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ENHANCING STUDENTS' FOREIGN-LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS THROUGH DIGITAL DIDACTIC TOOLS

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Abstract. This study investigates the development of foreign language writing competence in German as a second foreign language among Ukrainian university students through electronic didactic tools. A four-stage methodology was developed and implemented over ten months, integrating classroom and distance learning formats. The methodology incorporated Internet services (email, search engines), Internet resources (video lessons, interactive exercises), graphic files, and multimedia presentations. The four stages included organizational-preparatory, training with model support, productive-creative, and reflective-evaluative phases.

Assessment criteria measured five competence components: linguistic, discursive, pragmatic, strategic, and sociocultural. Results demonstrated significant improvement in the experimental group, while the control group showed minimal change. Statistical analysis using chi-square tests confirmed significant differences between groups.

The findings validate that systematic use of electronic didactic tools within a structured integrative approach significantly enhances foreign language writing competence, addressing all competence components while promoting learner autonomy and motivation.

Key words: foreign language writing competence, electronic didactic tools, German as a second foreign language, integrative approach, distance learning, digital literacy.

Introduction. The socio-political, economic, and social changes that have taken place in Ukraine over recent decades have led to significant transformations in the educational sphere as well. According to contemporary requirements, students must possess the necessary competencies to carry out various types of activities, as well as critical thinking skills and experience in creative activity. They must be able to use new information and communication technologies not only for personal purposes but also for professional ones.

The process of informatization in education has influenced the expansion of the arsenal of teaching technologies and electronic didactic tools, the use of which facilitates students' transition to a higher level of foreign language communicative competence formation. A number of works by Ukrainian pedagogy methodologists (O. Bihych, N. Borysko, N. Maiier, S. Nikolaieva, V. Chernysh), as well as foreign researchers (D. Nunan, M. Byram, B. Handwerker, U. Steinmüller), examine the educational potential of Internet services and resources for foreign language teaching and the development of foreign language communicative competence.

An analysis of scientific literature from recent decades shows that a number of important aspects of teaching foreign language writing have been developed and comprehensively analyzed to date, namely:

– *the content of teaching foreign language writing* in non-language higher education institutions (N. Maiier, V. Chernysh, O. Kozlova), and in language higher education institutions (N. Borysko, S. Nikolaieva, A. Hirvela, D. Hyland);

– *the formation and development of foreign language writing skills* (J. Harmer, S. Kiyko, A. Raimes);

– *the use of information and communication technologies in education* (V. Bykov, M. Bates, T. Anderson);

– *practical methodologies for teaching foreign languages using information and communication technologies in higher education institutions* based on web-quests and project-based technologies (N. Morze, T. March), electronic learning environments and learning management systems (V. Kukhareno, D. Jonassen), corpus technologies and digital resources (S. Gries, U. Stefanowitsch); in general secondary education institutions – based on podcasts and multimedia programs (G. Stanley, R. Godwin-Jones);

– *ways and methods of teaching foreign language writing using information and communication technologies in higher education institutions* based on blog technologies and Wiki environments (M. Warschauer, T. Kessler), digital platforms and social networks (R. Blattner, M. Fiori), as well as Internet resources as a means of developing academic writing.

An analysis of the aforementioned works indicates that issues concerning the formation of students' foreign language writing competence in German as a second foreign language through electronic didactic tools have remained outside the scope of attention. The essence and structural components of students' foreign language writing competence are insufficiently described, the complex of electronic didactic tools for forming foreign language writing competence has not been determined, the approaches, principles, and organizational-pedagogical conditions for teaching foreign language writing through electronic didactic tools have not been established, and the criteria and levels of students' foreign language writing competence formation have not been defined. Diagnostic instruments for identifying the level of students' foreign language writing competence formation require in-depth attention. It is also necessary to develop practical recommendations for teachers on using electronic didactic tools in forming students' foreign language writing competence. All of the above determines the relevance of our research.

The *object of the research* is the process of forming foreign language writing competence among junior-year students studying German as a second foreign language. The *subject of the research* is the development of a methodology for forming students' foreign language writing competence through electronic didactic tools. The *aim of the research* involves the development, substantiation, and verification of a methodology for forming students' foreign language writing competence through electronic didactic tools.

The study proposes a hypothesis according to which the formation of students' foreign language writing competence will be effective if:

(1) this process is organized on the basis of a methodology for the gradual formation of students' foreign language writing competence through a complex of electronic didactic tools, including Internet services, Internet resources, graphic files, and multimedia presentations;

(2) the proposed methodology is based on an integrative approach using electronic didactic tools according to the principle of integrating classroom and distance learning formats;

(3) the formation of students' foreign language writing competence through electronic didactic tools is implemented with adherence to the following conditions:

a) organization of electronic foreign language correspondence between the instructor and students and provision of pedagogical support to students from the instructor;

b) organization of foreign language interpersonal communication among students based on correspondence materials;

c) independent writing by students of personal electronic letters or business letters based on a model sent by the instructor;

d) establishment of levels of formation of students' foreign language writing competence based on a set of criteria (mastery of methods for constructing foreign language written utterances in accordance with the communication situation; formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competences; formation of linguistic competence; high learning motivation).

Main part. Analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature from recent decades indicates that in connection with the transition to a new paradigm of education and upbringing, the competency-based approach has gained significant prevalence. For a long time, it was considered primarily in the context of professional education (O. Savchenko, I. Zyazyun, V. Baidenko, S. Kiyko, J. Raven, F. Weinert). However, following the publication of the Presidential Decree "On the National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine for the period up to 2021" (<https://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/344/2013>) and the ordinance of February 23, 2022 No. 286-r "On approval of the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2022-2032" (<https://mon.gov.ua/osvita-2/vishcha-osvita-ta-osvita-doroslikh/strategiya-rozvitku-vishchoi-osviti-v-ukraini-na-2022-2032-roki>), there has been a reorientation in evaluating educational outcomes from the concepts of "preparedness," "educatedness," "general culture," and "upbringing" to the concept of "competence." Accordingly, a competency-based approach in education is being established, which involves a significant strengthening of the practical orientation of education and is aimed at developing students' personal qualities.

