СМАРТФОН КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: ЗА И ПРОТИВ

И.С. Сидорчук

Белорусский государственный экономический университет
г. Минск, Республика Беларусь
E-mail: english1311@yandex.ru

В статье анализируется и методически обосновывается возможность использования цифровых технологий, в частности, мобильных телефонов для организации аудиторной и внеаудиторной работы студентов в процессе изучения иностранного языка; рассматриваются возможные проблемы, преимущества и недостатки; даются примеры заданий.

Ключевые слова: цифровые технологии; смартфон; инновации; языковые навыки; современные методы и инструменты; мотивация

Digitalization is transforming working, educational and other environments by using digital technologies as a tool to do some part of your regular work. Today digital technologies are evolving quickly and include websites, digital TV, smart phones, video streaming and blogs, social media, computers, tele- and video- conferencing, e-learning platforms, and many more. Some decade ago, using these tools was an

opportunity for English teachers and students. Now it has become a necessity. We are living in a digital world now. Smart and cell phones have become an integral part of students' everyday life. They have replaced a dictionary, a notebook, a book itself and what not. There are currently more than 4 billion cell phones in use worldwide among a global population of more than 7 billion. So, let's try to overview the educational value and potential of this digital technology in the English classroom.

Firstly, there are some obvious benefits of using smart phones in language teaching. Global educational establishments, including the British Broadcasting Corporation, believe that "the cell phone has taken learning to individuals, communities, and countries that were previously remote economically, socially, or geographically, for other educational interventions" [1, c.3], for example, developing countries in Asia, Africa or South America. Secondly, some digital tools (tele- and video-conferencing via computer or cell phone) enable teachers to reach their students wherever they are, so, they proved to be the only option and thus were on the upsurge in the lockdown year of 2020.

The first and the most essential criteria in using any educational tool are compliance and coherence with the main teaching principles and codes as well as its effectiveness and efficiency.

To integrate smart phones into the English lesson, one can utilize the following smart features of the cell phone:
- browsing the Internet (to find, to read, to cite, to translate, to check, to share information);
- recording, playing, downloading, storing video and audio files;
- taking, processing, editing, and storing pictures, screenshots and images;
- typing and sending instant messages;
- making chat rooms, groups, and communities online (Viber, Telegram etc.)

In terms of efficiency (minimizing time while maximizing outcomes), smart phones help because we don't need a specially equipped computer room if we are going to use online resources to practice some vocabulary on *Quizlet.com* or test something on *Master-test.net* or *Kahoot.com*. Computer rooms are not always accessible, well-equipped or well-organized. If we are doing a project, we don't need to bring a camera, a computer, or a tape-recorder, a smart phone can replace them all. And of course, nobody is going to write a paper letter, to switch on a laptop or even phone to ask for or share some information. Texting it will be fast and visual.

In terms of basic methodological principles, this digital technology has a big potential.

1. The principle of the student's personal involvement and active participation: it is guaranteed because students today are really spending most of their time online, in their virtual reality; they send dozens of messages, listen to voice mail, scroll through top news, send pictures and so on. They know it, they like it, so, why not use it as a tool for education?

2. The principle of novelty: if you start using smart phones in your class, students will face not only a new task wording (click instead of circle, type instead of write, etc.) but will also have to submit their tasks in a new format, for example, a video.

3. The principle of creativity and development: using smart phones in class is innovative in itself, but since students have a different level of digital competence and a natural desire to show they talents, they will definitely try to use any special applications, visual and audio effects, filters, stickers and many more. Being in the same class or chat room, students will develop both technically (new digital skills and tools) and intellectually (new ideas, points of view, sources, arguments, evidence).

4. The principle of connecting education to real life: nothing can be more real than spending your working day with a smart phone in your hand if you work out of the office as a stock broker, merchandiser, sales agent, production manager and the like. Today, if you have a smart phone in your pocket, you don't really need anything else to make out in your life.

5. The principle of activating various channels of perception: digital technology is no better than a classical lesson where students can see and hear the information, but using smart phones, you can do it as many times as you need without exhaustion.

6. The principle of visibility: everything said, written or demonstrated in the classroom can be either visualized via smart phones or recorded to be visualized later. For example, students can quickly find a picture of a person or a place you/they are talking about, can consult a dictionary if they come across a new word or want to know what the term means and they need to find it out on the spot.

7. The principle of intersubject communications: while using smart phones in some activity, students will definitely master and practice their digital and information technology skills.

8. The principle of considering students' age and personality characteristics: most our students belong to the 21st century, the age of digital and IT technologies, so, we can logically expect a high degree of receptiveness and responsiveness to a "smart" lesson; besides, this technology can help students reveal their talents and, particularly, to

overcome their shyness or the fear of public speaking, making a mistake, being slower or less knowledgeable than others, etc. For example, instead of speaking or presenting in class, students can be assigned to make a corresponding video and to send it to a group chart or as a personal message to their teacher. It works well as a consolidation or a test task on a topic. Thus, smart phones can encourage and involve all the students in some productive work, which is not usually achieved in the classroom, especially in mixed groups.

9. The principle of interconnecting oral and written speech: if you feel that your students don't practice writing in English often enough, texting on Viber, for example, can be helpful. You can ask your students a question and assign them to type their answers on Viber within 1 minute. As a result, all students have to answer, think about spelling and wording and in 1 minute you will have enough ideas for discussion visualized on the screen. So, we can replace the "I don't know what else to say" or "I agree" answers by the comparative discussion of what has been texted.

