E-Lecture as a New Genre of Scholarly Discourse

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Abstract. The article presents an elaborated classification of a digital lecture as a new genre of English scientific discourse, and provides the analysis of earlier studies on some of its aspects. The paper sheds the light on varieties of e-lectures in particular and reports the description of their general characteristics as well as linguistic and paralinguistic features. Importance of the addressee factor in virtual scientific communication on an example of an e-lecture is well-grounded in the work.

Keywords: *scientific English discourse genre, massive open online courses, video lecture, live digitized lecture, e-lecture, addressee factor.*

Introduction. The globalization as a phenomenon has taken over many spheres of human activities, and the science is not an exception. We may notice how the ways we approach science have been changing globally as well as the means of dialoguing, exchanging knowledge and dissemination of results of scientific research. The advantages that technologies have brought into contemporary science are the first to mention, as in the era of globalization online communication has become a key factor of science and education development processes. Modern scientific community have got used to the virtual world where hundreds of scholarly events are taking place every minute anywhere in the world enabling every interested person to get easily connected to take part. Nowadays one can deliver a conference speech, get higher education or heighten qualification without leaving one's study room provided having a proper gadget and access to the Internet.

It has become very popular to learn distantly, in particular with the help of massive open online courses, which are usually self-paced, free of charge or at least affordable, open for unlimited participation via the web. According to the statistics, the number of users of massive open online courses in 2015 has reached a figure of 35 million to compare with 16-18 million of users in previous year [3], taking into consideration the fact that the first MOOC was launched not so long ago in 2011. Moreover, above 80% of the courses are available only in the English language. This statement is one more proof of the role of English as a modern lingua franca for scientific community.

Due to such circumstances, a great many of new scholarly discourse communicative genres have been developed, such as e-mails, intranet communication genres, chats to mention but a few, being called 'cybergenres' [2; 12]. Along with this, special mechanisms of adaptation of the traditional genres for the use in virtual communication are being worked on as well. Academic lecture has always been one of the most popular scientific discourse genres, and it continues to play this important role. Now we may speak about an updated and upgraded version of a lecture, namely a video lecture (digital lecture) and its further elaborated subtypes.

Digital lecture is widely used as a fundamental element of massive open online courses, and brightly depicts the peculiarities of the contemporary English language in use to talk science today. Thus we may assume that an e-lecture is a brand-new communicative genre of scholarly discourse which is characterized by a number of specific general, linguistic and paralinguistic features.

A brief review of publications on the subject. An e-lecture as a genre of scientific discourse is almost an unknown object of research. Currently we may mention few studies which shed the light on different aspects of a digital lecture, such as statement of its definition and distinguishing its major subtypes [8; 13; 14] as well as research on the lecture adaptation mechanisms for the use in the Internet [1]. Our previous investigation resulted in articles devoted to singling out features of a video lecture as a scholarly discourse subgenre by describing its "genre portrait" [15; 16].

The goal of this paper is to give an overview of the main linguistic and extra linguistic peculiarities of an e-lecture as a functional subtype of a video lecture.

Materials and methods. The evidence to support the hypothesis has been obtained from 30 English e-lectures proper. The lectures have been taken from such massive open online courses sites as FutureLearn, Coursera, EdX, Open Yale Courses, OpenLearn [4; 6; 7; 9; 10]. The selection of the lectures was based on the following criteria: e-lectures had to focus on the study of linguistics and the English language. Obviously, the data are restricted, and the following analysis should be regarded as a pilot study that provides preliminary results which require further discussion and confirmation by a larger corpus of evidence.

To solve the tasks of the paper the following methods were used: method of language use observation, method of systematization and generalization to carry out complex description of the received results, general empiric scientific methods (comparison, observation, and measurement).

Results and discussion. Having analyzed previous research papers and the video lectures themselves, we may provide the definition of a digital lecture as such as well as elaborate its further subtypes. To make the picture clearer, the following table is presented to displays the tentative classification of a digital lecture [1; 8; 13; 14; 15; 16] (Table 1).

