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INNOVATIVE ONLINE TEACHING TOOLS FOR STUDENTS WHO MAJOR IN ENGLISH PHILOLOGY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Abstract. The paper in question outlines the possibilities of using modern teaching methods and tools in the process of teaching English to students who major in English Philology. The rapid changes which this process is undergoing are predetermined by the constant development and new demands which it has to meet. In view of Ukrainian education this process is shaped not only by the factors mentioned but as well by the fact that our country is still facing post-pandemic consequences and now those of war conflict when students are deprived of the possibility of gaining offline education in physical classrooms and many other essential educational items. The paper examines the effectiveness of various approaches and tools in promoting language acquisition and proficiency, as well as their impact on students' engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes during the challenges posed by war and pandemic. The paper is an overview of the latest tools available for the implementation in the process of teaching English including online resources and activities, as well as the use of different platforms, applications, virtual reality, gamification and artificial intelligence. It is aimed at highlighting the advantages and drawbacks of these approaches which may be faced both by educators and students and providing examples of the successful implementations

of these approaches in different educational environments. It may be summed up that while the implementation of the teaching methods and tools in question can boost and enhance the quality and accessibility of language education but it is next to impossible to reach successful learning outcomes without careful planning, training, and evaluation which ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

Keywords: teaching methods, teaching tools, language acquisition, learning outcomes, educational platform.

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СУЧАСНИЙ ІНСТРУМЕНТАРІЙ ОНЛАЙН НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТІВ-ФІЛОЛОГІВ: ВИКЛИКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

Анотація. У статті закцентовано на можливостях використання сучасних методів та інструментів навчання у процесі викладання англійської мови студентам, які спеціалізуються на англійській філології. Швидкі зміни, які відбуваються у процесі навчання у цілому й англійській мові зокрема, обумовлені постійним розвитком освіти та новими вимогами, які їй потрібно задовольняти. Говорячи про українську освіту, цей процес формується не лише під впливом згаданих факторів, а також тим, що наша країна все ще оговтується від наслідків пандемії та відчуваються все нові й нові виклики, які обумовлені повномасштабною війною, розв'язаною країною-агресором, у результаті чого студенти позбавлені можливості отримувати офлайн-освіту та багатьох інших важливих освітніх елементів. У статті окреслено ефективність різних підходів та інструментів задля підвищення рівня знання та володіння мовою, а також їх вплив на рівень залученості студентів, їх мотивацію та

результати навчання в умовах війни та пандемії. Стаття є оглядом новітніх інструментів, які можливо використовувати у процесі навчання англійської мови, зокрема онлайн-ресурси та завдання, а також використання різних платформ, онлайн додатків, віртуальної реальності, гейміфікації та штучного інтелекту. Метою є визначення переваг та недоліків таких підходів, з якими може зіткнутися викладач та студент, та наведення прикладів успішної реалізації цих підходів у різних освітніх середовищах. Таким чином, узагальнюючи, слід зазначити, що впровадження обраних методів та інструментів навчання може підвищити якість та доступність мовної освіти, але без ретельного планування, навчання та оцінювання, які гарантують його ефективність та стійкість, досягти успішних результатів навчання майже неможливо.

Ключові слова: методи навчання, інструменти навчання, засвоєння мови, результати навчання, освітня платформа.

Problem statement. The insufficient study of the possibilities and advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of new approaches and tools in the teaching process of English to students who major in English philology posed by war in Ukraine and post-COVID-19 consequences represents a wide field for the investigation in modern teaching methods. The insufficiency of the issue is justified by the fact that the process is undergoing constant and rapid changes consequently educators have to keep their fingers on the pulse with the latest teaching tools somehow to overcome all those obstacles and challenges their students face due to the mentioned circumstances. Moreover, online tools, platforms, and artificial intelligence serve as crucial means of language acquisition, therefore they should be in the constant focus of researchers. In addition, the relevance of the research is determined by the significant expansion of the influence of latest online tools on the educational process, as well as the growing interest in means by which this influence is achieved and strengthened. It is crucial for the time being to highlight the challenges and opportunities which may arise from these circumstances. Therefore, taking into consideration all these issues this study aims to explore all the possible ways how educators and students can adjust to the changing educational environment of the English learning process and overcome those barriers caused by war conflict and pandemic.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The peculiarities of online language teaching are under consideration in papers of the following scholars E. Bernat, E. Martin-Monje, G. Motteram, H. Reinders, M. Thomas. The issues of language acquisition and academic need in times of war and conflicts and pandemics have been studied by the following researchers Ch. Coombe, O. Garcia K., E. Johnson, K. D. Samway, S. J. Shin.

