

**CHALLENGES IN DISTANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR SENIOR
SECONDARY STUDENTS**

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Abstract. *This article explores the challenges and opportunities of distance learning for foreign language acquisition among senior secondary students. While this mode of learning offers flexibility, it also introduces technological limitations, limited real-time interaction, and motivation issues. By integrating linguistic theories from notable scholars and Uzbekistan's national language learning policies, this article provides a comprehensive analysis of these challenges and proposes solutions to enhance the remote language learning experience.*

Keywords: *Distance learning, language education, Uzbekistan language policy, senior students, foreign language acquisition.*

The shift to distance learning has fundamentally transformed language education for secondary students who are familiar with digital technology. However, remote learning poses unique challenges for language acquisition, which traditionally relies on in-person interaction. Influential linguists like Stephen Krashen, Lev Vygotsky, and Merrill Swain highlight the need for interaction, comprehensible input, and social context for effective language learning.

According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, exposure to comprehensible input—that is, language slightly above a learner's current level—plays a critical role in language acquisition. Connectivity issues that disrupt access to this input can significantly impact language learning, as continuity is essential for mastering conversational skills. To improve access, schools could initiate device loan programs and optimize courses for low-bandwidth networks [2].

Linguists such as Lev Vygotsky argue that language is acquired through social interactions within a cultural context, emphasizing the importance of collaborative learning. According to Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, interaction is a critical component of cognitive development, which is especially relevant in language learning [4].

Merrill Swain's Output Hypothesis suggests that producing language in real-time, and receiving immediate feedback, encourages learners to process language deeply and improve their linguistic skills. Without in-person cues, online learning often delays feedback, limiting the immersive experience necessary for language acquisition [3].

Uzbekistan's educational policies align with these findings, supporting live interaction in language classes to counteract the limitations of online learning. Incorporating live video sessions, breakout rooms, and group activities allows students to engage in conversational practice, fostering fluency and comfort with the language.

Self-discipline in online learning environments is essential but challenging, particularly for secondary students learning in isolation. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights that motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence directly impact language acquisition. A high affective filter—due to factors such as low motivation or increased anxiety—can impede a student's ability to process language input effectively. Decree No. PF-5618 “*On the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency Standards*” Uzbekistan, emphasizes the need to maintain motivation in language learning [1].

To enhance engagement, teachers can incorporate interactive elements like quizzes, role-plays, and language games, keeping students interested and reducing the affective filter. Additionally, regular check-ins and progress tracking can provide accountability, motivating students by showcasing their achievements even when learning remotely.

Traditional language teaching methods, such as group discussions and interactive pronunciation exercises, don't always translate effectively to an online format. Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar posits that language learning is innately driven, but external support and structured interaction are essential, particularly in formative educational settings. Uzbekistan's language policy acknowledges the need to adapt teaching methods to digital formats to maintain learning quality.

Blending asynchronous materials, like instructional videos, with synchronous live sessions can balance foundational learning and active practice. Utilizing AI-driven tools that provide personalized feedback can help tailor the learning experience, supporting each student's unique pace and needs, which aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction.

The isolating nature of distance learning can negatively impact students' mental health and, consequently, their language acquisition. Vygotsky's and Swain's theories underscore the social nature of language, and language learning benefits significantly from interaction with both peers and instructors. Uzbekistan's educational reforms consider these aspects, supporting holistic student development and advocating for language learning methods that foster a sense of community. Solutions to counteract isolation include virtual group projects, peer discussions, and regular one-on-one support sessions, which encourage peer support and maintain student engagement. This can help reduce the psychological impact of isolation and sustain motivation, improving language learning outcomes.

Distance learning offers significant flexibility in language education but also presents challenges in engagement, interaction, and motivation. By implementing strategies that align with linguistic theories and Uzbekistan's language policies, educators can create a supportive online environment that promotes language acquisition. Continuous adaptation to meet students' needs will be essential to help them overcome obstacles and achieve language proficiency goals.

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