Foreign language speech competence is the ability to successfully communicate in the target language, combining knowledge of rules (grammar, vocabulary) with the ability to apply them in practice in real situations, taking into account linguistic and extra-linguistic means (gestures, intonation) and cultural context, in order to effectively convey and understand messages. It is a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, and value qualities for successful communication.

Authors who study the problem of forming foreign language written speech competence in students of language higher education institutions identify five of its components: linguistic, discursive, pragmatic, strategic, and sociocultural competences (Canale, Swain, 1980; Council of Europe, 2001; Kiyko, 2017; Nikolaieva, 2010). Let us explain the components of foreign language written speech competence as understood by these authors.

Linguistic competence manifests itself in the correct use of foreign language forms. It presupposes knowledge of language rules (phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical) and the ability to operate with them in the process of formulating one's own thoughts and understanding the thoughts of a communication partner. In the sphere of written speech, linguistic competence ensures the ability to freely use linguistic and speech material for constructing written texts as means of interpersonal and professional communication (Canale, Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990; Council of Europe, 2001).

Discursive competence manifests itself in mastering various types of discourse. This aspect of foreign language written speech competence presupposes the ability to connect one utterance with another, as well as the ability to logically present thoughts in written communication situations. Some researchers understand discursive competence as knowledge of how to combine grammatical forms and semantic content to create coherent oral or written texts of various genres in different communication situations (Canale, Swain, 1980). Other authors see in discursive competence verbal, non-verbal, and paralinguistic knowledge that determines the ability to properly organize the semantic content of oral and written texts (Scarcella, 1990: 159-161). H. Brown defines discursive competence as the ability to connect sentences into discourse fragments and structure a meaningful whole from a series of utterances (Brown, 1987). In this work, we understand discursive competence as the ability to connect individual sentences into microtext (paragraph) using grammatical, logical, lexical, and figurative means and to construct a written text that functions as a means of written communication.

Pragmatic competence consists in the ability to achieve a set goal in oral and written communication

through various techniques of obtaining and transmitting information. Authors define pragmatic competence as a way of optimal use of linguistic means for the purpose of solving a communicative task (Norris 1991).

Strategic competence consists in the ability to compensate for the lack of linguistic means in the course of written speech. It is a set of skills and communicative abilities that allow for selecting and, if necessary, adjusting a particular intercultural communication situation or a foreign language model of written text/discourse in accordance with the author's communicative intentions (Scarcella, 1990: 160). We believe that self-control skills occupy an important place in the content of strategic competence. When creating a written text, the author must monitor orthographic correctness, structural-semantic and compositional formatting of their work.

Sociocultural competence presupposes possession of background, country-specific, and general cultural knowledge formed within a particular linguistic and cultural community and reflecting its culture, way of life, and traditions. It encompasses knowledge of the ethno-sociocultural background of specific foreign language written communication situations, value orientations of communication participants, norms of communicative-speech etiquette of the written form of communication, as well as linguistic and cultural features of the logical-compositional organization of foreign language written texts (Council of Europe, 2001).

Thus, by foreign language written speech competence we understand students' ability to perform foreign language written speech activity in the form of a combination of linguistic knowledge and speech skills for the purpose of creating a written foreign language text in accordance with the communication situation. The expansion and strengthening of international relations, the development of information and communication technologies, and the use of the Internet in the educational process require changing the status of written speech and its place in the paradigm of modern education.

The process of teaching foreign language writing in universities is carried out with gradual complication of subject content, volume and nature of texts, and increasing complexity and diversity of linguistic means used. Students' independence in this type of activity depends largely on the level of formation of general educational and compensatory (adaptive) skills. General educational skills include, in particular, working with reference sources and educational literature, using dictionaries; conveying the main content and main idea of a read or heard text; description (brief and detailed), comparison and juxtaposition of facts; argumentation and proof; generalization, combination and systematization of information; characterization, expressing evaluation and one's own attitude to the presented information, abstracting and commenting (O'Malley, Chamot, 1990). Compensatory skills encompass the ability to paraphrase utterances, express complex thoughts using simpler linguistic means, as well as the ability to rely on text for the purpose of searching and selecting necessary information (Canale, Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990; Council of Europe, 2001). When teaching this type of speech activity, students need to master language rules, learn to use them for the purpose of expressing their own and others' thoughts by means of a foreign language, as well as master the ability to use various supports when independently composing one or another written utterance. The teacher's task is to create favorable conditions for the successful implementation of all components of the learning process.

Many researchers in the field of foreign language teaching methodology are engaged in issues of creating, selecting, and classifying exercises aimed at forming students' foreign language written competence. The classifications of exercises for forming written speech competence available in foreign language teaching methodology (N. Borysko, H. Raimes, J. Harmer) allow us to conclude that, in general, authors identify two main types of exercises – preparatory and speech exercises. Preparatory exercises are aimed at developing skills that underlie written speech, including transformation, compression and expansion of sentences, grouping of linguistic material according to various features, implementation of equivalent lexical and grammatical substitutions, formation

of the ability to ask questions and answer them, etc. Speech exercises are focused on the content of written utterances and involve overcoming a complex of difficulties characteristic of a particular type of written communication. The mechanisms of written text generation are implemented taking into account the author's communicative intention, that is, an idea of what exactly will be written, for whom and for what purpose; selection of linguistic means for implementing the communicative task; identification of the predicate as a supporting component of the semantic organization of the sentence; as well as establishment of inter-sentence connections through adequate selection of lexicogrammatical means (Harmer, 2015: 31–33).

In methodological science, there is also a classification of teaching aids, according to which teaching aids for teachers and teaching aids for students are distinguished; they can be non-technical and technical. According to the nature of information presentation, technical teaching aids are divided into auditory, audiovisual, and multimedia (Richards, Rodgers, 2014). Auditory teaching aids include audio supplements to textbooks, as well as various audio files used for educational purposes. Audiovisual teaching aids encompass manuals and materials designed for visual-auditory perception of information, including animated clips, video films, etc. Multimedia teaching aids involve the use of computers and the Internet and include, in particular, presentations, online applications, interactive platforms, and other digital resources.

