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Usage of Modern Digital Sources in Teaching English for Higher Education Academic Seekers: on the Practical Example of Pearson English Portal Platform

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Abstract. Learning and teaching English online has long become the norm. Many language centers and educational institutions are transferring learning to a distance learning format, encountering various technical and organizational difficulties. Modern technologies and approaches to learning simplify this process. The Pearson English Portal for teaching English combines convenient tools for teachers and effective teaching methods. It is clear that the primary task of teachers in modern conditions is to ensure a continuous learning process, protect students from problems associated with obtaining education. Therefore, at Pearson English Portal effective learning process management tools and an interactive approach to learning English have been combined to make it convenient for everyone: teachers, students. Consequently, the outlined background can define the purpose of the research that is to give general analysis of English language teaching digital resources realizing and supporting it with the description of Pearson English Platform highlighting its crucially important benefits for English teaching process at modern university. This research can be identified as an applied one aimed at finding a solution to the pedagogical issue of increasing the effectiveness of the English teaching process by means of digital sources application. The research results have witnessed that along with numerous digital resources Pearson English Portal provides such benefits, as follows: a modern system for managing the learning process and daily tasks; saving time on routine tasks: 20+ hours per week; ready-made lesson plans, an interactive library of textbooks; more than 180 tests with automatic verification; interactive homework assignments that are automatically checked by the system; learning on the principle of a "flipped lesson"; flexible functionality that can be customized to your needs, online and offline classes; combining a Learning Management System (LMS) and an interactive library of textbooks for learning English. The novelty of this research means the provision of a range of recommendations that might be useful in the process of application digital resources while teaching English for university academic seekers.

Key words: higher education academic seekers, university, digital resources, Pearson English Platform, benefits, drawbacks, digitalization, English language competencies.

Використання сучасних цифрових ресурсів під час викладання англійської мови здобувачам вищої освіти: на прикладі платформи "Pearson English Portal"

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Анотація. Вивчення та викладання англійської мови онлайн давно стало нормою. Багато мовних центрів та навчальних закладів переводять навчання у формат дистанційного навчання, стикаючись з різними технічними та організаційними труднощами. Сучасні технології та підходи до навчання спрощують цей процес. Pearson English Portal для викладання англійської мови поєднує зручні інструменти для викладачів та ефективні методи навчання. Зрозуміло, що першочерговим завданням викладачів у сучасних умовах є забезпечення безперервного навчального процесу, захист студентів від проблем, пов'язаних з отриманням освіти. Тому на англійській цифровій платформі Pearson English Portal поєднані ефективні інструменти управління навчальним процесом та інтерактивний підхід до вивчення англійської мови, щоб зробити його зручним для всіх: викладачів, студентів. Отже, викладені передумови можуть визначити мету дослідження, яка полягає в тому, щоб надати загальний аналіз цифрових ресурсів для викладання англійської мови, реалізуючи та

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підтримуючи їх описом англомовної цифрової платформи Pearson English Portal, підкреслюючи її надзвичайно важливі переваги для процесу викладання англійської мови в сучасному університеті. Це дослідження можна визначити як прикладне, що спрямоване на пошук вирішення педагогічного питання підвищення ефективності процесу викладання англійської мови за допомогою застосування цифрових інтерактивних ресурсів. Результати дослідження засвідчили, що поряд із численними цифровими ресурсами, Pearson English Portal надає такі переваги для навчального процесу, як: сучасна система управління навчальним процесом та щоденними завданнями; економія часу на рутинних завданнях: понад 20 годин на тиждень; готові плани практичних занять, інтерактивна бібліотека підручників; понад 180 тестів з автоматичною перевіркою; інтерактивні домашні завдання, які автоматично перевіряються системою; навчання за принципом «перевернутого уроку»; гнучкий функціонал, який можна налаштувати під ваші потреби, онлайн та офлайн заняття; поєднання системи управління навчанням (LMS) та інтерактивної бібліотеки підручників для вивчення англійської мови. Новизна цього дослідження полягає в наданні низки рекомендацій, які можуть бути корисними в процесі застосування цифрових ресурсів під час викладання англійської мови здобувачам вищої освіти.

