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# USING DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Abstract**. In the context of the English language teaching modernization and digitalization, the problem of using digital learning tools at English lessons in primary school has been revealed in the article. Besides, the transformation of English teaching policy and implementation of new approaches, forms, methods and teaching aids in young learners' learning, a great educational role of digital learning tools is outlined in the article. A thorough analysis of a number of pedagogical, psychological and methodological literature is made in order to state the topicality of the presented research and point out its theoretical basis. Special attention is paid to the didactic value of software tools for creating and designing English digital coursebooks. A wide range of advantages of digital coursebooks, such as creativity, technology, mobility, accessibility, convenience, interactivity, communicatively orientation and authenticity, is illustrated in a detailed analysis of student's project in the research. The pedagogical opportunities of using multimedia tools, in particular, video songs on YouTube channel, in the English language teaching is demonstrated by the author. A big number of video songs are suggested to be used at different stages at English lessons considering various educational goals. The article deals with the positive emotional and motivational influence of such multimedia tools use in teaching English as well as they ensure young learners' communicative activity and encourage them to learn English much more interesting and vigorously. In addition, the didactic potential of digital learning tools (software tools, multimedia tools and educational channels), which enable teacher and pupil interaction and the formation of all aspects of English communicative competence in the process of English teaching in primary school, is studied in the presented research.

**Keywords:** digital learning tools, English language teaching, young learners, primary school, software tools, multimedia tools, video songs.

**Statement of the problem.** The main aim of primary school education is the formation of ten competences determined by the Conception of the New Ukrainian School and Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning [1], [2]. According to the documents, foreign language communicative competence (FLCC) and digital competence (DC) are included in the list. In the context of globalisation, informatisation and digitalisation of education both of these competences are of agreat value nowadays, in particular in the process of the English language teaching (ELT) to primary school learners.

Having analyzed thoroughly a new syllabus of ELT in primary school, it should be pointed out that online interaction is presented as a new kind of pupils' activity at the lesson [3]. Due to that, pupils' FLCC can be formed simultaneously with DC during the ELT in primary school. For this purpose, the teacher should enrich traditional activities with interactive ones at English lessons, using

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new approaches, forms, methods and digital learning tools and improving the process of ELT in primary school.

Unquestionably, a modern English teacher of the 21 century should possess a sufficient level of DC to use skillfully and creatively new technical aids, involving English websites, educational channels, online platforms, multimedia resources and digital learning tools in ELT to young learners.

Analysis of the recent publications. That's why the latest scientific and methodological publications (L. Kalinina, O. Ovcharuk, I. Ivaniv, O. Khomyshak) are devoted to the problem of teacher and pupil's DC formation and development in the conditions of educational system modernization. The theoretical issues of using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in educational institutions are highlighted in the research by Yu. Bykov, M. Vember, R. Hurevych, M. Zhaldak, M. Kademiya, V. Lapinskyi, N. Morze, O. Spirin, V. Kukharenko and others. A wide range of modern Ukrainian and foreign scholars (T. Koval, S. Nikolaeva, L. Morska, Ye. Polat, O. Shestopal, J. Hammer, J. Socket, S. Steel, et al.) study methodology of ICTs use inthe process of formation of FLCC. Different aspects of the developing of professional and methodological training of future foreign language teachers of primary school are analyzed by Ukrainian researchers (O. Bihych, O. Karpyuk, O. Kotenko, S. Roman, O. Parshykova, N. Redko, I. Samoylyukevych, et al.) in their recent publications. Many psychological studies (P. Bolonskyi, I. Zymnya, L. Levitov, H. Lyublinska, O. Skrypchenko, L. Vyhotskyi) are dedicated to a detailed analysis of foreign language learning to primary school pupils.

Nevertheless, the issue of using digital learning tools in ELT to young learners is not thoroughly determined and concerned in modern scientific research. The purpose of the article is to illustrate the ways of using digital learning tools in ELT in primary school on the basis of our teaching experience.

**Research methods**. For this purpose, theoretical and empirical methods were used. A big number of scientific methodological, psychological and pedagogical literature was critically analyzed to state the theoretical basis of the research. With the aim of the improvement of the process of ELT using new teaching aids in primary school the best foreign teaching experience was taken into consideration in our article.