In the course of our research, we introduce the concept of "electronic didactic means," by which we understand technical teaching aids (auditory, visual, audiovisual, multimedia) focused on the content of instruction, specially selected for the purpose of forming students' foreign language written speech competence. Researchers examine the possibilities of using such teaching aids as virtual learning (educational) environment, Internet services (email, Web 2.0 services), blogging and microblogging, as well as other digital tools that contribute to the development of foreign language communicative competence (Dudeney, Hockly, 2007; Warschauer, Matuchniak, 2010). At the same time, the use of electronic didactic means in the process of teaching written speech should be based on a student-centered approach, which manifests itself through:

- students' independence in learning (more than 50% of learning time is allocated to students' independent work in distance mode);
- reliance on existing knowledge (the process of teaching written speech is based on familiar linguistic material);
- consideration of students' interests, way and style of life (the content of tasks corresponds to age characteristics and cognitive interests);
- consideration of particularly important psychological aspects of a certain age, such as learning motivation and self-esteem (developed tasks contribute to the development and maintenance of learning motivation and formation of adequate self-esteem);
- redistribution of teacher and student roles in the educational process (student as subject of activity, teacher as integrator and facilitator).

The methodological basis for developing a methodology for teaching written speech using electronic didactic means is a set of teaching principles substantiated in the works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers. General didactic principles include the principles of consciousness, activity, visualization, consideration of individual psychological characteristics of learners, accessibility and feasibility of educational material, as well as motivation, which are described in detail in the works of S. Nikolaieva (2008: 45–52) and N. Borysko (2011: 28–34).

Methodological principles of teaching foreign language written speech include the principle of communicative orientation of teaching, the principle of stylistic differentiation, and the principle of creative orientation of the educational process. The communicative orientation of teaching as a leading methodological principle is substantiated in the works of S. Nikolaieva (1999: 96-104), as well as in the research of J. Harmer, who emphasizes the need to orient written tasks toward real communicative

situations and the text addressee (Harmer, 2015: 31-33). The principle of stylistic differentiation of written utterances and genre variability of writing is revealed in the works of N. Borysko (2011: 57-63), as well as in the works of J. Richards, which emphasizes the connection between genre, communicative purpose, and linguistic means of the text (Richards, Rodgers, 2014: 90-94).

A special role in the context of using electronic didactic means is played by special principles, including the principles of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary integration, as well as the principle of integration of classroom and distance forms of learning (Harmer, 2015: 181-186). Let us consider the process of implementing the integrative approach in practice. Thus, the student must write a letter in response to a received letter. This task requires composing and sending to the addressee using email a written utterance in accordance with the communicative task, linguistic, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic norms of the foreign language, as well as completing a creative task (selecting appropriate music, taking or choosing photographs on a certain topic, etc.). Completing this task involves integration of:

(1) content elements of such academic subjects as computer science, country studies/geography/literature (depending on the task theme), music;

(2) types of language activity: writing letters, reading sent letters, listening (watching videos);

(3) speech (monological utterances based on letter materials);

(4) classroom (in class) and distance (writing emails) forms of class organization.

The triad of principles is implemented in the process of students mastering the content of teaching foreign language written speech, the components of which are presented within the framework of describing the methodological system, as well as in the course of applying such electronic didactic means as Internet services (email, search engines); Internet resources (music, images, information, videos, interactive exercises); graphic files (photographs, digital drawings); multimedia presentations.

To achieve the research goal and verify the hypothesis, the following tasks are set in the work:

(1) to determine the essence and structural components of foreign language written speech competence, describe the criteria, indicators, and levels of its formation, and fill them with content;

(2) to develop a complex of electronic didactic means and a methodological system for their application in teaching foreign language written speech;

(3) to identify organizational and pedagogical conditions and stages of forming students' foreign language written speech competence using electronic didactic means.

(4) to develop a methodology for forming foreign language written speech competence based on an integrative approach and, using diagnostic tools, verify its effectiveness experimentally;

(5) to develop recommendations for teachers on forming students' foreign language written speech competence using electronic didactic means.

Material and methods of research. The methodological foundation of the research consists of the ideas of the competency-based approach in education (N. Borysko, V. Bykov, S. Nikolaieva, O. Pometun, J. Raven, A. Weinert), provisions of the communicative approach (O. Bihych, M. Byram, V. Chernysh, M. Canale, D. Hymes, S. Nikolaieva, O. Pometun, U. Steinmüller), main directions of the sociocultural approach (N. Borysko, O. Byram, C. Kramersch, M. Risager), provisions of the integrative approach (V. Bykov, L. Drake, H. Jacobs, N. Morze), and ideas of the systems approach (L. von Bertalanffy, P. Checkland, S. Goncharenko, V. Kremen). To solve the set tasks and test the proposed hypothesis, the following research methods were used:

– theoretical (analysis and generalization of psychological-pedagogical, methodological, and linguistic literature; analysis of information and educational resources of the Internet on the research problem; generalization of domestic and foreign experience in the field under study);

– empirical (questionnaires, testing, interviewing, observation, pedagogical experiment; quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of the pedagogical experiment, statistical analysis of experimental work data).

The research was conducted at the Department of Germanic Philology and Translation Studies of the Faculty of International Relations and Law at Khmelnytskyi National University. The total sample of experiment participants consisted of 26 students from the 2nd and 3rd years (two groups of 13 students each).

Organization and stages of the research. The preparatory (prognostic) phase lasted three months (March – May 2025). During this first stage, the problem, goals, and objectives of the future research were determined, and issues related to organizing foreign language teaching for students and using electronic didactic means in the process of foreign language teaching were studied.

At the second (exploratory) stage (June – August 2025), the working hypothesis was formulated, a methodological system for using electronic didactic means in teaching foreign language written speech was developed, a methodology for forming students' foreign language written speech competence using electronic didactic means was described, and the content of experimental teaching aimed at forming students' foreign language written speech competence was determined.

The active phase of the research took place over three months (September-November 2025). During this stage, verification of the developed methodology was carried out by implementing it in foreign language teaching practice.

At the final stage (December 2025 – January 2026), conclusions and recommendations were formulated, general results of the research were summarized, and analysis of the empirical research results was conducted.

Results and their discussion. We implement the methodology for forming students' foreign language written speech competence in four stages: organizational-orientation, training with reliance on a model, productive-creative, and reflective-evaluative. The forms and types of student activities at each stage of implementing the methodology are as follows:

(1) *The organizational-orientation stage* involves initial self-assessment of the ability to produce foreign language written utterances, performing preparatory exercises, familiarization with the linguistic and organizational features of informal and business registers of written communication, as well as performing exercises on identifying the register of written communication.