Ключові слова: здобувачі вищої освіти, університет, цифрові ресурси, платформа Pearson English Portal, переваги, недоліки, цифровізація, компетенції з англійської мови.

I Introduction

In the context of increasing globalization trends, internationalization of the economy, education and culture, processes of Ukraine's integration into the intercultural space and expansion of its economic ties, the issue of increasing the competitiveness of future specialists in international relations of Ukraine is acute. Ensuring innovative development of the field of knowledge 29 "International Relations", bringing it to the level of European and world quality is possible under the conditions of modernization of the training of masters of future specialists in international relations, aimed at educating specialists capable of effective intercultural interaction with foreign partners and clients, presenting domestic projects at the international level, studying the innovative experience of foreign countries in the field of international activity. This urgent problem has received considerable attention in European strategic documents (Directive of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on Services in the Internal Market (2006), Directive of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on Consumer Rights (2011), Communiqué "A New Policy Framework for Tourism in Europe" (2010). Ensuring the modernization of training of specialists in the field of tourism is enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (2014), "National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine for the Period up to 2021" (2013), "Strategy for the Innovative Development of Ukraine for 2010–2020", Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the National Qualifications Framework" (2011). Modern education is developing in conditions of rapid growth of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. Comprehensive digitalization is taking place in all spheres of life of the state and society, not leaving education aside. Participants in the educational process are rapidly master various digital technologies and tools, introducing them into the educational process for academic, organizational and entertainment purposes [1].

Fierce competition in the market of digital technologies and tools leads to their extreme diversity and variability, which often causes situations when the teacher feels uncertain about the possibility and appropriateness of using a particular tool in the educational process, when participants in the educational process simultaneously do not possess the necessary tools or means and cannot use them.

Consequently, the outlined background can define the purpose of the research that is to give general analysis of English language teaching digital resources realizing and supporting it with the description of Pearson English Platform highlighting its crucially important benefits for English teaching process at modern university.

II Materials and Methods

In pedagogical science in general and in the field of foreign language teaching methods in particular, the issue of using various digital resources is currently being discussed extremely widely and in various aspects. Authors of numerous professional publications and speakers at conferences, seminars, and webinars mainly focus on describing digital technologies and exploring their academic functionality in the context of studying specific academic disciplines and forming various competencies [14].

However, it is worth noting that most of the scientific sources we have reviewed touch on this topic rather superficially, only outlining the specifics of using a wide range of tools. While methods and forms of educational activity based on a more thorough study of numerous additional functions of digital resources, which would contribute to better mastering of these resources by teachers and their students, often remain poorly studied.

There are also practically no publications on how to adapt publicly available popular digital resources for teaching students with special educational needs [14].

This research can be identified as an applied one aimed at finding a solution to the pedagogical issue of increasing the effectiveness of the English teaching process by means of digital sources application.

III Results

Pearson English Pearson is an English language learning platform that offers a variety of resources to support learning and skill development. It provides access to interactive/additional materials that help with language learning at all levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) [8, 9].

In addition, this platform provides opportunities for learning English through various channels, including: interactive tasks and exercises for language practice; various resources for teachers (lesson plans, methodological materials, assessments); the ability to communicate with native speakers through online courses; access to learning materials that are adapted to different levels; integration with distance learning platforms (webinars and online meetings); the ability to use mobile applications; resources for self-study (video lessons); support for teachers who want to improve their skills [8, 9].