Research results. The modern school educational system is constantly transforming as well as digital learning tools enable the teacher and pupil's interaction at the lesson. Nowadays in the digital era, the teacher is not the only source of knowledge that is open-access on the Internet. It is not enough to know a lot today, it is of vital importance to be able to use the theoretical knowledge in solving problems of everyday life [4, 126]. Unquestionably, the integration of digital learning tools has changed traditional face-to-face learning to e-learning and/or blended learning encouraging teacher and learner's self-education.

From this point of view, the development of education is characterized by competence-based approach, in particular, in ELT, ensuring the formation and development of key and subject-matter competences. A wide range of laws (the State Standard of General Primary Education, The New Ukrainian School Conception) has determined a crucial role of ten competences for lifelong learning, among which are: literacy competence, multilingual competence, mathematical competence, competence in science and technology, digital competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, entrepreneurship competence, civic competence, ecological competence, cultural awareness and expression competence. It should be noticed that all these competences are important and closely interconnected with each other [1].

In the context of ELT competence-based approach promotes theintegration of ten key competences in the process of foreign language teaching to young learners in primary school. Moreover, in the new syllabus of ELT pupils' ability of online interaction is outlined [3, 77]. Due to that, foreign language communicative competence and digital one should be formed simultaneously as well as the process of ELT is impossible without digital learning tools use in modern conditions [4, 127].

Many modern psychologists (W. Straus, N. Hove, B. Shaw, Ch. Carter, Ye. Shamis, A. Sapa, J. Katz, S. Popova) state that children born in the 21 century are the representatives of the new

generation Alpha (born in the early 2012s) who consider technologies (smartphones, Internet and social media) to be integral parts of everyday life [5]. That's why using digital learning tools in the educational process is quite natural and effective for these children.

Dealing with ELT to young learners in primary school it should be highlighted that the most part of contemporary English coursebooks has got audio support for listening activities and pronunciation practice at the lesson. Some of them, in particular, the latest coursebooks (*Quick Minds, Smart Junior, English with smiling Sam*), include DVD, video and multimedia materials, online additional resources, etc.

Having taken it into account, we worked out aselective course "New approaches in English teaching in Primary School" for future primary school English teachers' training. Special attention is paid to digital learning tools integration in ELT in it as well as they ensure pupils' online interaction as a new kind of communicative activity at the English lesson. Moreover, the students of the Faculty of Primary Education and Arts of Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University deal with modern approaches to foreign language teaching, modern teaching aids, typology of lessons, technologies of ELT in primary school according to the course syllabus. Therefore, to ensure relevant methodological training of future English teachers we suggest learning new digital learning tools and methods of their usage for effective formation of FLCC of pupils at the lesson.

That is why, we would like to illustrate our pedagogical experience, in particular, of digital learning tools presentation, practice and production in the course teaching. First of all, it should be said that at the lecture we reveal students' knowledge of the main teaching aids in ELT, their classification with the help of mind mapping. Then students make notes on various digital learning tools, provide the definitions for them and put down their samples in the copybooks. While watching the video lessons (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bUPqVsH\_Xs) suggested by the university teacher, they learn the technical characteristics of such digital tools as CourseLab, FlipPDF, StoryJumper, etc. A brief review of these learning tools is given:

- **CourseLab** (http://www.courselab.com/view\_doc.html) is a powerful, yet easy-to-use, elearning authoring **tool** that offers a programming-free WYSIWYG environment for creating high-quality interactive e-learning content that can be published on the Internet, Learning Management Systems (LMS), CD-ROMs and other devices [6].
- **StoryJumper** (https://www.storyjumper.com)— the easiest way to create, narrate, and publish your hardcover and digital books. It makes creating a story book fun and easy with innovative story creation tools. Using that digital tool students can design characters, pick expressions, clothes and colors, add voice and produce video books. At last, they can become a published author, sharing their books and getting positive feedback from the world community [7].
- Flip PDF (https://www.flipbuilder.com/flip-pdf/) is a powerful digital flipbook maker that allows you to convert static PDFs/images into HTML5 flipbooks at the fastest speed. One can add page audio (voice assistant), table of contents, bookmark, and other interactive elements to engage your audience; customize branding options and privacy settings easily; share his or her flipbook on social media after uploading it to a server; publish it as HTML, EXE, APP, APK, or plug-in file and distribute to multiple devices. Flip PDF Plus empowers anyone to create flipbooks that work beautifully in any browser, on any device [4, 132], [8].