Aim of the research is to investigate the online educational strategies employed in the process of teaching English to students who major in English philology and their implications on students' language acquisition. Via the analyses of available online teaching tools, the study is aimed at identifying their peculiarities and ways of the implementations in the educational process taking into account the necessity to overcome consequences and challenges caused by war and pandemic. Ultimately, the aim of the research is to provide a detailed insight into the educational process during full scale war and study possible ways of enhancing the quality of English language instruction and support student engagement and motivation.

Results and discussion. Educational change is a constant process initiated by increased globalization, advances in educational tools and needs set by society. Though the issue about educational change in Ukraine contains as well underlying challenges caused by war and pandemic consequences. Hence educators face a difficulty in their desire to make this change effective as much as possible and how to adjust themselves and their students to the new classroom environments. But this change is not supposed to be done just for the sake of change. The point in question should be focused on the 'improvement of the education of students' no matter what circumstances it is caused by [1].

According to J. Gardner the educational change implies three dimensions including the introduction of revised and innovative materials, implementation of new approaches and strategies and reconsideration of existing theories and beliefs [2]. All three dimensions are supposed to be implemented in the teaching process in harmony as they represent a fundamental unity of the whole process. Moreover, in accordance with the scholar in question, 'while there is a lot of change and innovation going on at classroom, school and policy levels, the focus is often more on the *how* – "How can we introduce these new ideas in the classroom?" – than on the *why* – "And why should we actually do this?"' [2]. 'Why' is crucial here. Though in our case with Ukrainian education this very 'why' becomes just way too obvious.

Since the beginning of full scale war more focus has been directed mainly at online teaching. Our educators had to rearrange the whole educational process making it as much accessible and comfy as possible somehow to lessen psychological instability of those who are involved in the process. According to the studies the following issues may arise as a result of armed conflicts: depression, irritability, aggression, isolation, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, and paranoia [3]; nervousness, anxious arousal [4]; loss of the ability to concentrate, passivity, loss of spontaneity, and sorrow [5]. As M. Bragin states "school is the best remedy for children affected by conflict, as it is a place of normalised experiences, such as spending time with other children, which bring routine to their lives" [6].

Due to the advances in online educational tools there is a wide range of available ones. Different educators have their own preferences. Considering the process of teaching English from our own experience dating back to the times of pandemic and now during the war, we have figured out that the best option for us is the use of the Zoom platform in combination with MOODLE and some extra tools. It is worth mentioning that the platform in question has undergone excessive changes which lead to considerable improvements which definitely favour the teaching process. We have witnessed all those advances the platform has undergone and how significantly it has eased educators' functioning during virtual classroom activities.

It goes without saying that it was necessary to modify the teaching process completely for it to function effectively and successfully in a new educational environment. Furthermore, we had to take into account technical issues such as frequent electricity shortages and as a result poor internet connection that had a certain impact on the quality and effectiveness. The Zoom platform keeps working even with poor internet connection and students manage to join conferences even via mobile internet connection and they can do it even from shelters or from all over the world. Zoom supports those who are deprived of the possibility to get education that is why access to Zoom is now unlimited to all the Ukrainians during the war and as it used to be for those who provided education in the zones affected by the pandemic. Zoom with its innovative features such as screen sharing, virtual whiteboard, breakout rooms can make the whole process engaging. Zoom as well provides additional opportunities to integrate other resources into the language acquisition process such as listening and speaking practices, use of Kahoot! which is a part of gamification and other digital tools.

