

TEACHING GRAMMAR EFFECTIVELY USING MOBILE APPS FOR UPPER GRADES

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Abstract: *This article discusses how to use apps in teaching English at schools effectively. As we know nowadays learning and teaching Grammar anywhere in the world let alone Uzbekistan has become easy and interesting with the advent of online tools such as computers, mobiles, and social media such as Blog, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, Moodle, etc. Online instruction promotes language learning. During the quarantine period teachers and students are learning to use effectively social media both in teaching and learning process. It is well known that language is guided by Grammar for correct usage so that proper meaning is given to the words and sentences used. Grammar enables learners to use language to describe the world in terms of how, when and where things happen. Keeping this in view, technology is adapted for learning and teaching purposes, to meet the demands of man and enable him to attain the imperishable and flawless treasure of learning. This paper aims at listing and evaluating some of the technological tools used for effective teaching and learning of grammar.*

Key words: *app, application, teaching grammar, technology for grammar teaching, teaching grammar to schoolpupils*

Introduction

We live in a world that the mobile technology develops at so fast speed that we have difficulty following. In only a few years the mobile market has changed drastically with the advent of smartphones with android system and Apple products with iOS system such as iPad and iPhone, and the number of people that own these

kinds of devices is growing at a fast rate especially among young people. The situation is same in Uzbekistan.

With the mobile devices, a new market of application software called Mobile App has appeared and is growing at an incredible speed. Apps are easily available online, and there are two App stores: iTunes App store and Android Market. iTunes App store offers over 700.000 apps available to consumers, while there are over 675.000 apps on Android Market (Andersen, 2013). Among this incredible number of apps, there are a large number of apps relating to English learning for Uzbek students. These English learning apps can be easily and freely downloaded by students according to their own interests. Besides, these apps are developed in terms of learners' different purposes. Also, using apps on mobile devices to learn English also breaks the restriction of time and place (Subian, 2014). It means that students can learn English at any time and in any place. Mobile devices are becoming a kind of important tools for students to learn English.

On the other hand, English, as the most prominent language in the world, is playing an important role in Uzbekistan. For the current college students, it is a necessity to have a good ability of English, because of academic and job factors. For example, there are many majors need English to support such as international trade, e-commerce and information technology, and a majority of multinational companies in Uzbekistan are interested in the graduates who have excellent ability of English. Uzbek government has been enhancing English education.

With the accelerated development of Apps about learning English and the popularization of mobile devices among college students, students have become increasingly interested in the learning benefits that apps on mobile devices bring. According to the relevant researches, the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can not only enhance students' English ability, but also increase students' learning motivation. Seemingly, it is helpful and efficient for college students using mobile devices to learn English by themselves.

The reality is that we don't know whether it is efficient and effective for college students to use mobile apps to learn English by themselves. MALL is a new way for Uzbek students to learn English. Thus, students' attitudes towards it are not clear. On the other hand, with the explosion of apps, college students are supplied with more choices. But every coin has two sides. Although there are a lot of apps referring to learning English and college students are easier to get these materials and resources, the reality is that the App market is like a jungle. There is too much software for college students to choice and use. Obviously, there is a lack of recommendation about relevant apps and suggestions about how effectively to use them to learn English. Thus, empirical research about these problems is much needed. A mobile app, as a computer program, is designed to run on mobile phones, tablet computers (like iPad) and other mobile devices. The word "app" is a shortening of the term "application software". Apps are easily available through application distribution platform called App Market, and these apps are typically operated by the owner of the mobile operating system, such as the Apple App Store, Google Play, Windows Phone Store, and BlackBerry App World. There are two main app stores: Google Play for Android and Apple App Store for iOS. Google Play, known as Android Market, is an international online software store developed by Google for Android devices (Chu, 2009). Apple App Store for iOS is the first app market, which set the standard for app distribution services (Rao, 2011).

