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**Research of Developing the Oral-communication  
Skill while ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching) (in  
the example of teaching English for Bachelor's  
degree at Higher Educational Institutions  
of Georgia)**

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## **Research of Developing the Oral-communication Skill while ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching) (in the example of teaching English for Bachelor's degree at Higher Educational Institutions of Georgia)**

### **ABSTRACT**

2020 started in a hard way for the whole world and it was a remarkably tough year for the educational system. On the 12<sup>th</sup> March the World Health Organization announced the Pandemic, which changed many things for Georgia and for the whole world. Georgia shifted from offline learning to the online/distant learning, that turned over the whole educational system. Some of the countries met this situation well-prepared, but for others, it was quite new and strange. Georgia was on the second list. My research topic highlights teaching-learning processes while ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching). On closer inspection, it studies changes in the traditional methodology of developing the oral-communication skill of English while teaching online because of the pandemic. First of all, we have to differentiate several terms that emerged through the pandemic into the educational system due to the non-traditional forms of teaching processes. These are: e-learning, distance education/distance learning, online education/online learning, blended learning, hybrid learning. But in pandemic, a new term emerged: "emergency remote learning and teaching". This term is used by EUA (European Universities Association) in their short report of September, 2020 "European higher education in the Covid-19 crisis". The same term is used in North America, "emergency remote teaching", where the majority of universities offered their students online learning next to the traditional forms of teaching to their students before the pandemic as well. Hence, teaching-learning processes that became online just because of the pandemic made vivid differences between the existing online learning forms and the learning that became remote because of the emergency situation. Therefore, my research highlights what changes the traditional forms of teaching gone through, when in the Spring term of 2020, the whole system of Higher Educational Institutions of Georgia adapted their offline teaching courses for the online ones.

**Key words:** *distant, oral-communication, development, teaching, pandemic.*

### **Thesis Actuality**

The announcement of Pandemic on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020 by the World Health Organization and shifted educational system which became fully online. Universities of Georgia had to adapt their teaching resources into the online ones. The professors had to

start teaching in virtual classrooms by the help of different platforms. Most of them were not aware of online teaching techniques at all. March semester of 2020 was the first, when University teachers had to face so many challenges that were caused by the fastest shift ever done by the administrations of the Higher Educational Institutions.

Emergency changes in the curriculum of HEI of Georgia caused changing methods of teaching the oral-communication skill of English while using online platforms too.

My research highlights the techniques of developing the oral-communication skill of English in the students of different faculties for the Bachelor degree. Particularly, how the methodology changed because of the Emergency Remote Teaching. It is a well-known fact that there have been online courses for studying foreign languages. They were specially created for online platforms, with specially trained professors and the suitable online resources that had been observed and explored before the courses started. But in this new reality, ordinary professors were obliged to teach the materials, that had been chosen by universities for offline learning, not the online ones. This is the reason, why the topic of my research is so actual nowadays, it studies how the teachers and professors managed to adapt the offline resources and traditional methods in such a way that they would have become suitable for the distance learning. That is why I use the new term for my research topic: ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching) and not just distance learning as there is a huge difference in terms of the content.

My research will study the readiness of professors and lecturers in terms of technologies and methodology whilst Emergency Remote Teaching. As I mentioned above, most of the university lecturers of Georgia were not so aware of using computer technologies and online platforms or applications in actual classrooms. Their lectures had been interesting for their students, they used to teach with traditional methods for developing oral-communication skill of English, such as discussions, task based approach, problem based approach, group work or pair work, though, how they would organize these activities productively while teaching online, is quite a different issue.

The importance of the oral-communication skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and challenges of teaching-learning processes whilst Emergency Remote Teaching is another reason why the research is so actual. We all know that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century English is considered as a

“lingua Franca” for the whole world. Internationalization, globalization and Europeanisation are three main forces that have caused the popularization of the English language to such an extent. Despite the above mentioned reasons, students of different faculties (non-English professions) have trouble while speaking English. Some of them have got anxiety, others lack confidence or vocabulary knowledge or lack practice. These challenges have doubled while emergency remote learning. E.g. They do not switch microphones at all, some of them have internet problems, others do not like their voice, or are not used to speaking via Zoom or other online platforms. These challenges have not been studied systematically yet. We do not have thorough research how the lecturers assess the processes of developing oral skills or the challenges they have to overcome while teaching online.

### **Research Novelty**

Currently there is no systemic research and its analyses about professors' assessment of the quality of developing the oral-communication skill in students of BA at HEI of Georgia .

What changes have been made on traditional methods of teaching languages whilst Emergency Remote Teaching.

Deep research has not done yet on studying the challenges which were faced by University professors and lecturers when they started teaching English in students of different faculties using the shifted curriculum and online platforms in terms of developing the oral-communication skill of English.