The main point for us was and still is to make our students feel at ease during our classes. We find it extremely important to keep an eye on their emotional state which influences the process of learning in many ways. We do our best to build a friendly atmosphere and collaborative environments in the virtual classrooms to engage students to pursue their strengths, be able to adapt to different circumstances and acquire unique skills and talents via creative and challenging tasks but for sure 'not teach just to test' them, especially now.

As a warming up activity and a good way to break the ice at the very beginning of the class is the use of polls which are available in the Zoom settings and now with even more options than they used to have (there are options to point out wrong and right answers if there is such a necessary, to include more complicated questions, again if such a necessity arises). For instance, the students are asked how they are doing today. They have the following suggestions:
1) walking on air;
2) alive and kicking;
3) I'm fine (Ross's legendary one)

4)   the light is on but nobody is home.

The second question might be what they feel like doing right now. The possible answers are:

1)   getting away from it all;
2)   ready for getting my Bachelor's degree;
3)   sleeping is just what the doctor ordered;
4)   wearing my pj all day long.

The activity in question includes a variety of different idioms and set expressions for revision. Moreover, there are some humorous options which in some way will create a positive learning environment. Humour serves as a teaching tool making students more engaged and perceptive to the material which is under consideration. It can be used during warming-up activities, while teaching grammar, illustrating lexical units etc. Though, humour as a teaching tool should be respectful and appropriate. Educators should always bear in mind whether it is appropriate and if it not is perceived in a negative way in the classroom. The same goes with the materials, now educators have to revise the materials they are going to use during the teaching process carefully and thoroughly to avoid sensitive topics and issues, set certain boundaries which will help them address the matters in question, for instance, those connected with family, home etc. in order to avoid causing trauma to students who might have been affaceted by war in this or that way.

Another example of the task connected with humour as a teaching tool and practising the use of idioms and set expressions is the implementation of the use of meme generator apps during the learning process. The students are suggested the app for meme generators and a list of idioms to use, so they create their own puns and memes and present them to their classmates which help them better understand the context of their use and practise them turning them from passive vocabulary into active one.

Additional task for students is coding and encoding information via the emojis. The Zoom platform suggests a wide range of emojis. So, students are given the following task: to code a story related to the topic and preferably implying the use of the lexical units they are studying right now with the help of different emojis and the other student is given a chance to decode the information / message which is hidden in the story presented by emojis. In such a way, pair work provides opportunities for students' imagination and creativity together with practising the use of complex vocabulary.

The option of breakout rooms can be used for discussions or pair work. It now has a more advanced level as it enables educators screen share some information to a separate breakout room and give instructions even without entering it. The example of the assignment connected with the use of breakout rooms can be the following. The students are divided into several breakout rooms in order to do 'the shadowing'.

Shadowing is considered to be an effective technique used in language acquisition and which implies listening to the recording and simultaneous pronunciation of the extract together with, for instance, actor to improve fluency. The idea behind shadowing is that by listening and repeating, the learner can practice mimicking the rhythm and sounds of the language and eventually internalize them. The phenomenon of shadowing was first proposed by Alexander Arguelles, an American linguist and language enthusiast, in the 1990s. In his research it is stated that 'It's basically learning another language in a way that's similar to how you learned your first language – repeating sounds exactly as you hear them. It's the best way not only to master colloquial speech, but accent and intonation as well' [7]. Since its introduction, shadowing has become a popular technique in language acquisition which justify the choice of many educators to integrate it into their teaching process. It is often used in combination with other language learning methods, such as conversation practice, grammar drills, and vocabulary exercises, to provide a well-rounded and immersive learning experience for the students. Moreover, it has become really trendy on TikTok which is definitely a plus for enhancing students' interest. We highly recommend the following recording for consideration (Ross's I'm fine from Friends TV show).