As me may see, generally a video lecture provides any learning experience that is mediated by the use of streaming or video technologies, either online or asynchronously. A video lecture simply may be the representation of the live event which took or is taking place at a definite moment. When it comes to an e-lecture proper, that is a digital resource which has been made specifically to be used in the scope of the massive open online course or other kinds of learning platforms.

Table 1.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">VIDEO LECTURE (Digital Lecture)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">is a lecture delivered through digital technology either synchronously (online) or asynchronously (on demand)</td></tr>
<tr><th>SYNCHRONOUS lecture</th><th colspan="2">ASYNCHRONOUS lecture</th></tr>
<tr><td>is the streaming of the live event with the help of digital technologies, and may require a real presence of students and teachers during the time of a lecture in the classroom or distantly</td><td colspan="2">is the learning experience that enables students to take part in it online or with the help of streaming technologies or storage devices like CDs, DVDs, secure digital memory cards, pen-drives etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><th>LIVE DIGITIZED lecture</th><th>e-Lecture</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>is an electronic version of a live event taking place in a classroom with the real participation of students, “in vivo”</td><td>is any digital resource in the format of a lecture captured in studio or any other place (“in vitro”) with the staff and necessary equipment, with the purpose to engage students in an e-learning experience.</td></tr>
</table>

Evidently, the language that is used in an e-lecture has all the conceptual and stylistic qualities the scientific language should have, that is “objectivity, impartiality grounded by the facts, clear order in exposition of facts and clarity of expression” [11, p. 3]. What is important, the spoken text of a video lecture with the help of different devices captures the attention and interest of the listener, facilitating at the same time their understanding. As a genre, a video-lecture is *linguistically* characterized by the loose language structure, language simplicity that allows clear explanation of the material by the tutor, inner speech coherence, correspondence of structural, linguistic, discourse and stylistic characteristics to the register of formal English. Though, the English language in this type of lectures, taking into consideration its oral nature, combines features of formal and colloquial styles, and is characterized by a certain level of emotionality, that presumably helps to support attention of the listener. These lectures make use of the specter of techniques such as monologue and dialogue communication situations, rigid and flexible structure of the text, friendly manner of speech and atmosphere, passive and active listening, usage of verbal and non-verbal communication channels, slow or moderate tempo of speech etc. [1, p.44]. The text of an e-lecture usually exploits stylistic devices, such as rhetoric questions, idioms, colloquial words etc. in order to support the attention of the listener. The extract of the e-lecture below vividly exemplifies the above mentioned features:

«*Learning those little words and endings is hard. It is even harder to use them automatically without thinking in second language speech. But they are indispensable. And they are worth the effort. Practise makes them perfect. Remember, in second language acquisition, as well as in many other things in life, no pain, no gain*» (FutureLearn, University of Southampton, Course “Understanding Language”, Week 1, Video 1.12 Implications for teaching, Roumyana Slabakova).

Along with beforehand mentioned features, the text of an e-lecture has segmental structure which allows the lecturer to explain in clear and understandable way, introducing spontaneous and unplanned clarifications; presence of self-correction and self-interruption; usage of discourse *markers* and parenthetic and connective words that make the speech “flow” and help the audience to comprehend the material better by perceiving the lecture section after section [1, p.45]. In addition, speech is *prosodically* characterized by the moderate tempo, loudness and intonation flow, pitch difference and meaningful pauses which make it segmental. Such a construction of the text helps the lecturer virtually dialogue with the audience and build a spontaneous chat, transforming a lecture into a mediated and interactive communication. The lecturer uses long pauses as if waiting for the response of the audience. The mentioned techniques as well as appealing to the students and responding them in an emotionally positive tone are used to help them feel included into the learning process and as a means of encouraging them to enter into a conversation. In e-lectures which have been analyzed, the teacher performs a role of a collective knowledge medium who by a repetitive usage of the personal pronoun “we” as if speaks on behalf of the scholarly community and at the same time makes the audience feel a part of that community. Along with the verbal explanation, the tutor of the lecture exploits visualization, graphs or diagrams, or highlights the most important issues on the screen with the help of extra technologies.