In our country, most of apps can be downloaded by users freely, while some must be purchased. Mobile apps can be downloaded from App Market to a mobile device, such as an iPad or mobile phone, or they can be downloaded to computers. At the beginning, mobile apps were developed for general productivity and information retrieval, such as weather forecast, e-mail, calendar, alarm clock, and so on. However, public demand and the availability of developer tools drove rapid expansion into other categories, such as education, entertainment and tools. The

popularity of mobile apps keeps continuously rising, as their usage is becoming increasingly prevalent across mobile phone and tablet computer users (Sean, 2012). According to a report from comScore (2012), more and more users used apps than browsed the web on their mobile devices. Mobile apps have become very popular among school students. Almost all of them download apps on their mobile devices..As Sarah Lohnes and Charles Kinzer remarks that “College Students seek to integrate technology into all aspects of their college experience.” [1,p.5]Integrating with technology enhances the Teens’ interest in learning and helps to clarify doubts relating to their subject. There are a few packages and software for Grammar available through online teaching. They are as follows.

- Longman Interactive English Dictionary is an exciting tool which combines a computer database with sound, video and picture. The user has the access to different kinds of information available on the database about grammar, meanings of words, pronunciation etc. It is provided with real life video situations, photographs, maps etc. This tool helps the learner to understand and learn the structural form of a language and also provides many interactive exercises. (Longman Interactive English Dictionary)

- The Grammar ROM: Hilary Rees-Parnall & Ingrid Freebairn[2,p.3] emphasizes that Grammar ROM is a program available for students to revise and practice their English grammar in a more exciting way. It contains effective, interactive exercises and tasks on grammar at intermediate level. Students can use The Grammar ROM by themselves as part of their study, or to supplement any intermediate level English language study.(The Grammar ROM-Intermediate Language Study)

- Welcome to English for Business: These CD’s are available for people who wish to improve their English language skills in the English speaking business environment. These CD programs enable the teens to understand real business English; and they contain many videos which form the centre of the learning activities. The most important feature of these CDs is the fact that it develops

grammar and vocabulary. In the business environment the learner learns to use standard English with good grammar.

- BBC English Expressions: It is an English Language Course on CD ROM. BBC English Expressions is designed to teach the spoken language required in some of the common situations that one is likely to meet with. The users can learn grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. This also helps him to speak good English with proper grammar.(BBC Learning English) [3,p.2]

Software Automated Writing Evaluation, also referred to as automated essay scoring, was under development since the 1960s. As stated by Chi-Fen Emiy Chen & Wei-Yuan Eugene Cheng (2008)[4,p.4] Automated Writing Evaluation was used to evaluate writing quality in terms of discourse structures, grammatical usage, word choice & content development. The above researchers have admitted the fact that AWE programs provide a variety of writing assistance features which include My Editor, Thesaurus, Word Bank, Scoring Rubrics, My Portfolio and others and of all these features My Editor is a proofreading system that automatically detects errors in spelling, grammar and style and hence provides suggestions on how to eradicate and correct such problems. Mobile Assisted Language Learning as a Technological Tool MALL is a branch of technology-enhanced learning in English which can be implemented in many forms including face-to-face or on-line modes. Students could learn grammar through mobile phones using short text messages and websites, which are developed to explain sentence structure and English idioms. Mobile devices help learners have a better involvement in learning grammar and to have a better interaction. The use of mobile phone as a learning tool is widely used in educational systems. Mobile Phone is considered as a miniature of a computer. MALL consists of short lessons of grammar, vocabulary lessons, dictionary, and recorded lectures for better understanding and language learning games. The advantages of using mobile phones as a tool for language learning are promotes social interactivity among students, enhances individual learning by referring to recorded lectures and easy accesibility which enable

learners to learn language outside classroom settings. Multimedia is a combined use of several media such as sound and videos in computer applications. It also refers to information in different formats such as text, images, sounds music, videos and animations. In teaching learning process especially in classroom situations different multimedia devices are used, namely, T.V, video, computer, a movie projector and video tape player. There are different ways to use Multimedia in classrooms for effective learning of grammar for teens.