The use of animated films in language acquisition is a well-established practice which favours the process in many ways so it is quite effective to incorporate it into teaching. Cartoons assist in memorizing vocabulary and learning grammatical structures more effectively [8; 9]. Besides, animated films including scenes, real conversations of characters and props tend to engage students more easily than text materials [10]. Again with the help of break out rooms students are divided into several groups. Each one receives a cartoon as an assignment. It is optional whether to use already dubbed ones with authentic language and to practise the target language or to practise voicing characters and storytelling themselves. We tend to use more assignments when our students have to voice the characters on their own in such a way practising and improving different language aspects and moreover, it has proved to show better engagements of students in the process. It is better to take short cartoons, for instance, Pixar ones, as teaching materials.

As for the white board as a Zoom teaching tool its use is not limited only to illustrate certain material. But it can also be used to engage students in the process of language acquisition and increase the level of their proficiency. The following assignments can be given: playing a guessing game when a student illustrates the idioms suggested to them and the rest try to guess what is meant by the picture or students are asked to draw a logo of their company and then present it to the rest.

Though the development of writing skills during online teaching is rather limited, there are still a few things educators can do. For instance, with the help of Zoom chat students can be asked to write their own endings to the story. They can

do it individually or in a team when one student starts and the other continues. The purpose of such assignments can be different. For instance, it can be done in the interests of practising grammar structures, to be more precise, conditionals or successful writing sticking to the rules of different styles and pieces of writing.

Instagram can serve as an additional tool for language acquisition. According to website statista Instagram takes a leading role as social media among young people. First of all, it can be used as an authentic material for different types of analysis. For instance, students can be provided with the following task: from the Instagram account @newyorkercartoon, choose two posts and analyze them taking into account the language used, the pun functions etc. Another example of the use of Instagram as an effective learning tool is to ask students to create different Instagram accounts as of the were some characters and write posts there and leave comments to each other. In such a way all the aspects of language acquisition are engaged and improved and moreover, students have a possibility to interact with each other not only during classes.

As for the possibilities provided by MOODLE for teaching English to students who major in English philology. They are quite considerable. During electricity shortages and internet connection issues it is quite accessible and free. It can be used as a good platform for various tests and assignments. Moreover, it can be used as well for students' interaction and their discussions. There is such an option as a forum where they can share their views. For instance, the students were advised to watch videos connected with bullying and express their point of view. Also they were shown a picture with a blooming cactus and the task was to share their views in what way this picture can be interpreted in terms of education.

It is quite obvious that the effectiveness of education in general and language acquisition respectively is hampered by post-pandemic circumstances and now by Russian aggression but educators still can with the help of available online tools arrange the learning process of high standard. The main focus should be on the student's emotional state as they go through real hardships and creation of a favourable atmosphere in the classrooms via interesting and creative assignments, humour and those tools which are of particular interests for students and will definitely engage them in the process. It never should be about teaching to test but acquire knowledge and skills. Students are at the center of learning process. The focus is on the needs, interests, and goals not those of educators. The active involvement of students in the learning process is emphasized, with the educators serving as a facilitator rather than the sole source of knowledge. Educators' talking time is extremely reduced and students' talking time is extremely increased.

Conclusions. The process of teaching English to students who major in English philology online during war and post-pandemic consequences presents both challenges and opportunities for educators. Due to the potential of technology in

providing access to education in these difficult circumstances it is quite possible to arrange an effective process of language acquisition. Though the pandemic recedes, the use of online teaching tools is inevitable as Ukraine is affected by war conflict and for some students it is the only possible option to gain education. Effective online language teaching requires careful planning, design, and implementation and should be adapted to suit the needs and preferences of students who go through hardships. Different creative tasks via the use of various online tools and platforms are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of language acquisition.

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations due to electricity shortages or poor internet connection may require some reconsideration of the teaching process. For instance, Zoom platform and MOODLE do not require high-speed connection. That is why they can be considered as quite appropriate ones. Teaching English online during war and post-pandemic requires a combination of technological proficiency, pedagogical innovation, and psychological sensitivity. By adopting best practices, educators can help to provide a valuable and accessible education and create favourable educational environments for students who are deprived of possibilities of getting offline education.

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