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“TELEGRAM” AS A MODERN SIMPLIFIED AND RAPID MEANS OF DISTANCE LEARNING USING MULTIMEDIA FORM

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with modern solutions to the problem of building distance education in the scope of “Telegram” messenger. It shows the means of the given communicative app that are easily transformed into educational platform. The whole process of modeling the lesson is illustrated, in this perspective, followed by all the advantages of this method. This article will be appropriate both for urgent organization of distance learning in any of the area and for institutions with limited resources.

KEYWORDS: *Telegram Channels, Telegram Groups, Distance Learning, Simplified Education, Online Tests, Studying During Pandemic, Multimedia*

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11.03.20 as the new coronavirus. According the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) A pandemic is an epidemic that’s spread over several countries or continents and affects a large percent of the population [1]. As Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted “We have never before seen a pandemic sparked by a coronavirus. This is the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus. And we have never before seen a pandemic that can be controlled, at the same time.” [2] Cambridge online dictionary defines the word uncontrolled as existing or happening with nothing able to stop it. In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan immediately took all precautions as soon as the first case of infection was detected in Uzbekistan. The first case was registered at 6:00 on March 15, and on the same day at the meeting held by Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, all universities, secondary schools, kindergartens and all educational organizations of Uzbekistan announced to be closed on the occasion of coronavirus spread on

March 16 [4]. Literally, everything happened overnight, just the day before the students left their educational institutions with different aims, work programs and homeworks, and the next day everything breaks down for an indefinite period. “Desperate” times require “desperate” measures. Since we didn’t have any similar precedents, it was urgently necessary to take action to prevent a gap in education. Continuity of education is one of the highest priorities of our country, which is spelled out in the Law "On Education" of the Republic of Uzbekistan: "The education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan is unified and continuous" [5]. At present, the problem of lifelong education is relevant because, it is associated with the objective need to constantly master new technologies. Thus, if we are not ready to accept and recognize it, very soon we will be on the sidelines of not only professional, but also social life [6].

Accordingly, an immediate decision was made to continue the educational process remotely. It is a form of studying in which the interaction of the teacher and students and students among themselves is carried out at a distance and reflects all the components inherent in the educational process. The United States Distance Learning Association defined distance learning in 1998 (Roblyer & Edwards, 2000) as "the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance [7]." Alexander Pop outlines the great flexibility for students. “Remote access to distance learning courses helps students worldwide to study from the comfort of their homes, or while on the move. Students remain independent and it empowers them to organize their own schedule. As an added bonus, they get to develop their time management skills by managing a learning calendar[8].

Digital technologies demolish or reduce the distances that separate people and communities from educational opportunities, and thus represent a major delivery mechanism for distance learning [9]

In an emergency response to the situation, the first platform that immediately came to mind to create easy access for distance learning was “telegram” messenger. “Telegram” may be fairly considered among the most popular messaging system in the world. It was founded by Pavel Durov in 2013, gaining lightning fast popularity in just one day in Uzbekistan. This is a messenger that captivated the hearts of people by the fact that all messages, files and photos are sent instantly at the time of sending, which was a big problem for the mobile app that everyone used before. Messages were sent for a very long time in other apps, files could be loaded for days, and telegrams entered our lives at the right time eliminating all these shortcomings. Thus, in just a couple of days, people “moved” to the telegram. It is no an exaggeration to say that absolutely every resident of our country, regardless of gender, age and social status, has a telegram application on its electronic device. Even the people who meet the first time, by default, know that the companion has telegram and while talking they use the expression "I will send you it via telegram" instead of "Do you have telegram?" If we narrow down the scope of using of “telegram”, within the university, it is officially used by the administration, teachers and students both among themselves and to transfer the information from the administration to teachers and from teachers to students and vice versa. Consequently, as soon as the question arose about the emergency preparation of distance learning in a pandemic, the question of which platform would be used was no longer aroused.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Firstly, telegram platform allowed us to create a channel which subsequently contained the theoretical part of the lesson according to the calendar thematic plan.