During the process of an e-lecture investigation, we must pay the attention to the *addressee factor*. Scientists argue [1, p. 46; 2] that the Internet learning allows increasing the level of cognitive activity, individualizing the process of education, taking over the stereotypic and traditional approach to the interaction between a teacher and a student, thus forming a new type of a learner. This addressee is virtual and anonymous, distant in time and space, but active, motivated, targeted and determined at the same time. The tutor cannot timely trace their reactions, previous experience, attitudes, emotions and immediate feedback unlike the lecturer dealing with the real audience, which makes the former’s job more complicated. The learners have more freedom, they can switch off the learning source. The lecturer is aware of being filmed and this influences his communicative behaviour. Moreover, the teacher does not see their audience which makes it necessary to exploit additional means of speech influence, including prosodic means to support the attention of the learners.

Despite the fact, that there are a lot of features common for the video lectures as a whole, the e-lecture proper owes a bulk of distinctive characteristics, since it requires a special preparation and setting to be shot and designed. Such circumstances may make an e-lecture to be

considered as an independent genre of the scholarly discourse in the future. Thus a tentative classification of an e-lecture according to the following criteria has been elaborated:

Table 2.

e-Lecture				
The scientific, learning and pragmatic bent of an e-lecture				
Informative e-lectures	*Theoretical e-lectures*	*Practical e-lectures*		
presentation of the scientific and popular scientific information on the subject, the analysis and commentaries	presentation of the theoretical information on the subject, analysis and commentaries, tasks for completion	practical instructive lectures		
Format of an e-lecture				
presentation	*e-lecture proper*			
e-lecture represents the set of slide accompanied with the audio track with the commentaries by the tutor	e-lecture created especially for the use in a virtual domain, namely in the scope of the massive open online courses			
Duration of an e-lecture				
short	*average*	*long*		
extremely short, starting from 1 to 5 minutes in length	the ordinary lecture lasts from 5 to 30 minutes	from 30 minutes and longer		
The place of capturing				
"in vitro", in the studio	*in the open space*	*in a classroom*		
e-lectures are common to be captured in the studio with the needed technical staff and required equipment	scenarios of an e-lecture usually make an ample use of the outdoors shooting	e-lectures' capturing usually is taking place in the classroom or other rooms of the educational establishment which offers the course		
Orientation on the level of the audience erudition				
high-level quality e-lectures for career development and professional growth, oriented on a qualified in a certain domain audience	theoretical and practical e-lectures which aim at introducing audience into the subject	informative popular scientific lectures for the general audience		
Producer's framing				
e-lecture-presentation	*e-lecture-discussion*	*e-lecture-interview*	*e-lecture-poll*	*e-lecture-practical instruction*
e-lecture designed as a set of slides accompanied by the audio commentaries by the tutor	e-lecture featuring several tutors, scientists or other guests discussing issues of the presented topic	e-lecture, in which the tutor interviews scientists or specialists on the definite matter	e-lecture-poll aims at gathering the knowledge on the topic from different specialists in a form of a poll	e-lecture, during which the learner gets information and instruction for completing certain tasks
Emotionality level				
emotionally neutral, formal	emotional	emotionally expressive		
Level of English language fluency by the lecturers				
native speakers	English as a second language	combined		

Speaking about the process of adjusting a lecture as a genre to an electronic domain, we shall pay attention to the *format of an e-lecture*. E-lecture-presentation represents the set of slides accompanied by the audio track. This type of an e-lecture is well adapted to the virtual context and is convenient for a virtual addressee, as allows the audience to easily acquire knowledge (using tables, definition, explanations etc.). The technique of presentation of information in such a way saves the time, implementing one of the main principles of contemporary science – to increase the information provision in the sake of decreasing the time and space consumption for its presentation as well as shortening the time for perceiving by the target addressee [1, p. 47]. This also ensures the e-lecture to be multicanal and multimodal to suit the peculiarities of the addressee perception. During such an experience, the audience can see and hear the information provided in the lecture.

