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THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS FOR ENHANCING GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF THE FUTURE ENGLISH PHILOLOGISTS

The new and effective techniques of the target language teaching are becoming increasingly essential with the rise of technology. It has drastically affected not only all four skills of language acquisition but also sociolinguistic, strategic and grammatical competencies. Thereby, the educators feel the urgent need of developing the appropriate methods to form these competences efficiently, in particular, the grammatical one. Before dwelling on the variants of teaching grammar with the help of technology, it will be helpful to define the study of grammar.

According to Dontcheva-Navratilova, grammar is “the set of rules and principles that underlie the shape and meaning of terms, sentences, clauses and phrases” [1; 3]. Thus, the grammatical competence of the English philologists lies in the ability to form grammatically correct oral and written utterances and to have the understanding of grammar formation of speech.

The majority of researchers (O. I. Vovk, N. F. Borysko, and N. K. Sklyarenko) understand the notion of „grammatical competence” as the ability to use the knowledge of the grammatical phenomena correctly. Furthermore, J. van Ek believes that grammatical competence is the linguistic competence in the first place and considers it as the speaker's ability to produce and interpret utterances that conform to grammatical rules and certain meanings [2; 39].

The main components of grammatical competence are grammar skills, grammatical knowledge and grammatical awareness. In addition to that, N. K. Skliarenko differentiates two types of grammar skills: reproductive and perceptive grammar skills.

Formation of reproductive grammar skills is regarded as one of the prerequisites for the functioning of the ability to express learners` thoughts both in communication with others and in writing (speaking and writing).

Developing of receptive grammar skills is the background for the capacity to comprehend others' thoughts in oral and written ways (listening and reading). In contrast to the reproductive grammar skill, which involves the choice of form in accordance with the communicative intention, speech situation, etc., the first task in the formation of receptive grammatical skills is a perception of the sound or graphic image of the grammatical structure. If receptive grammatical skill is formed, perception is accompanied by grammatical recognition of forms and their correlation with a certain meaning [5; 18].

It should be pointed out that grammar being a significant constituent of the target language is traditionally taught at the universities in terms of learning the major linguistic categories, defining and clarifying language phenomena by the teacher, memorizing and practicing the rules through drilling, translation and exercises [3; 12].

The process of studying grammar shouldn't be isolated from any other skill of language acquisition. Nevertheless, it must serve the role in the practical usage of the language, which is the medium for efficient communication.

Due to the spread of Covid-19, the need for online training and the use of digital tools are inevitable. The trend in language education is to create up-to-date grammar activities that are thoroughly embedded into the course and use engaging and interactive tools needed for grammar instruction. While teaching ESL class teachers have not only help students develop language skills

but also provide them with opportunity to fully practice them with appropriate activities in interactive way.

Hence, an educational game *Bamboozle* can be implemented. The platform makes it easier for teachers, trainers or instructors to create a fun educational game. It is customizable to the teachers' curriculum and is designed to be a whole class activity or a whole group activity with the teacher or instructor up front running the game and the students playing it. The teacher can either use some of the featured games or create some on their own. There is a preview of questions that go with this game. The game can contain some pictures, soundtracks or gaps for students to fill-in and the verbs in brackets that have to be transformed. The students are divided into teams, they take turns to choosing random questions and then in their teams try to figure out the right answer. In case the answer is correct students are awarded points depending on the complexity of the task.

Another multifunctional platform for interactive grammar instruction is *Learningapps*. This application has a wide range of ready-made activities or templates for creating the new exercises. Among them are matching pairs, group assignment, number line, freetext input, cloze text and others. One of the templates of this software program is called *Audio/video with notices*. The notable advantage of this tool is that you can use any video and adapt it to the needs of the English grammar. According to Shrosbree (2008) in their actual context, videos introduce learners to the language, bringing their attention to visual aids that promote awareness [4; 75]. Consequently, the grammar activities based on videos help students perceive the English language in the real context.

To illustrate the possibilities of this platform let's consider the example of its application. For practicing Past Simple and Past Continuous, students are divided into two teams. All of the students have to watch a video but the first team are to put the verbs in the correct form and the second one have to take notes of everything mentioned in the video. The teacher provides students with main icons/episodes from the video related to the story and asks to retell it in the slightest details paying attention to the key words and the visual aid. After that, students are to tell whether the statements are true or false and correct the false sentences. This gives the virtual space for arranging revision or explanation of a new material and tends to improve the delivering of the grammar class.

In conclusion, grammar instruction has evolved from rote learning of grammar rules and translating of the sentences and now aims at improving communicative abilities of the students including exercises that provide cultural context, gamification of a lesson and better motivation of students.

References:

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