This platform provides unique opportunities for learning English. It will help you achieve your learning goals, regardless of your level [8, 9]. Some examples of digital sources from the platform Pearson English Portal can be as follows:

Platform Activity #1. "USE OF ENGLISH 7 Choose the correct option a–d to complete the text. A presentation challenges. The world 0 ___ dramatically now, especially the environment. In a class discussion, someone 1 ___ out that people in general still don't know enough about this. The teacher agreed: everyone can make things better or worse 2 ___ a consequence of his or her own actions. So the teacher challenged us: how can we get the message 3 ___ to people that they need to be more responsible for their actions? We formed groups in class and each group 4 ___ one problem area and created a presentation. In our group, we explored the various reasons why some animals and plants are critically 5 ___. Sadly, many species 6 ___ extinct. While we 7 ___ on our presentation, one student in our group quickly stood up and walked away. We weren't sure if we had done something to make her angry, but later she told us that – as a nature lover – she was 8 ___ with the situation itself. I reminded her that our presentation could help 9 ___ an important message about helping. She calmed down and we finished the presentation. The teacher is very pleased with what we've done, and we are 10 ___ to present our work at the open day at the end of the school term." [8, 9].

Platform Activity #2. READING 4. Read the text below. For questions 1–5, choose from texts A–D. You may choose each text more than once. 'Respect Our World' holidays.

"A. Our new research trip is ideal for those interested in finding out more about the Arabian oryx. This medium-sized member of the antelope family, which became extinct in the wild in the 1970s, was saved in captivity. Today over a thousand have been reintroduced into their natural habitat. Although most of them live in protected areas, they are still under threat. You will spend your days with scientists, collecting data about this fascinating animal considered by some to be the source of the unicorn legend. You don't need a scientific background as you will be given some training on your first day in areas such as how to drive a jeep safely in the desert. You don't need to be super-fit either, but you must be able to walk 10 km in desert sand. So, leave the kids at home, learn how to do a new job and help the oryx! Two thirds of the amount you paid for the trip will be invested into this conservation project [8, 9].

B. Did you know that in 2010 there were only around 3,200 wild tigers in the world? However, things are looking up. This number has increased to almost 4,000 thanks largely to conservation projects and the establishment of more reserves. If you would like to find out more about tigers and to see a conservation project in action, then Kipling Camp, located on the edge of the Kanha Tiger Reserve in India, is a great choice. You can go on tiger safari drives, enjoy walks in the countryside and have picnics on beautiful river beaches! Guests can also find out about local culture by going on village tours and are welcome to get involved in the organization of community projects, such as health camps, where doctors and nurses provide important health advice. The charming rustic cottages where you will stay all have cooking facilities so you can make yourself snacks, although all meals are provided, including a special menu for the under 10s [8, 9].

C. Come to Borneo and have the trip of a lifetime! Although this island has some spectacular beaches, this isn't a beach holiday. You'll spend your time learning about a highly intelligent endangered species that

shares 96.4% of our genes, the orangutan. You will have the chance to come face-to-face with these fascinating, tree-living animals on guided tours in the Tanjung Puting National Park and the Lamandau Wildlife Reserve of Borneo. You will travel deep into the heart of the rainforest to find feeding sites, where you will see orangutans that used to live in captivity living in the wild, as we teach you about why they are under threat. One important reason is that they often can't find food in the forest and destroy crops, so hunters kill them, which is easy as they are large and move through the trees slowly. In the evenings, you will be able to relax with other travellers in the ecolodge where you will stay in your own room, note what you learned and talk about other animals you've seen along the way, such as smaller monkeys and lizards [8, 9].

D. What better way to discover what the coast of British Columbia has to offer than sailing round its fjords and estuaries with other older teens and young adults! You'll be able to get up close to whales swimming in the sea during a special visit to the whale research station and will also enjoy a forest walk where you will be fascinated by watching baby bears playing, at a safe distance of course! Travelers will also visit local communities. This rewarding experience provides a unique opportunity to find out about the native people's customs and traditions. You will sleep on the small, comfortable boat in a cozy cabin and will be able to socialize with the other guests in a comfortable lounge. Finally, this eco-friendly cruise only employs people from local communities, so most of the income from this holiday remains in the coastal economies you will visit" [8, 9].