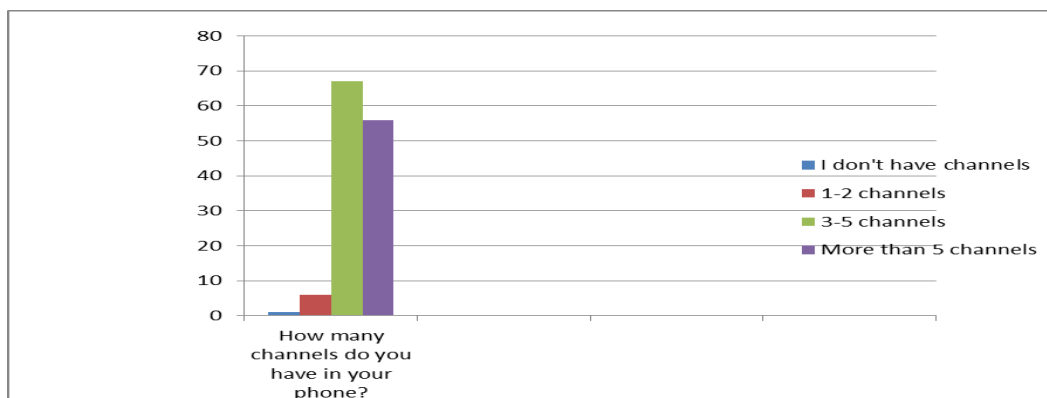
A channel is a one-way communication between an administrator and subscribers. The administrator exposes any information according to the purpose of the channel, and subscribers, in their turn, have access only for reading the material. Thus, creating a channel, we got the illusion of a lecture. Distance learning began from lesson 7 according to the calendar-thematic plan, since quarantine found us after 6 weeks of studying of the second semester.

It was decided to use the channel as a lecture base, since this profile is gaining immense popularity in Uzbekistan.

Country	2018	2019	Growth
Russia	57 784	133 846	x2.3
Ukraine	3 765	12 210	x3.2
Belarus	548	1452	x2.6
Uzbekistan	6 512	26 904	x4.1
Kazakhstan	865	11 671	x1.9
Kyrgyzstan	242	489	x2.0
Iran	23 350	44 542	x1.9

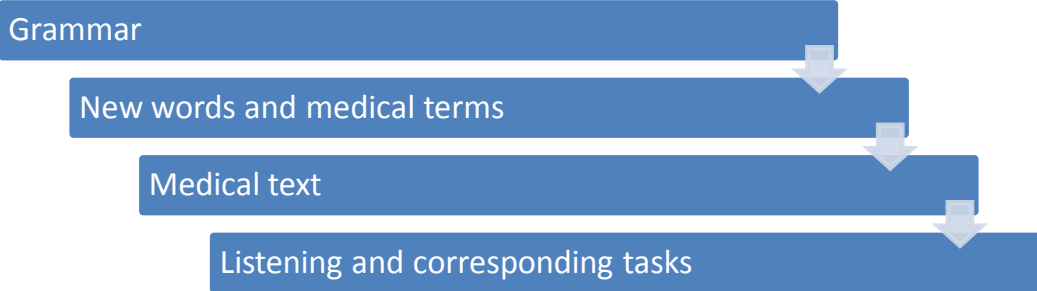
(Telegram Analytics [10])

According to the statistics of the official website of “Telegram Analytics”, we can see that for 2019, the Uzbeks showed an increase in the number of channels by 4 times, which has no analogues among all other countries. Almost every person in our country is subscribed on average to 3-5 channels. According to a survey among 130 TMA students we have the following results:



We can see that telegram channels are the daily routine of TMA students, which they use in parallel with their affairs on absolutely any topic, thereby creating an educational base through this platform it was not introduce any kind of shocking unusual effect, but on the contrary, the communication started in a “general” way that is convenient for both students and teachers. The above statistics is not limited to students only.

The channel follows a clear lesson sequence, that is, a regular traditional lesson consists of the following components:



As for compulsory tasks of the lesson, they are numerated and highlighted successively.

- Grammar is explained in the most understandable form with clear examples and visual aid.
- The medical texts and terminology of the relevant topic of the lesson is highlighted separately and the words are written out in a column.
- Corresponding tasks from listening and the audio file itself.

