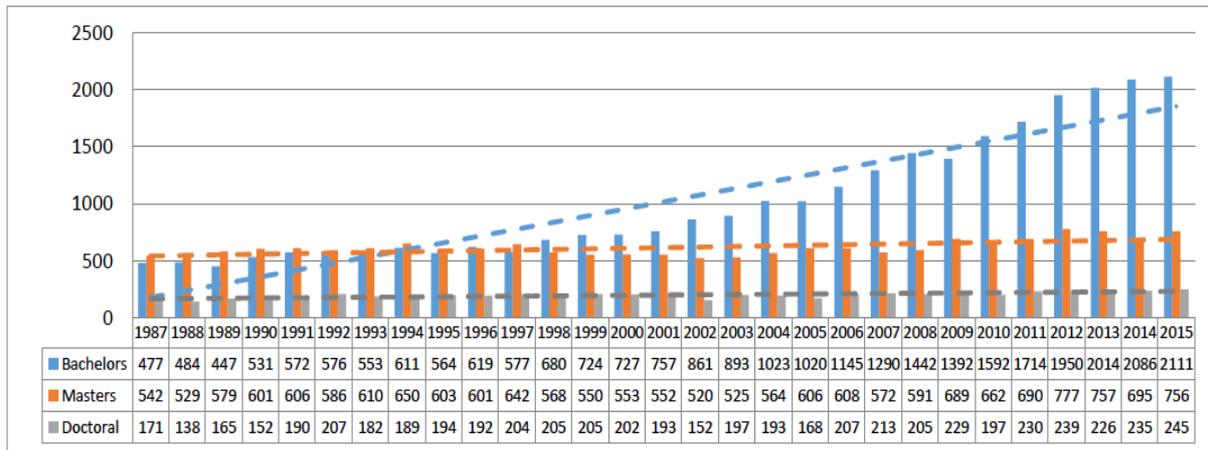


Fig. 2. Trends in growth in Linguistic Degrees 2000-2015

4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Therefore, we can conclude that the US experience of professional training in linguistics rationally combines the up-and-coming trends in digital learning and expands the scope of learning with innovative digital technologies and online platforms. In such a way, linguistics students have the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge of theoretical and applied linguistics and acquire relevant practical skills, which they will surely need to modernize professional activities and correspond to the requirements of the labour market. Given computerization of the education process, one can expect certain demise of traditional face-to-face learning. However, we do not assume it to be the case. It is still rather effective, since such learning ensures interaction between the teachers and the students and the students themselves. Digital learning, in turn, contributes to flexibility of the education process and allows economizing study time and practicing required skills and abilities through innovative and interactive forms. We believe that it is extremely imperative to accelerate the introduction of innovative digital technologies and online platforms into professional training in linguistics worldwide. Based on the study of the US experience, we have outlined the following recommendations, which, in our opinion, might be of importance:

1. It is essential to develop state mechanisms that can ensure financial support of higher education institutions in both computerization and digitalization of the education process in general and professional training in linguistics in particular.

2. It is recommended to organize advanced professional training for teachers, which should be dedicated to the problems of applying innovative digital technologies and online platforms in professional training in linguistics, so that educators can feel confident to use them and be motivated to expand their knowledge of technological advances and enhance digital competency.

3. It is vital to encourage linguistics students to engage in independent study in the context of discovering new ways to consolidate their knowledge of theoretical and applied linguistics through innovative online digital technologies and linguistic platforms and feel free to share their knowledge and experience with peers.

4. It is necessary that higher education institutions and, in particular, linguistics departments, should organize innovative distance conferences or webinars on linguistics with the use of linguistic platforms, social media and involve international specialists, so that linguistics students may learn how to cooperate with colleagues, discuss relevant linguistic issues, develop the culture of a scientific dialogue and discover the benefits of applying online technologies to promote their scientific views and receive feedback.

5. It is compulsory to reconsider linguistics courses curricula and syllabi, so that they may correspond to the challenges of digitalization and meet scientific needs and interests of linguistics students.

The prospects for further researches include studying innovative experience of the leading European countries in applying digital technologies and online platforms to teaching linguistics students and outlining their positive aspects, which may be used to enhance the quality of professional training in linguistics worldwide.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ СУЧАСНИХ ОНЛАЙН-ПЛАТФОРМ ТА ЦИФРОВИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ ДЛЯ НАВЧАННЯ ЛІНГВІСТІВ В ОСВІТНІЙ ПРАКТИЦІ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОЇ ВИЩОЇ ШКОЛИ