Which text: 1. explains why an animal is in danger? 2. mentions some necessary physical requirements for the trip? 3. describes a working holiday? 4. suggests the trip is suitable for children? [8, 9]

BBC Learning English: The app is in the TOP among the learning apps not because it was developed by the British Broadcasting Corporation, but because of the effective assimilation of English at all levels. The app offers educational material in the format of news, stories and videos on grammar, pronunciation, listening and memorizing words. After downloading, by opening the app, users can select the section that interests them. You can view and save lessons. Tests are offered to test yourself. Users can also listen to audio materials and follow transcripts to improve their listening skills. Being a product of the BBC, the app gives an idea of British culture, which is useful for those planning to travel or work in the UK. Here, the language instruction is clear and accurate, and the materials are relevant and well-structured. The app is updated daily with new lessons. Hence the confidence that users always have fresh material to study [11, 22].

BBC Learning English is a free program. Among the disadvantages: it is focused on content that is not supported by exercises. It also does not adapt to a specific level and does not adjust to the user's progress. It helps improve listening skills, there are no opportunities for speaking practice [4; 9; 90]. BBC Learning English is a great resource for those who want to improve their English listening comprehension.

Duolingo: Top of the list of apps for learning English through a gamified interface. Here, students can earn points, level up, and receive rewards as they progress, which is a great way to motivate them. The app is based on individual learning, assessing the student's level and adapting the content accordingly. It encourages regular practice, tracks the number of days in a row that Duolingo has been used. It will help you master reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills [22]. The app is easy to navigate. Constant repetition helps you memorize words and review exercises. A significant amount of content is free. However, the app often uses suggestions, which, while useful, may not always reflect natural English pronunciation. Duolingo is easy to use. It is downloaded from iTunes, Spotify. You need to set up your profile, specify the language, and your proficiency level. Then the app will offer a test to determine your real knowledge. After completing it, you can start the lessons, which are divided into different modules. Each of them is dedicated to a specific vocabulary or grammar. In the lessons, you will translate sentences, match words with their meanings, and learn to pronounce phrases [22].

Babbel: Teaches through dialogues, grammar exercises, and focuses on vocabulary building. After downloading the app, you set up a profile, select a language, and indicate your language level. Babbel will then customize your learning path based on your goals. Each lesson starts with a dialogue. You'll listen to and read conversations between native speakers, then delve into vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation based on that dialogue. Babbel offers several types of exercises: sentence completion, word matching, and conversation practice. This helps you understand how language is used in everyday life. The app can also recognize speech, helping you improve your pronunciation. The app instantly responds to your speech (even if you have a bad pronunciation). It uses repetition to help you remember new words and phrases. It covers general topics: greetings, phrases, guided tours, pronunciation in business circles and cultural events [22]. Unlike other language learning programs, Babbel works on a subscription basis (for the time being, it is free for Ukrainians).

This requires costs, but allows you to study without ads and get access to all content.

Memrise: the work is based on repetition – the mother of learning – and visualization, which is especially useful for beginners. And polyglots will also benefit. The program uses videos with native speakers. Beginners will hear phrases pronounced in everyday conversations. It also matches words with images or other similar-sounding words in the student's native language. This helps newcomers remember new vocabulary [22]. After downloading the program and creating an account, users must select English and their level of proficiency. Memrise then presents a course adapted to the user's level. Each lesson introduces new words or phrases. The user is then asked to recall those words. Students can watch clips of native speakers to get an idea of real-life pronunciation. Memrise offers content that covers vocabulary and pronunciation. Grammar is more difficult, and the app provides limited instruction. Beginners who are unfamiliar with English grammar may need additional resources [22].