10. The principle of motivation and self-evaluation: all that has been said above leads to a logical conclusion – the motivational potential of smart technologies is rather high since it offers more freedom, self-actualization and independence to students who can dig up the knowledge themselves and share it with others in some innovative and creative way which psychologically increases the value of the task performed. Being interested in what they do, students are prone to self-evaluation and self-criticism which is possible because smart phones visualize everything that has been done.

The use of cell phone technology can improve communication and collaboration in the English classroom. There have been a number of successful projects with cell phones. A group of educators in China proved that the learning of vocabulary could be improved through the use of smart phones. One group of students received five words per day via a messaging application. A second group received 130 words on paper and they determined their own study schedule. It was found that students who received the words on their phones were more motivated to study small chunks of information released on a particular day. [2, c.208]

Smart phones can be used to practice all possible language skills: grammar, vocabulary, speaking and others. Following are the ideas of tasks that can be done with students of different levels.

1. "Describe a picture":
Beginners and Intermediate students
1.1. students bring the pictures of their family or friends, describe them, discuss them in groups;

1.2. students exchange the pictures of their family/friends, describe them and try to predict who and what this person is, compare it to real facts;

1.3. students make dialogues to discuss smb's appearance, character, occupation, outfit and improve their communication and vocabulary skills at a time;

1.4. students bring a picture from their family album showing any memorable moment of their life and tell a story that happened then and drill the Past Simple tense or the Present Continuous tense;

Advanced students

1.5. students take pictures of unusual/attractive people/places in your city/dishes/events, then describe them and explain their choice;

1.6. students make picture quizzes by taking a photo and inviting their mates to identify its name and location.

2. "English is everywhere":

Beginners and Intermediate students

2.1. ask students to spot English words, terms or phrases in their everyday life (in public places, in the street, on the transport, etc.) and take a picture, so that you could discuss their meaning and translation in class;

Advanced students

2.2. ask students to spot the mistakes in using English words in their everyday life and take pictures for further discussion.

3. "The word/phrase of the day":

Beginners and Intermediate students

3.1. send students a word/a group of synonyms/an idiom that they should learn on a particular day, ask them to look it up in a dictionary and write sentences with it;

Advanced students

3.2. ask students to choose a word/an idiom/a phrase/ a quotation of the day, illustrate its meaning and explain their choice by texting or recording a short piece of speech.

4. "Film a video"

Beginners and Intermediate students

4.1. students make a series of pictures on the topic (for example, "My Home Town", "My House/Flat/Room") and then a picture-caption story;

Advanced students

4.2. students make/stream and dub the video on a certain topic/problem/situation, comment on each other's videos;

4.3. ask students to create a digital story out of their videos and pictures, choose the best one and discuss the others.

5. "Improve your pronunciation"

5.1. using smart phones students can record their own pronunciation and compare it to the native speaker's online and improve theirs.

6. "Keep in touch and share"

Beginners and Intermediate students

6.1. invite students to communicate via smart phones by texting a piece of news, a useful ad or a link to some language resource, for example, on Viber; it allows everyone to make a contribution and expand their personal knowledge;

Advanced students

6.2. ask students to text or record and share their congratulations on various occasions, like public holidays and birthdays.

As such, smart phones can help language teachers and instructors bring innovations to their lessons, replace old-school and boring tasks by other assignments and activities that seem to be a real asset for a modern young person who is living and working at the age of total digitalization. Besides professional skills, students using their cell phones in education can gain and develop their personal features such as personal space and individual approach, confidence, creativity, freedom of choice and decision-making, initiative and many others.

A few words should also be said about the limits and obstacles to using smart phones in the classroom. The biggest problem is that most schools and teachers simply forbid using phones during the lesson because it distracts students, encourages them to cheat and undermines the teacher's credibility. But to reach the desired educational effect, using smart phones in the class should be carefully planned, organized and managed. As a teacher, you should set a clear goal and establish rules and guidelines for proper and improper use of phones during learning activities. Besides, we still have enough technical problems that often prevent us from using innovations actively in class: the Internet connection is weak, there is no free Wi-Fi available, some phone features and applications are charged, teachers themselves are not always phone-literate.

So, first of all, it's recommended to do the following: assess your own competence, get consent from the students and make it relevant to them and your teaching objectives. Only on these conditions smart phones will promote students' active participation and self-motivation, increase their speaking time and involvement, provide more learning possibilities, spice up your lessons and give advantage to you as a teacher.

БИБЛИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ ССЫЛКИ

1. Chiverton, S. Cell phones for low-resource environment / S. Chiverton //English Teaching Forum. – 2017. – Vol.55. – № 2 – P. 2-13.

2. Zhang, H., Song, W., Burston, J. Reexamining the effectiveness of vocabulary learning via mobile phones. / H. Zhang // Turkish Journal of Educational Technology. – 2011. – Vol.10. – P. 203-214.

SHALL WE GO SMART IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM?

I.S. Sidarchuk
Belarusian State Economic University
Minsk, Belarus
E-mail: english1311@yandex.ru

The article analyses and explains the educational value of using digital technologies, in particular, smart phones to organize the lesson and students' individual work; dwells on some possible problems, advantages and disadvantages of this tool and offers a number of assignments for the English classroom.

Keywords: digital technology; smart phone; innovation; language skills; modern tools and methods; motivation.