Then, the enumerated assignments that students should perform on the basis of the topic covered to get a grade for the lesson

1. Learn a grammar rule
2. Learn new words
3. Read and translate new text
4. Listen to the audio and perform tasks on it

In the channel, as an exception to the traditional lesson, additional material on the topic with visual aids and a link to different tests for improving the topic acquisition were included. Video materials with subtitles are provided for improving audio and reading skills. However, these tasks are voluntary and remain at the discretion of the student.

After the lesson, a test is set to practice and train the knowledge gained. The test is created using the “Quiz bot” and set directly in the channel. All students who take part in the training test instantly find out about their result as well as statistics of all respondents, and the number of correct answers to those who passed the test by this time is available to all participants. This is a motivational key to learning, and students are also preparing for what they can expect in final test.

The model of one lesson is finished, then, the next lesson goes directly to the channel following the same circle.

Along with this, there was created the next platform in a telegram called “group”.

“Group” in a telegram is a function that allows to add up to 200,000 users and everyone can write in a group and maintain communication an unlimited number of times. Telegram groups are created to unite people of some sort of common commune. This may be a topic of discussion that interests even unfamiliar participants, for example, “Helping lonely old people during a coronavirus pandemic,” or most often this group includes people who are connected by some kind of common social factor, for example, these may be:

Former (current) classmates (groupmates), work colleagues, parents of children (of kindergarten, schools, courses, etc.). In the present realities of our country, if someone is interested in some kind of activity, then he is necessarily have telegram group of associates to exchange and receive information (of course, if a person is not isolated from society and lives in the forest, but shows any kind of social activity).

Telegram group, for today, is the fastest and most convenient way of informing and receiving information, starting from the official announcement that, for example, “the lessons have been transferred” and this message instantly gets the whole class, ending with informal communication up to “what kind of blouse anyone will wear”.

In our conditions, the group was created to connect students with their teachers because the “channel” has only one-sided communication, and now everyone can speak in the group. A distinctive feature of this model is the presence of direct interaction with the teacher. Moreover, the group allows to use one of the most important functions - an open quiz, which in our context is used to create tests for assessing students. The quiz has a test format. It is impossible to revote for participants once they chose the option. However, it is more convenient than much traditional tests since the result is shown right away for both the teacher and the student, and the teacher at the same moment can see in the test the results of the number of correct answers and list of students who answered correctly and vice versa. Furthermore, student can immediately see if he answered the question in the right way and what answer is actually correct. If the student answered incorrectly, it would immediately show him and the correct answer will be indicated. In this regard, it will cause emotions and contribute to better memorization of the words. According to Cognitive Social Psychology, information is perceived better when it is received on the basis of emotions. “Emotional events, like those that trigger a fear response, can enhance a person's memory of related pieces of information acquired prior to the emotional moment” [11].

Elizabeth A. Kensinger in her article researched different points of view, studied it from medical perspective and came to conclusion “Though the theories differ from one another in important ways, they all share the central tenet that some aspects of an emotional experience are remembered well because of their arousing nature, while other elements may receive no mnemonic benefit and in fact may be more likely to be forgotten” [12]. Thus, at the same moment we get the effect of working on errors, which is much more effective than traditional tests. In traditional tests, students, answering questions, do not immediately recognize the answer, and after the test is over, most students simply don't remember most of the questions to find the right answer at home, and the rest of the students are simply not interested in it. With the help of online quiz in a telegram, all kinds of students are interested because at the given moment they have the goal of successfully answering questions in order to get a satisfactory mark. And if they answer incorrectly, they immediately see it.

An example of test in a telegram, in its original form, when the answer is still unknown (answers are presented for translation in their native language):

Translate the word "Platelet"	
1.	Кровяная пластина (platelet)
2.	Коленная чашечка (patella)
3.	Череп (skull)
4.	Сосуды (vessels)

An example of test when the student answered a question wrong by choosing the kneecap option, while the correct answer is a platelet:

Translate the word "Platelet"	
✓	1. Кровяная пластина (platelet)
✗	2. Коленная чашечка (patella)
3.	Череп (skull)
4.	Сосуды (vessels)

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Thus, it became possible to clearly differentiate the goals and objectives in our telegram platform. The channel was used for the lecture part of the lesson. That is, the teacher posted all the necessary information about the lesson. Since English at the medical university is held once a week, the entire lecture part of the lesson, which will be checked in the future, was also laid out once a week. In addition, interesting quizzes, additional material and videos corresponding to the theme of the week were uploaded throughout the week. This form of making up a lecture lesson proved to be very effective with a number of advantages:

1. The student is able to choose a convenient time particularly for him to study the theme
2. The student's time is not limited to one lecture hour, and if something is not clear to him, he can re-read it and return to the topic an unlimited number of times until he finally comprehends the material
3. Some students during the traditional lesson are embarrassed to ask questions and as a result the topic is not fully assimilated. "Although learners may be eager to ask questions, the act of uttering a question publicly to the scrutiny of others may discourage them from doing so, as this may render them vulnerable to embarrassment, censure, or ridicule" [13]. This issue has been resolved with a telegram online.
4. Since digital technology is used, all the information has already been printed and the student does not need to waste time copying it into a notebook, but simply copy it to some storage or simply forward it to favorites

Students using the channel receive the material that they need at the same time where everything is very clearly dispersed and there are no unnecessary or distracting factors that take place in a

traditional lesson. After conducting an online survey among students, we received positive reviews:

What kind of lesson do you prefer?

- a) Traditional, in-class lesson (24 -15%)
- b) Distance lesson with the help of telegram (118 – 73%)
- c) Distance learning with the help of other messengers (8 – 5%)
- d) Distance lesson with the help of other WEBs (11 – 7%)

Thus, we have discovered that studying via telegram is leading not only in comparison with in-class lessons but also among any other online learning platforms.

Specially designed for online learning platforms have a number of disadvantages that make distance learning inconvenient activity. In order to enter the site first and foremost it is necessary to have a good Internet connection, however in different locations the connection quality may vary, what creates certain difficulties. Moreover, to enter the site is it necessary to deal with different tabs and numerous questions immediately arise: identify functions for finding something, what to do, how to give a lecture, how to pass a test, how to download a task, how to find out the result, etc. All these require various manipulations and a qualitative internet connection. Moreover, every time a student needs to go to the browser, to the site, enter the login and password. Too many manipulations in a seemingly simple matter may discourage students from studying. Furthermore, it is worth considering the most common problem of sites – from multiplicity of the user, ordinary sites begin to load for a long time, crash and even stop working.

As for the telegram, people 24 hours a day are almost online in Uzbekistan. In order to visit any channel, practically no manipulations are required, because it is equivalent to correspondence with a friend. Notifications of any new information on the training channel comes instantly and in order to open and read it, it takes only one click. The exceptions of unnecessary bureaucracy, and user friendly system motivates students to learn. Moreover, telegram is simple in allowing users to access accounts from multiple devices. They can use a tablet, phone, computer and any other digital device convenient for them. They can even be online at once in all of them, there are no unnecessary restrictions in the telegram, at the same time it is considered the safest messenger against pirated Internet interventions and attacks.

As a result, each teacher, just by informing every monitor of his groups, was able to collect 100% attendance

CONCLUSION

Summing up, we can emphasize that telegram has entered the life of Uzbekistan as one of the most necessary tools, from small to large. In this regard, it would be a mistake not to use this fact in the interests of education, especially if the issue is urgently resolved in a pandemic. Telegram has proven to be a reliable, convenient and multi-functional platform for distance learning.

The telegram channel without access to feedback served as a ladder for lectures, thereby saving participants from unnecessary information that may be contained in groups where all participants have access to sending messages. The telegram group, in its turn, served as feedback from the seminars, where each student could speak out and ask any question of interest, thereby reducing

the time and effort of the teacher and the students themselves. After all, what is not clear to one student is more likely to be not clear to many others. Thus, asking a question once, all other students know in advance the answer to it, saving their time, without the need to ask themselves.

For all the time of existence of telegram messenger in Uzbekistan, there were no malfunctions. Thus, we can safely conclude that this is a reliable source for introducing it into distance learning lessons. However, the issue of continuous contact of the teacher with the student in the form of an online video chat remains open and untouched. A telegram takes the form of sending video messages, but this does not happen online in a real time as a conference with different people. In the context of teaching, the teacher who wished to interview the student personally does not have the opportunity to objectively evaluate the student, since the survey does not take place between two or more people at the same time. Perhaps the creators will take this fact into account when creating a new version of the telegram that periodically comes out.

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