Rosetta Stone: The program teaches through association and repetition in lessons without translation (all information is provided in English). This method helps develop instinctive language skills. The application is especially useful for beginners and intermediate students. It is also useful for advanced students who want to improve their knowledge. Learning English without translation, although effective, may not be suitable for some. Here the methodology focuses on listening and reading skills. It does not improve speaking skills and understanding grammar. Rosetta Stone helps students think in a new language, thereby encouraging them to speak English. The program uses TruAccent speech recognition technology, helping to speak more naturally. However, this style of learning does not focus on grammar.

Hello English: presents 475 lessons in the format of games, quizzes and conversations. Hello English helps you improve your grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and listening comprehension. After downloading the program, you need to set up an account and select your native language. The app will then take a test to determine your English proficiency level and then suggest a personalized learning path [22]. Among the app's features is the Grammar Bot, which provides grammar tips and corrections to help students understand and correct their mistakes. For paid users, the app allows you to ask teachers questions and receive answers in real time. Yes, while the app offers a lot of free features, some of them (teacher's guide and advanced lessons) are still available for a paid subscription.

Hello Talk: Connects users with native speakers of the language they are trying to learn. This is the app's feature. It is a great tool for practicing and getting to know spoken English. By communicating with native speakers, users can practice their skills in the here and now. Users have the ability to send text messages, voice messages, and even video calls to their teachers, which gives them the opportunity to practice continuously. The app provides chat translation, transliteration, and correction to facilitate communication and learning. There are communities where students can ask questions, share their learning experiences, and learn from each other [22]. However, the effectiveness of the app depends on how good the teacher is. Sometimes finding a good one can be a difficult task. The app does not offer grammar lessons or vocabulary building exercises. To use Hello Talk, you will need to download and set up an account. You will need to select the language you plan to learn and indicate your native language. The app then matches them with native English speakers who are learning your language. This way, users will communicate as needed, teaching each other.

Grammarly: An AI-powered writing assistant that corrects grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. While it's not a traditional language learning app, it can be an invaluable tool for those who aren't strong at writing [22]. Grammarly corrects errors in real time, helping users understand typos and learn as they write. Unlike basic spell checkers, this one understands the context of what you're writing and can correct the most complex inaccuracies. In addition to basic grammar and spelling, the app provides recommendations on how to write better to sound like a native speaker. And it suggests synonyms to improve word variety and help avoid repetition [22]. It also finds garbled text and suggests the correct citation. After creating an account, you can write directly in Grammarly's online editor or install the free Grammarly browser extension for Chrome, Safari, Firefox, or Edge. Grammarly will then automatically check your text as you type it into any text field in your web browser, including social media, email, and Google Docs. The app offers a free version with basic spelling, grammar, and punctuation recommendations [22].

Busuu: offers a well-structured curriculum that covers all aspects of the language, including vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Users can practice by recording and comparing their pronunciation with that of native speakers. Using social networks, you can also receive feedback on your written

and oral exercises from native speakers. The platform creates an individual curriculum based on the student's goals and motivates them to study. For Ukrainians, it gives 90 days of premium subscription, mostly due to the war in Ukraine, the validity periods are extended - this is officially confirmed by the founders of the platform. In addition to English, you can also study Polish, German, Spanish, French, Italian, and others. You can study a language on an online platform, as well as using mobile applications for iOS and Android. Busuu provides a certificate of completion of the course, which is recognized by McGraw-Hill Education, a respected educational company. The app has a lot of free content, but there are also lessons and grammar blocks that are only available with a premium subscription. And yes. Although users can leave and receive feedback, the platform does not support live communication [22].