The second type of an e-lecture is an e-lecture proper. As we may see, an e-lecture is an interactive scientific and instructive lecture with a learning purpose, peculiar characteristics of which in particular are interactivity, multimodality, multidimensionality etc. [1, p. 48; 5]. Text in an e-lecture acquires new suchlike features and becomes paralinguistically active, hypertextual, multicanal, creolized. An e-lecture is a primary genre of scholarly virtual discourse as it is created especially for use in the scope of massive open online courses or other learning platforms mainly in the web while other varieties of a video lecture may be considered as secondary 'products' of an academic lecture. An e-lecture cannot be created solely by a lecturer or a tutor, but under the guidance of a producer. The lecturer is mainly responsible for the informative content and communicative realization of the lecture (by this we mean the preparation of an oral material for an e-lecture with the purpose to be broadcast to anonymous target audience) while the producer prepares the final and complete version of it. The tutors of such lectures usually make use of the special techniques of attention maintenance, in particular manipulating with the intonation, body language, emotional response etc. Besides this they are in charge of making control of

verbal and non-verbal channels of information and various means of information supply, as an e-lecture may contain slides with information accompanied by audio tracks, interviews with guests (scientists, specialists etc.), control questions, comments from the tutors to support effective communication between themselves and the audience. The behaviour etiquette of the tutor includes direct sights into the camera, smiling, positive intonations, emotions, repetitive use of the personal pronoun "we", often referring to the audience to simulate the effect of the real presence of listeners in virtual space. Such attitudes set the atmosphere of the lecture making it a real event. The combination of the beforehand mentioned features forms an e-lecture as a genre as one visual, structural, and functional whole with the ability to influence the audience [1, p. 49]. To add to what we have mentioned before, we should emphasize that the tutor in an e-lecture is suggested to owe presentation and dialogue techniques, using the elements of conversational style to simplifying the nature of scientific information, taking into account the diverse level of background knowledge and experience of the target learner. The ability to set a good feedback mechanism is of great importance too, and here in handy come the chats, forums, tasks for completion etc., which are a good means of giving the virtual communication a real touch.

Conclusions. Analysis of existing works on a video lecture as well as first-hand analysis of an e-lecture in particular on different learning platforms allowed us to elaborate a tentative classification of a video lecture and a further classification of variety of an e-lecture and depict their linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics. As a result of the work on this paper, it may be concluded that an e-lecture plays an important role in the process of scientific communication being an active and dynamic genre of scholarly discourse and owing a number of peculiar features such as interactivity, multimodality, multidimensionality, combination of the linguistic and paralinguistic parameters and completely performs it communicative functions, taking into account the specific anonymous virtual targeted learner. As it had been mentioned before, little research was carried out on an e-lecture, thus making it a promising and prospective object for further exploration. The studies may focus on e-lecture's other linguistic, paralinguistic, cognitive features − mainly on the detailed study of structural, prosodic, stylistic features of each subtype, mechanisms of the speech influence realization etc.

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Електронная лекция как новый жанр англоязычного научного дискурса

М. В. Томахив

Аннотация. В статье представлена разработанная расширенная классификация цифровой лекции как нового жанра современного научного англоязычного дискурса, и анализ наличных работ, что раскрывают уже исследованные аспекты видеолекции. Даная работа предлагает ознакомиться с описанием основных функциональных разновидностей видеолекции, их общей характеристикой, а также лингвистическими та паралингвистическими особенностями электронной лекции как таковой. Обоснована важность учета фактора адресата при виртуальной научной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: *англоязычный научный дискурс, жанр, массовые открытые онлайн курсы, видеолекция, живая оцифрованная лекция, электронная лекция.*