(2) *The training stage* with reliance on a model encompasses reading stimulus letters sent by the instructor, writing personal response letters based on the stimulus letter as a model, performing creative tasks (selecting photographs, musical accompaniment), and improving linguistic competence through watching video lessons and performing interactive exercises. During the class, discussion of the results of distance learning sessions takes place, composing monological utterances based on the content of written letters and completed creative tasks, as well as self-assessment and peer assessment of monological utterances.

(3) *The productive-creative stage* includes reading task letters sent by the instructor, writing corresponding informal and business letters in accordance with the task, performing creative tasks (digital drawing, selecting music, photos, images), improving linguistic competence through watching video lessons and performing interactive exercises. During the class, it is necessary to discuss the results of distance learning sessions, practice monological and dialogical utterances based on the content of written letters and completed creative tasks. It is desirable for students to present their own creative works to the group and carry out self-assessment and peer assessment of monological and dialogical utterances.

(4) *The reflective-evaluative stage* is implemented through writing an electronic review in German about the work performed, completing a final creative task (collage or presentation), as well as self-assessment of the formation of the ability to produce foreign language written utterances. During the class, it is advisable to conduct a comparative analysis of the level of formation of students' written speech skills before and after training, as well as to encourage final presentations by students to the audience with a presentation of the results of completing creative tasks.

Within the framework of the proposed methodology, we define criteria for the formation of students' foreign language written speech competence, which we divide into main and auxiliary criteria. The main criteria include evaluation criteria related to the quality of students' production of foreign language written utterances: (1) mastery of methods of constructing foreign language written utterances in accordance with the communication situation; (2) formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence; (3) formation of linguistic competence. As auxiliary criteria, we include high learning motivation and adequate self-esteem.

The result of implementing the proposed methodology is the formation of students' foreign language written speech competence, which is determined based on the arithmetic mean of students' indicators across all the above-mentioned criteria. The effectiveness of implementing the presented methodology has been verified through experimental research.

The proposed methodology for developing students' foreign language writing competence through a complex of electronic didactic tools was integrated into a supplementary program alongside the main curriculum, designed in accordance with the thematic content of the "Begegnungen A1" (Buscha, Szita, 2021) and "Begegnungen A2" textbook series (Buscha, Szita, 2021). Each textbook features a clear, well-structured format comprising 8 lessons (chapters), which systematically present and develop all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The course follows a comprehensive approach to language acquisition, with each lesson building progressively on vocabulary, grammar, and communicative competence appropriate to the A1 and A2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The "Begegnungen" series is specifically designed for adult learners and intensive German courses, making it particularly suitable for university-level instruction. The complete course package includes a main textbook (Lehrbuch) with integrated exercises, a workbook (Arbeitsbuch) for additional practice and reinforcement, a teacher's manual (Lehrerhandbuch) with methodological guidance and answer keys, audio CDs featuring native speaker recordings for listening comprehension activities as well as supplementary online exercises available on the publisher's website (Schubert-Verlag), offering interactive practice opportunities. The A1 level focuses on basic communication skills, introductions, describing daily routines, and fundamental grammatical structures, while the A2 level advances to more complex topics including past tenses, expressing opinions, making comparisons, and handling more extended conversational exchanges.

In the course of the empirical research, variable and constant conditions for conducting experimental teaching were identified. The constant conditions include:

(1) approximately equal group sizes (division of students into 2 groups; group size – 14-15 students, reduced to 13 participants in the control and experimental groups due to the fact that some students are on an individual study schedule);

(2) approximately equal initial level of foreign language proficiency of students in the control and experimental groups;

(3) equal duration of the period of studying German as a second foreign language;

(4) equal number of hours allocated to studying German as a foreign language per week (6 hours) in accordance with the curriculum;

(5) identical forms of assessment;

(6) equal number of additional classes for teaching foreign language written speech per year (27 hours, including 14 distance learning sessions).

As variable conditions, we identified the use in the EG (experimental group) of a methodology for forming students' foreign language written speech competence. In both groups, the formation of this competence was carried out during foreign language classes. However, in the EG, teaching was additionally carried out in accordance with the content of the experimental program based on our methodology. During distance learning sessions, only EG students completed tasks involving

the composition of various written speech products and sent them to the instructor using email and social networks. Let us provide examples of tasks used in forming foreign language written speech competence in EG students:

Aufgabe 1: Sommerlager. Du hast folgenden Brief von deinem Freund bekommen: *Liebe(r) ... , vielen Dank für deine nette E-Mail. Ich habe mich wirklich sehr darüber gefreut. Heute habe ich eine interessante Information für dich. In der deutschen Jugendzeitschrift "Bravo" habe ich gelesen, dass für ein Sommerlager in den Alpen noch internationale Betreuer für deutsche Kinder gesucht werden, die über gute Deutschkenntnisse verfügen. Ich werde mich als Betreuer anmelden und finde es toll, wenn du mitmachen wirst. Hast du Fragen? Ich beantworte sie dir gern. Bis bald – hoffentlich in den Alpen. Es grüßt dich Christian.* Überlege dir eine E-Mail an Christian und geh auf folgende Punkte ein: (1) Wann, wo und wie lange findet das Lager statt? (2) Hast du solch eine Tätigkeit schon einmal ausgeübt und was hast du da gemacht? (3) Welche Aufgaben würdest du gern übernehmen und warum?

Aufgabe 2: Jobben in den Ferien. Michaela, 19, schreibt dir: *„In den Ferien werde ich dieses Jahr arbeiten – wie übrigens auch viele meiner Freundinnen und Freunde. Ich arbeite vier Wochen im Supermarkt. Da bekomme ich in der Stunde fast 14 Euro. Mit dem Geld möchte ich nächstes Jahr den Führerschein machen“.* Schreibe einen Antwortbrief und beachte dabei die folgenden Punkte: (1) Möchtest du auch in den Ferien arbeiten? Warum? (2) Haben auch unsere Jugendlichen Möglichkeiten eine Arbeit zu finden? (3) Deine Aktivitäten in den Ferien. Hast du schon einmal in den Ferien gejobbt? (4) Was willst du mit dem Geld machen?