Hi Native: The Hi Native app focuses on communicating with native speakers around the world on the principle of “here and now”. Users discuss the nuances of pronunciation and spelling rules, learn more about the culture of communication directly with native speakers. The app supports a wide format of learning, for example: how to pronounce certain phrases in English or another language, what is the difference between similar words, pronunciation features. Future international relations specialists ask questions, native speakers answer, explaining the basics of grammar, analyzing transcriptions, pronouncing sounds that are difficult to pronounce. This way, you can understand how the language is used in everyday life, and not be limited to examples from textbooks. The app also allows you to ask and answer questions in audio format, thereby practicing your pronunciation skills [22]. Future international relations professionals can specify the language and country in which they are asking a question. This way, you can get targeted help faster and better. For example, those learning English can indicate that they want to learn British or American English. The community encourages voting for helpful answers, ensuring that the best ones are freely available to everyone. Hi Native is ideal for language learners at any level. It is especially useful for those looking for quick feedback on questions of interest from native speakers.

IV Discussion

Application of different sources for English study is aimed to improve academic seekers knowledge in a relaxed environment. Users can request translations, pronunciation guides, and information about communication culture. Native speakers can suggest corrections to user suggestions. Questions can be tagged with specific languages and countries, which makes it easier to get answers that consider the specifics of the region. The community votes on answers, so the most useful ones are easy to find.

However, the quality of the answers may vary, since they are given by community members, not professional teachers. Also, while the application helps to familiarize yourself with the language, it cannot replace structured learning for beginners who need a foundation in grammar and vocabulary. The program is aimed more at those who want to hone their knowledge [22].

There is currently no such program that would perfectly teach all language skills. Each program has its advantages and disadvantages, and when learning a new language, you can combine several resources, so it is necessary to balance work with different programs that develop different skills. For example, Memrise is great for quickly learning new vocabulary, but it will not help you connect the learned words into sentences. For this, you may need a program for developing grammar skills (such as Learn English Grammar from the British Council) or a program that shows words in context (such as Fluentu). Many programs send students reminders to use them daily “to see progress” [16].

Programs are most effective when combined with other learning methods. If you combine learning in the programs with online foreign language lessons on appropriate resources, such as Preply, or classes in a traditional format [18].

It is worth noting that modern digital tools for developing foreign language key competencies should complement the educational process of practical classes in academic disciplines.

V Conclusion

The main goal of teaching English disciplines is the formation of foreign language competencies by involving modern innovative technologies, in particular Duolingo: a free platform with gamified lessons for learning many languages, which offers translation, listening and reading tasks; Busuu: a social network for

learning languages, where you can communicate with native speakers, perform exercises and receive feedback; platforms with individual lessons Preply: an online platform for finding tutors and conducting individual lessons, Promova: a Ukrainian educational product that combines a mobile application, a website and individual or group lessons with teachers, as well as specialized and additional resources Rosetta Stone - an application that focuses on immersion in a language without direct translation, Babbel: a platform offering interactive courses, in particular for learning English, Polish and German, BBC Learning English: A resource with interactive exercises, audio and video to improve listening, reading and vocabulary skills, Exam English: A platform for preparing for international exams such as IELTS and TOEFL.

According to the research conducted, there are several aspects, practical recommendations that should be considered when shaping English language competencies in the context of digitalization of the educational process of a modern university:

– ensure constant work with dictionaries during the formation of competencies of future specialists in international relations, because they not only stimulate foreign language speech, but also thinking in English and create a language environment, contribute to student autonomy and the development of critical thinking, form lexical and grammatical skills, communication skills and socio-cultural competence;

– actively introduce digital technologies into the educational process of forming foreign language communicative competence of future specialists in international relations;

– combine traditional and innovative methodologies and techniques for the formation of specialized and professional competencies (Hard-competencies) and universal-communicative (Soft-competencies) of future specialists in international relations in the context of university education;

– consider the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning in the process of creating a foreign language digital environment in order to effectively optimize the formation of competencies of future specialists in international relations;

– promote creative, independent, project-based educational and scientific activities of future specialists in international relations in order to create a simulated professional environment in the context of university education.

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