There are no surveys on exploring the satisfaction of University professors and students about the online learning as well as the feedback they give to exact universities about the effectiveness of online studies whilst Emergency Remote Teaching.

CEFR, the parts it consists of and challenges in terms of linguistic, pragmatic and socio-cultural components defined by those documentaries whilst ERT. (Emergency Remote Teaching)

In the following research, the oral-communication skill implies the idea, that students have got skills and abilities to speak English effectively and fluently. Nunan (1999) claims that success of a foreign language learner can be measured by his/her skills of making a conversation with an interlocutor in the target language. Nevertheless, Oral-communication skills are full of challenges in the context of foreign languages.

This research studies the development of oral-communication skills in Bachelor students of different faculties during ERT (Emergency Remote teaching), caused by the pandemic and highlights the complexity and challenges of the issue that have emerged while teaching in virtual classrooms where we have to rely only on our technologies. Though, this skill itself, implies face to face communications. Nowadays, the conversations are available only through online platforms. The same platforms are used to assess the objectives that should be reached at the end of the curriculum. Let us take an example of the oral exam that checks the oral-communications skills of students each semester or once a year, depending on definite university regulations. There are a bunch of challenges while conducting such kind of exams, e.g. unstable internet connection, bad microphones, crashing computers and unsuitable conditions at home. There are cases, when students change places during the exam, or somebody prompts them the answers via headphones, or sheets of papers and etc. All these issues must be observed properly to take measures what should be done to improve the quality of developing the oral skill as well as the quality of assessing the students' speaking skills. As we do not know how long Covid-19 is going to live with us or how long the Emergency Remote Teaching will be the major form of teaching-learning processes at universities and what changes it will cause in curriculums of Higher Educational Institutions.

### **Research Question**

How the traditional methods developing the oral-communication skill of English in the students of different faculties of BA have/have not changed whilst Emergency Remote Teaching?

### **The research interrogates corresponding sub-questions**

How the processes of developing the oral-communication skill of English in BA students of different faculties go on?

How University professors assess the processes of developing the oral-communication skill of English in BA students of different faculties whilst ERT

How the process of developing the oral-communication skill of foreign languages go on in America and Europe

### **Research objective**

Research objective is to explore the development of the oral-communication skill of English in different faculty students of BA in Georgia while Emergency Remote Teaching.

### **Research Methodology**

Qualitative research: Processing the secondary literature and reviewing the scientific articles and researches already conducted about the issue.

Reviewing the foreign researches about ERT and finding similarities in Georgia.

### **Reviewing CEFR**

Reviewing traditional methods of teaching languages and the analyses of possibilities of using them while teaching online

Defining the communication concept and reviewing The USA five standards of languages.

Organizing semi-structured interviews with university professors and head of language departments in six universities of Georgia (four universities, two state and two private will be explored in Tbilisi and the rest two universities will be regional to have an overall impression about the real situation of ERT throughout Georgia).

Doing an **experiment** with my own groups by using the shifted traditional methods/techniques/activities that can be used productively to develop oral-communication skills of English while teaching online because of the pandemic.

Here is a list of activities that will be observed and used while using online platforms:

How we can use contemporary music forms (Rap, Hip Hop, Rock, Jazz) in our online/distance classes as a source of developing linguistic (phonology, morphology, lexis, syntax ) and sociolinguistic (e.g. discourse language peculiar for definite social groups) components of the oral-communication skill.

How to include films while ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching) and how to organize the corresponding modern activities before or after watching movies that will serve for developing the oral-communication skills of English effectively.

Which games are helpful to use during distance/online classes and how we can change forms of offline games to such an extent that they can be played via online platforms. How to plan a lesson in such a way that students' participation is achieved in an amusing and funny way as well as those games will be a good conversational practice for them. (e.g. "Mafia Night", "Never Have I Ever", "Guessing Games" etc.)

How to organize competitions and social work in our virtual classes, how to divide in large and small groups, how we can foster our students via giving them online awards or badges, or some statuses. (e.g. I always have an online Oscar Rewards Ceremony for active students, I show them the photo of Oscar together with clapping sounds and then they have to say their Oscar Speech in front of their groupmates, which is really interesting and desirable for them. They even take screenshots of their Oscar and upload in their stories. Although it is just an oral comment and maybe they do not get extra points, it is still reflected on their motivation to speak in English in a better way.

Which applications and online resources (web-sites) can be used by the teachers to replace some offline activities or fill those gaps that emerged in our virtual classrooms because of Emergency remote Teaching.

### **Theoretical and Practical Importance of the Research:**

The research will give us systemic analyses of developing the oral-communication skill of English in Bachelor students of different faculties throughout HEI (Higher Educational Institutions) of Georgia.

The research results can be used by the people who are interested in the following issue or by other scholars to conduct further research.

The research results will be used to create a guidebook for professors and teachers and university administrations, recommending those methods that can still be used in a virtual class with some changes whilst Emergency Remote Teaching.

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