Aufgabe 3: Warten auf die große Stadt. Marion, 20, der in einer kleinen Stadt wohnt, schreibt dir: *"Ich will unbedingt raus aus dieser furchtbaren Enge und mehr vom Leben mitkriegen. Sobald ich mein Bachelor habe, ziehe ich in eine richtige Großstadt. Aber ich kenne das richtige Leben in der großen Stadt noch nicht".* Nimm deine Stellung zu Marions Äußerung. In deiner Antwort solltest du auf jeden Fall folgendes erwähnen: (1) Vorteile und Nachteile der großen Stadt; (2) großes Angebot an Arbeitsplätzen; (3) Verkehr: pro, kontra; (4) kulturelles Leben und Erholungsmöglichkeiten.

The experimental research work was conducted in four stages: exploratory, ascertaining, formative, and control. At the exploratory stage, the main task was to obtain necessary information for the purpose of adjusting the process of developing educational materials and implementing the ideas of experimental teaching. At this stage, additional tasks were addressed: (1) to identify students' attitudes toward the subject "foreign language" and determine the leading motives and anti-motives for studying a foreign language; (2) to clarify students' technical capability to participate in distance learning sessions at home. Research methods at the exploratory stage included interviewing, questionnaires, and conversations. In the course of the exploratory stage research, it was found that: (1) according to questionnaire results, 57% of students in the control group (CG) and 61% of students in the EG named German among their favorite subjects, while 18% and 12% of students, respectively, included this subject in their list of least favorite subjects. The remaining students did not assign "German language" to either group. The leading motives and anti-motives of students in both groups for studying a foreign language are presented in Table 1, which shows that most motives and anti-motives of CG and EG students coincide (see Table 1).

Important motivating factors for students are interest, the teacher's personality and teaching style, as well as the necessity of mastering a foreign language in the future. Among the anti-motives (factors restraining the development of motivation), students in both groups indicated the difficulty of mastering the material and existing knowledge of English as a foreign language.

A conversation with EG students showed that 100% of students have access to the Internet at home; however, due to frequent power outages, they do not always use email. The results of the exploratory stage allowed us to adjust the methods and means of forming students' foreign language written speech competence and make clarifications and additions to the content of the proposed experimental teaching program.

Table 1

Leading motives and anti-motives of CG and EG students for studying German

Motives	CG	EG
I want to know several foreign languages	57%	61%
Knowledge of the subject is necessary for future job search	56%	59%
I like the teacher	53%	79%
Anti-motives		
The subject is difficult	34%	30%
I know English, so I don't need German	21%	20%
The subject will not be needed in the future	21%	15%

The purpose of the ascertaining stage was the initial diagnosis of the level of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence. This goal involves solving the following tasks of the ascertaining stage:

(1) to determine indicators according to the identified criteria for the formation of students' foreign language written speech competence;

(2) to determine methods for diagnosing the formation of students' foreign language written speech competence, as well as diagnostic tools;

(3) to conduct initial diagnosis of the level of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence.

In the process of solving the first task of the ascertaining stage, indicators and levels of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence were determined. Each indicator was assigned points for the purpose of unifying the obtained results. Indicators of formation according to all criteria and their corresponding points are presented in Table 2 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Criteria for the formation of foreign language written speech competence

Main Criteria		Points
Criterion 1: Mastery of methods of constructing foreign language written utterances in accordance with the communication situation (solving the communicative task)		
indicators	The content of the letter fully corresponds to the tasks, the correct register of communication is chosen, the norms of linguistic behavior and communication culture accepted in the language are observed	3
	The content of the letter does not fully correspond to the tasks (more than one aspect is not disclosed), there are violations of the communication register or norms of linguistic behavior and communication culture accepted in the language	2
	The content of the letter does not correspond to the tasks (most aspects are not disclosed), the wrong communication register is chosen	1
Criterion 2: Formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competences		
indicators	100% – 89% correct answers (high level)	4
	88% – 75% correct answers (medium-high level)	3
	74% – 60% correct answers (medium level)	2
	59% – 40% correct answers (medium-low level)	1
	39% and fewer correct answers (low level)	0
Criterion 3: Formation of linguistic competence (language design of the text)		

Table 1 (continuance)

indicators	Vocabulary and grammatical structures correspond to the task; lexical and grammatical errors are practically absent (no more than two different types of lexico-grammatical errors are allowed)	3
	There are lexical and grammatical errors that do not complicate understanding of the content of what is written (no more than 5 different types of lexico-grammatical errors are allowed)	2
	There are numerous different types of lexico-grammatical errors (6 or more)	1
Auxiliary Criteria		
Criterion 4: High learning motivation		
indicators	100-81% of motives selected from the list (high level)	4
	80-61% of motives selected from the list (medium-high level)	3
	60-41% of motives selected from the list (medium level)	2
	40-21% of motives selected from the list (medium-low level)	1
	20% and fewer motives selected from the list (low level)	0
Criterion 5: Adequate self-esteem		
indicators	Adequate self-esteem	3
	Slightly overestimated / underestimated	2
	Inadequately high / low	1
Maximum number of points		17

Based on the maximum number of points that students can obtain according to all criteria, levels of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence were identified, which are presented in Table 3 (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correlation of points and levels of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence

Level	% of maximum	Points
High	100-82	17-14
Medium-high	81-70	13-12
Medium	69-52	11-9
Medium-low	51-41	8-7
Low	40 and below	6 and below

In the course of solving the *second* task of the ascertaining stage, methods for diagnosing the level of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence were determined and its initial diagnosis was conducted. The main diagnostic methods were analysis of written works, testing, and questionnaires.

The method of analyzing written works was used to determine the level of formation of students' foreign language competence in the CG and EG according to all criteria. Students were asked to write a personal letter in response to the following stimulus letter:

Liebe(r) ...Vielen Dank für deine E-Mail. Ich freue mich sehr, dass du jetzt dein eigenes Zimmer hast. Super!

Ich war mit meiner Familie vor kurzem in den Alpen. Wir wohnten in einem Hotel. Unser Zimmer hatte einen Balkon und eine Terrasse. Wir genossen den Blick auf die Alpen und haben viele schöne Fotos gemacht. Am Tage wanderten wir in die Berge und danach saßen wir bis spät in der Nacht am Feuer und erzählten einander interessante Geschichten. Wir hatten eine sehr schöne Zeit zusammen.