They are as follows:

1. Group Video Reports: In Group video reports 3 to 5 students are assigned to a team and make each team choose a topic based on which they can make a short movie. It fosters team building and grammar learning without any stress.
2. Video Language Lessons help speed learning and developing grammar skills through listening. Many types of software are used to make grammar learning effective and interesting. They offer lessons on active and passive voice, direct and indirect speech, parts of speech, uses of tenses, kinds of sentences and patterns, to enhance interest among the teens to learn grammar.
3. Slide Show Presentation can be used in any subject. Grammar learning becomes easy and interesting when presented in visual forms by using pictures to teach tense, parts of speech and so on.
4. Convert Lessons to CDs or DVDs: Students can listen to Grammar Learning material more than once. With sound forge software one can record lessons, edit and convert the file to CD or DVD format for playback on a personal CD or DVD. This enables learners to analyze how to use the structure of sentences in various situations by listening to the audio and video format.
5. Podcasting is a method of communication allowing anyone to create audio files of grammar exercises and post them on the internet for others to download.

7. Multimedia language lab: The main purpose of language lab is to focus on sound, text images, videos, animation and interesting context that is accessed from electronic devices such as computer, mp3players, cell phones, and ipods. These tools can develop all the four skills of language as well as grammar skills. Thus Language laboratory has the following facilities to enhance learners' interest in grammar like online tutorials, teaching materials, audio recording, video recording, LCD, teaching software, games, functional grammar and group discussion. So the challenges before a teacher of grammar is to make the teaching meaningful and relevant to the needs of the learners by contextualizing it using examples derived from the socio-cultural situations of the learners. An important part of grammar instruction is to provide examples but the examples should be accurate and appropriate. But the examples should focus on a particular theme or topic so that students have more contact with specific information and vocabulary. Another challenge before the teacher is to decide the amount of rules to be taught to the learners. A teacher should select those grammatical rules and patterns which have greater communicative potential. Overtaxing of learners with rules which do not exist or do not facilitate the learning of a language has a retarding effect on the learners. For example, only two forms of nouns 'John' and 'John's' exist in the case system but the old grammar unnecessarily teach five cases, namely, i) Nominative ii) Vocative iii) Genitive iv) Accusative and v) Dative to the students, as mentioned in Nesfield's English Grammar, Composition and Usage.[5,p.6] Therefore it depends on the teachers to make a selection of only those grammatical items and patterns which have wide communicative range and could cover a number of speech situations. One of the problems generally faced by most of the secondary school teachers of English is the poor standard of the students. Students are even ignorant of the basic rules and structural patterns which they are supposed to have learnt at the lower level. If a teacher directly starts his teaching at the graduate level without trying to know the level of the students, his efforts will not bear any fruits as he will not be able to raise a structure over a feeble foundation. A teacher should begin from the simple grammatical terms and proceed towards the

complex ones. Thus by carefully selecting the frequently recurring grammatical items and by grading them as per the background of the learners, a teacher should provide constant practice to the students in creating and using sentences based on the grammatical forms and structures in various day to day situations of their lives. The teacher should identify the core rules and structures of English grammar and to provide practice in their use. The rules which have greater frequency in use should be taught first and emphasized by a teacher and the rules of peripheral nature which represent the exceptions, irregularities and anomalies should be taught at a later stage, when a learner acquires competency in the use of core rules and structures. One of the dilemmas of a teacher is to decide whether the aim of teaching grammar is to teach rules or to help the learners in learning a language. The aim of teaching grammar is to provide necessary exposure to the learners in the learning of a language. Teaching of only rules without providing sufficient practice in their use will not contribute to the learning of a second language. Rules should be taught simultaneously with their uses. Both grammatical rules and their situational uses should be taught side by side, and then only communicative competence which is the ultimate aim of teaching can be achieved.

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