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Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі використання сучасних онлайн-платформ та цифрових засобів для навчання лінгвістів в американській освітній практиці. Зазначено, що сучасні реалії спонукають освітян до пошуку нових підходів для поліпшення якості освітнього процесу, зокрема професійної підготовки фахівців з лінгвістики, за допомогою найбільш сучасних та інноваційних цифрових засобів. Проаналізовано останні наукові дослідження та публікації з цієї тематики. Виявлено, що вчені розглядають поняття «цифрове навчання» в різних контекстах, однак більшість з них погоджується з думкою, що таке навчання сприяє «дигіталізації» освітнього процесу та задає тенденції освіти майбутнього. Встановлено, що лінгвістика охоплює різноманітні предметні галузі, тому майбутні фахівці з лінгвістики повинні володіти знаннями та навичками, які можливо практично застосовувати в комп'ютерній індустрії, освіті загалом і вищій освіті зокрема, перекладознавстві, рекламній галузі, лексикографічній діяльності тощо. Обґрунтовано, що американська модель професійної підготовки фахівців з лінгвістики передбачає активне застосування інноваційних онлайн-платформ та цифрових засобів, оскільки майбутні фахівці повинні здобути ґрунтовні знання та практичні навички в галузі лінгвістики та впевнено й ефективно застосовувати їх у професійній діяльності. Досліджено, що американські освітяни активно впроваджують у професійну підготовку фахівців з лінгвістики «системи управління контентом» («content management systems»), оскільки вони забезпечують гнучкість освітнього процесу з метою надання майбутнім лінгвістам можливості ефективно організувати своє навчання та успішно досягти очікуваних результатів навчання. З'ясовано, що онлайн / дистанційне навчання, яке охоплює організацію лінгвістичних конференцій онлайн («videoconferencing») та масові відкриті онлайн-курси («massive open online courses»), активно впроваджується у професійну підготовку фахівців з лінгвістики з метою усунення географічних бар'єрів навчання та сприяння співпраці між майбутніми фахівцями з лінгвістики з усіх країн світу. Зазначено, що сучасні лінгвістичні мультимедійні лабораторії відіграють провідну роль в інформатизації професійної підготовки фахівців з лінгвістики. На основі результатів здійсненого дослідження сформульовано відповідні висновки та наведено оптимальні рекомендації для поліпшення якості професійної підготовки фахівців з лінгвістики в Україні шляхом використання сучасних онлайн-платформ та цифрових засобів.

Ключові слова: лінгвістика; лінгвіст; професійна підготовка; цифрове навчання; цифрові засоби навчання; онлайн-платформи; США.

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ОНЛАЙН-ПЛАТФОРМ И ЦИФРОВЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ ДЛЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ЛИНГВИСТОВ В ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ ПРАКТИКЕ АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ ВЫСШЕЙ ШКОЛЫ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме использования современных онлайн-платформ и цифровых средств для обучения лингвистов в американской образовательной практике. Отмечено, что современные реалии побуждают педагогов к поиску новых подходов для улучшения качества образовательного процесса, в частности профессиональной подготовки специалистов по лингвистике, с помощью наиболее современных и инновационных цифровых средств. Проанализированы последние научные исследования и публикации на эту тематику. Выявлено, что ученые рассматривают понятие «цифровое обучение» в различных контекстах, однако большинство из них соглашается с мнением, что такое обучение способствует «дигитализации» образовательного процесса и задает тенденции образования будущего. Установлено, что лингвистика охватывает различные предметные области, поэтому будущие специалисты по лингвистике должны обладать знаниями и навыками, которые можно практически применять в компьютерной индустрии, образовании в целом и высшем образовании в частности, переводоведении, рекламной отрасли, лексикографической деятельности. Обосновано, что американская модель профессиональной подготовки специалистов по лингвистике предполагает активное применение инновационных онлайн-платформ и цифровых средств, поскольку будущие специалисты должны получить основательные знания и практические навыки в области лингвистики и уверенно и эффективно применять их в профессиональной деятельности. Доказано, что американские педагоги активно внедряют в профессиональную подготовку специалистов по лингвистике «системы управления контентом» («content management systems»), поскольку они обеспечивают гибкость образовательного процесса с целью предоставления будущим лингвистам возможности эффективно организовать свое обучение и успешно достичь ожидаемых результатов обучения. Выяснено, что онлайн / дистанционное обучение, которое включает в себя организацию лингвистических конференций онлайн («videokonferencing») и массовые открытые онлайн-курсы («massive open online courses»), активно внедряется в профессиональную подготовку специалистов по лингвистике с целью устранения географических барьеров обучения и содействия сотрудничеству между будущими специалистами по лингвистике из всех стран мира. Отмечено, что современные лингвистические мультимедийные лаборатории играют ведущую роль в информатизации профессиональной подготовки специалистов по лингвистике. На основании результатов проведенного исследования сформулированы соответствующие выводы и приведены оптимальные рекомендации по улучшению качества профессиональной подготовки специалистов по лингвистике в Украине путем использования современных онлайн-платформ и цифровых средств.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика; лингвист; профессиональная подготовка; цифровое обучение; цифровые средства обучения; онлайн-платформы; США.



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