*Reist du gern? Was machst du gewöhnlich am Wochenende? Welche Städte hast du schon besucht? Wohin fährst du in den Ferien?
Schreib mir bald.
Schöne Grüße
Anna*

The results of the initial diagnosis of CG and EG students to determine the level of formation of foreign language written speech competence are presented in Figure 1 (see Fig. 1).

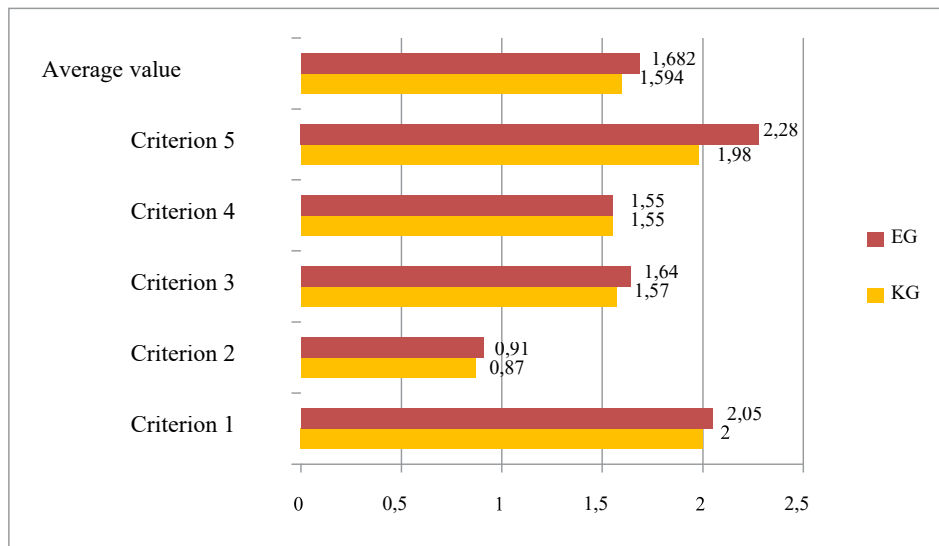


Fig. 1. Comparative analysis of average indicator values of CG and EG students according to criteria for the formation of foreign language written speech competence

The results of the initial diagnosis of the level of formation of foreign language written speech competence of CG and EG students presented in Fig. 1 indicate that students in both samples have approximately the same level of its formation. The highest results were obtained according to criteria 1 "Solving the communicative task" and 5 "Adequate self-esteem." Certain problems for students were caused by test tasks to determine the level of formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence (criterion 2). High and medium-high levels were identified in only 16% of CG students and 14% of EG students.

The average score that students in both groups obtained according to all criteria was 8.4 points, which constitutes 49% completion and corresponds to an overall medium-low level of formation of students' foreign language written speech competence. Taking into account the obtained data, corrections were made to the previously developed experimental teaching program in order to increase the effectiveness of the process of forming foreign language written speech competence in EG students.

The purpose of the formative stage was to implement the methodology for forming foreign language written speech competence using electronic didactic means and its integration into the educational process. The proposed methodology for forming students' foreign language written speech competence using electronic didactic means was implemented in four stages: (1) organizational-orientation; (2) training with reliance on a model; (3) productive-creative; (4) reflective-evaluative stages. A supplementary training program was developed in addition to the main program, which includes 27 classes, 13 of which are classroom-based and 14 are distance learning sessions. Let us proceed to describing the content of each stage of implementing the experimental program.

The purpose of the organizational-orientation stage was to familiarize students with the rules for writing letters taking into account the communication register. This stage included 6 classroom sessions in which students conducted self-assessment of their ability to produce written utterances using the scaling method, performed preparatory (training) exercises on expanding and reducing sentences, filling in gaps with missing words, constructing sentences, etc., became familiar with existing registers of written communication, learned to identify the register of written communication, and became familiar with the rules of electronic correspondence and the use of email services. This stage concluded with a classroom session in which students discussed the results of distance learning sessions, created monological utterances based on the content of written letters (working in pairs and groups), conducted self-assessment of their activities and peer assessment of each other's monological utterances using evaluation forms, and became familiar with the tasks for the next distance learning stage.

The purpose of the productive-creative stage was to teach the production of written utterances taking into account different communication registers. This stage included 10 distance learning sessions and 4 classroom sessions, which alternated so that after 2-3 distance learning sessions on one topic there was a classroom session where students had the opportunity to activate the material created during distance learning sessions in oral speech. The productive-creative stage of the developed program is the longest in implementation. Each topic is allocated 2-3 distance learning and 1 classroom session, which the instructor can integrate into the educational process. During the distance learning sessions of this stage, students read task letters sent by the instructor, wrote response letters according to the received task (for example, write a letter to a person in a photograph, correctly choosing the communication register), performed creative tasks (for example, draw a logo or emblem, illustrate a poem with music, etc.), watched language video lessons sent by the instructor (specifically tailored to the language errors students made), and performed interactive language exercises, links to which were sent by the teacher.

During the classroom sessions of this stage, students discussed the results of the distance learning sessions conducted, created monological utterances based on the content of written letters (working in pairs and groups), presented their creative works to the class, and conducted self-assessment of their activities and peer assessment of each other's monological utterances using evaluation forms.

If a student made lexico-grammatical errors in the letter text, along with the next task, the instructor sent the student links to educational language video lessons and interactive exercises aimed at improving students' linguistic competence specifically in those aspects of the language that caused them difficulties. Thus, in the process of experimental research work, video lessons and interactive exercises on the following topics were used: conjugation of verbs in the present tense with root vowel change, use of perfect tense with *haben* and *sein*, modal verbs, articles, prepositions of place, time, direction, conditional sentences, etc.

The purpose of the reflective-evaluative stage was to improve students' communicative and evaluative competences. This stage included one distance learning session and two classroom sessions. During the distance learning session, students wrote a review of the work performed in their native language using email, and completed a final creative task (collage, multimedia presentation, drawing, etc.) reflecting the results of the student's foreign language speech activity.

During the classroom sessions of the reflective-evaluative stage, students conducted self-assessment of their ability to produce written utterances using the scaling method, performed a comparative analysis of self-assessment results before and after implementation of the developed training program, and made presentations to the group summarizing their learning and presenting their creative works.

Next, we will characterize the content of the control stage of the experimental teaching. The purpose of the control stage of the experimental teaching is the final determination of the level of formation of students' foreign language writing competence after the implementation of the experimental teaching program. The main diagnostic tools, as in the ascertaining stage of the experiment, were

the analysis of students' written works, testing, and questionnaires. The method of analyzing written works was applied to determine the level of formation of foreign language writing competence of students in the CG and EG according to all criteria. Students were asked to write a personal letter in response to a stimulus letter. Using the testing method, the final level of formation of students' sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence was determined, as well as students' self-assessment after the implementation of the proposed teaching program. In order to identify the final level of formation of students' sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence, we used the same test tasks aimed at identifying students' knowledge of common sociocultural and sociolinguistic realities. Figure 2 presents a comparative analysis of the mean values of results of students from both samples according to all criteria at the control stage.

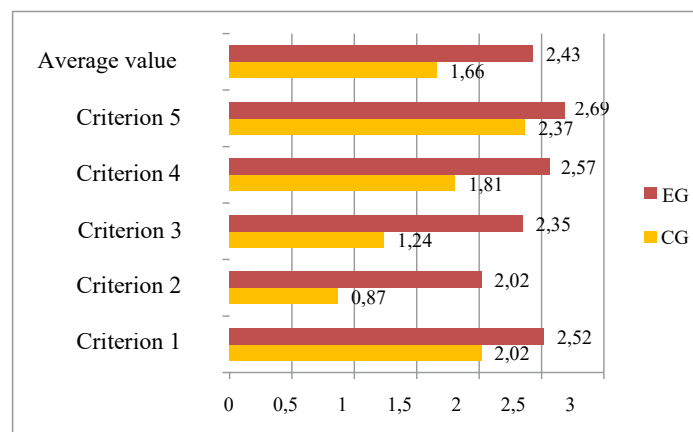


Fig. 2. Comparative analysis of mean values of results of CG and EG students according to the criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence at the control stage (after training)

The analysis of the results of the secondary diagnostics of the level of formation of foreign language writing competence of CG and EG students presented in Fig. 2 indicates that the average score of the EG test according to all criteria exceeds the mean values obtained as a result of studying the level of formation of foreign language writing competence of CG students. The mean value of EG indicators according to all criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence is 2.43 points, which exceeds the mean value (1.66) according to all criteria of the CG test by 32%. Fig. 3 presents a comparative analysis of indicators of formation of foreign language writing competence of CG and EG students by levels, obtained at the control stage of the experiment.

The data presented in Figure 3 allow us to state that the majority of EG students after the implementation of the experimental work showed a fairly high level of formation of foreign language writing competence (from medium to high).

The majority of students in the control sample at the control stage showed a level of formation of foreign language writing competence from medium to low. The average score of EG students according to all criteria was 12.1, which corresponds to 71% completion and an overall medium-high level of formation of foreign language writing competence. The average score of students in the control sample according to all criteria was 8.6 points (50% completion), which corresponds to an overall medium-low level of formation of foreign language writing competence. Thus, the results of the control stage of the experiment show that students in the experimental group have a higher level of formation of foreign language writing competence according to all criteria compared to students in the control sample.

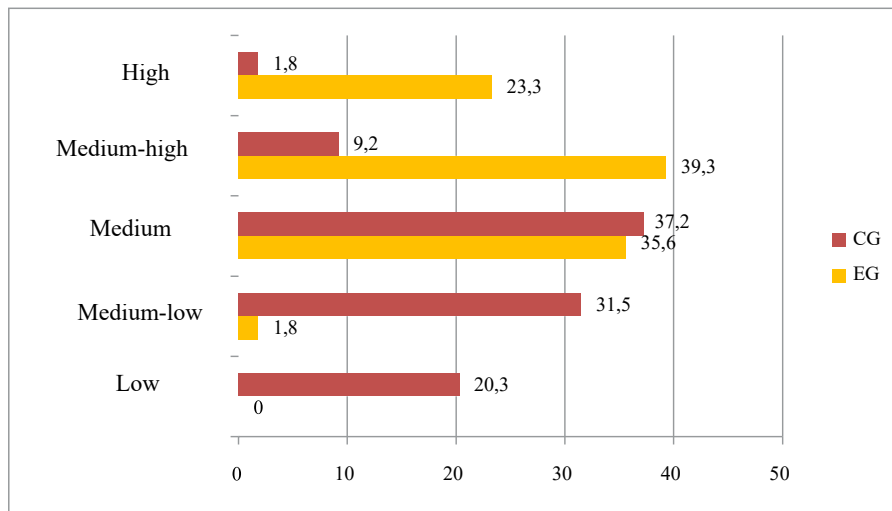


Fig. 3. Comparative analysis of levels of formation of foreign language writing competence of CG and EG students (in% of students) at the control stage (after training)

The comparative analysis of indicators of formation of foreign language writing competence of EG and CG students at the ascertaining and control stages of the experiment, which allows us to draw a conclusion about the effectiveness of the methodology we developed, involves the use of precise research methods, in particular, various types of distributions of observed values and statistical correlations. In the study, we use the χ^2 (chi-square) criterion and statistical distributions based on the diversification law. Using the χ^2 criterion, one can determine the presence of correspondences/discrepancies between the distributions of frequencies of observed values (Levyts'kyi, 2012: 156). The sum of χ^2 is higher the more the empirical values deviate from the theoretical ones. Critical values of χ^2 sums at certain degrees of freedom are given in special tables (Levyts'kyi, 2012: 172–176).

In the study, all data for analysis were reduced by a computer program to an alternative distribution, that is, to four-field tables. In this case, the number of degrees of freedom equals one, and the critical value for all tables is $\chi^2 0.05 = 3.84$. Values of χ^2 sums higher than 3.84 indicate that empirical values exceed theoretically expected ones. The sum of χ^2 is higher the more the empirical values deviate from the theoretical ones (cf. Levyts'kyi, 2012: 158–159). The sum of χ^2 allows us to establish only the presence/absence of a relationship between the studied values, but not its measure. The latter is determined using Chuprov's coefficient of mutual contingency K for multi-field tables. The values of the coefficient of mutual contingency can range from 0 to 1, and significance is established by the value of χ^2 (Levyts'kyi, 2012: 156–160). The obtained calculated results are presented in Table 4 (see Table 4).

From the data presented in Table 4, it can be seen that the calculations of Chuprov's contingency criterion did not reveal significant differences between the values of the studied CG and EG according to any of the indicated criteria, which confirms the approximately equal level of formation of foreign language writing competence of students in both groups before conducting the experimental teaching. The single existing value of the criterion $\chi^2 0.05 = 0.01$ is significantly lower than the critical value $\chi^2 0.05 = 3.84$, therefore it has no statistical significance.

At the control stage of the experiment, a repeated diagnostics of the level of formation of foreign language writing competence of students in both groups was conducted using the same methods and under the same conditions. A comparative analysis of students' results according to the criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence in the experimental and control groups after the implementation of the experimental teaching program is presented in Table 5 (see Table 5).

Table 4

Comparison of values according to the criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence in CG and EG at the ascertaining stage (before training)

Criterion of formation of students' foreign language writing competence		Mean value		Contingency criterion	
		CG	EG	CG	EG
1	Mastery of ways of constructing foreign language written expression in accordance with the communication situation	2	2,05	–	–
2	Formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence	0,87	0,91	–	–
3	Formation of linguistic competence	1,57	1,62	–	–
4	High motivation	1,55	1,55	–	–
5	Adequate self-assessment	1,98	2,28	–	$\chi^2_{0,5} = 0,01$

Table 5

Comparative analysis of criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence in CG and EG at the control stage (after training)

Criterion of formation of students' foreign language writing competence		Mean value		Contingency criterion	
		CG	EG	CG	EG
1	Mastery of ways of constructing foreign language written expression in accordance with the communication situation	2,02	2,52		$\chi^2_{0,5} = 4,36$ $K = 0,03$
2	Formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence	0,87	2,02		$\chi^2_{0,5} = 6,54$ $K = 0,05$
3	Formation of linguistic competence	1,24	2,35		$\chi^2_{0,5} = 3,67$ $K = 0,02$
4	High motivation	1,81	2,57		$\chi^2_{0,5} = 3,01$ $K = 0,01$
5	Adequate self-assessment	2,37	2,69	$\chi^2_{0,5} = 1,08$	

Statistical calculations revealed that the differences in indicators of the level of formation of foreign language writing competence of EG and CG students after the implementation of the experimental teaching are within the zone of statistical significance. We can conclude that after the implementation of the proposed methodology, EG students improved their results according to all criteria of formation of foreign language writing competence. The level of formation of foreign language writing competence of CG students did not change significantly. In the EG at the ascertaining and control stages, we identified a significant increase in the number of students with high and medium-high levels (from 14.4% to 62.6%) and a decrease in the number of students at medium-low and low levels (from 58.8% to 1.8%). The number of EG students at the medium level changed toward an increase, but not as significantly.

Overall, the results obtained during the experiment confirm our assumption that the developed methodology for forming students' foreign language writing competence using electronic didactic tools is effective. Thus, it can be considered that the goal of the study has been achieved, and the hypothesis has been confirmed.

Conclusions. Foreign language writing competence is a complex multi-component structure that encompasses linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural components. Each of these components performs a specific function in the process of generating written expression in a foreign language and requires purposeful and systematic formation. This necessitates a comprehensive approach to teaching foreign language writing that goes beyond purely linguistic training and takes into account the communicative, cultural, and social aspects of speech activity.

In the course of the research, a methodology for the gradual formation of students' foreign language writing competence using electronic didactic tools was theoretically substantiated and developed. The proposed methodology is based on a combination of modern methodological approaches, including integrative, communicative, and systemic approaches, and is implemented in accordance with the principles of interdisciplinary integration, intradisciplinary integration, and integration of classroom and distance learning forms. These principles ensure the integrity of the educational process, the interconnection of different types of speech activity, and the effective combination of traditional and digital forms of learning.

The methodology for forming foreign language writing competence includes four interrelated stages: training, writing with model support, independent productive writing, and reflective-evaluative stages. The step-by-step organization of the educational process ensures a gradual transition from reproductive activity to creative use of foreign language writing skills, promotes students' awareness of their own achievements and difficulties, and develops self-assessment skills.

An important result of the research was the creation of a methodological system for using electronic didactic tools in teaching foreign language writing. This system is based on the interaction of learning objectives, learning content, electronic didactic tools, and organizational-pedagogical conditions for forming foreign language writing competence. It has been proven that the effectiveness of forming this competence depends largely on the appropriate selection and purposeful use of different groups of electronic learning tools.

Within the framework of the proposed methodology, the functional role of each group of electronic didactic tools in forming the components of foreign language writing has been defined. In particular, Internet resources (video lessons, interactive exercises) are most effective for developing the linguistic component; graphic files (photographs, digital images) serve as support for forming the pragmatic component of written expression; multimedia presentations and Internet resources with audio and video materials contribute to the development of sociocultural and sociolinguistic components. The use of Internet services, particularly email, ensures the implementation of real written communication and increases the authenticity of the educational process.

Based on the developed methodology, an additional program for forming foreign language writing competence for undergraduate students was created. The program covers four stages (organizational-preparatory, training with model support, productive-creative, reflective-evaluative) and is implemented over 27 academic hours. The implementation of this program in the educational process demonstrated its high effectiveness.

The results of the experimental work confirmed the positive dynamics of the level of formation of students' foreign language writing competence according to all defined criteria. Specifically, an increase in the level of mastery of ways of constructing foreign language written expression in accordance with the communication situation was recorded, as well as growth in indicators of formation of linguistic, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic competences, increased learning motivation, and formation of adequate student self-assessment.

Statistical processing of the experiment results using non-parametric statistical methods (chi-square test, coefficient of mutual contingency K) revealed differences at a high level of statistical significance between the control and experimental groups. This provides grounds to assert that the hypothesis about the effectiveness of using electronic didactic tools in forming students' foreign language writing competence has found empirical confirmation, and the goal of the research has been achieved.

Prospects for further scientific research are seen in developing methodologies for forming other types of speech activity and general speech competence using alternative or expanded sets of electronic didactic tools, as well as in studying the possibilities of their integration into various educational contexts.

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