Thus, watching the options of the presented tools in the video lessons, students consider their pros and cons and select one to accomplish a professionally oriented project work. The task is to make a project of a worksheet of digital English coursebook for primary school learners. The aim of creating such a digital learning tool is to improve the process of FLCC formation of primary school pupils by enriching the basic coursebook with additional digital materials.

Summing up the results of the selective course learning at the faculty of Primary Education and Arts, we suppose the project work done by A.-M. Melnykovych is worth attention. The digital English coursebook for primary school learners created by the student was made with Storyjumper use. The teaching material suggested in the book is well-structured and based on the video song "The Wheels on the Bus" (https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/songs/the-wheels-the-bus?\_ga=

2.217350751.) as well as it is easy-to-sing and loved by young learners [9]. The author of the book has marked on the cover page that the song is interesting for children and attracts their attention.



Fig. 1. The front page of the digital coursebook

First of all, the student suggestsguessing the song title according to the pictures presented on page 1 in the coursebook. Then young learners are to listen to the song and say who can ride a bus, choosing among people and animals given on page 2.



Fig. 2. Screenshot of page 2 of the digital coursebook

After that pupils listen to the song once more and read the suggested words putting them in the order they appear in the text on page 3. In such a way young learners enrich their vocabulary and practice it.

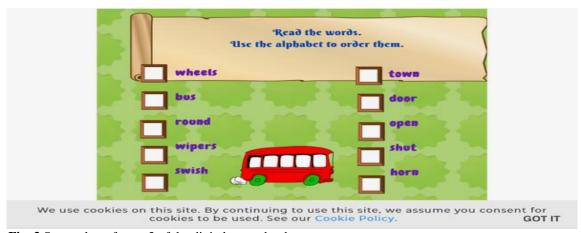


Fig. 3 Screenshot of page 3 of the digital coursebook

The next task is to complete the song by matching test on page 4.



Fig. 4 Screenshot of page 4 of the digital coursebook

After that, the author of the digital book suggests answering the questions in order to state the level of pupils' comprehension of the song. The last page of the digital coursebook presents the words of the song. Accordingly, young learners should read, sing and learn the song "The Wheels on the Bus".

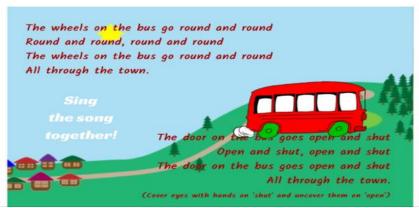


Fig. 5 Screenshot of page 5 of the digital coursebook

Having illustrated and analyzed the sample pages of student's digital coursebook created using Storyjumper, we can point out that the suggested vocabulary and communicative exercises are aimed at pupils' English communicative competence formation in primary school.

In general, the process of ELT in primary school is characterized by specifics of formation and development of pupils' cognitive interests, behavior, emotional and motivational features, in a particular mode of learning and manner of speech activities. That is why, psychophysiological features of young learners should be taken into account in ELT at the initial stage of school education. Due to a high level of emotions, the learning process can be facilitated with the multimedia tools which ensure better effective reception and memorization of foreign language materials using audio, video, static or dynamic images, etc. Thus, the usage of vivid multimedia in ELT to primary school pupils enables the teacher to concentrate their attention much longer and effectively with the aim of FLCC formation.

Based on our teaching experience and a thorough review of a wide range of multimedia tools on the Internet, we should outline a big number of video songs for young learners on YouTube presented by various foreign educational channels for kids (e.g. Happy Kids TV, Super Simple Songs, Cocomelon, Kids TV, Bounce Patrol, Pingfong, Dave and Ava, ChuChuTV, etc.).

It should be noticed that many psychologists prove songs and chants to be of great educational value in ELT to young learners as well asthey help create a foreign language learning environment and learn English intuitively. For this purpose, video songs should be vigorously used at English

lessons, in particular in the conditions of the New Ukrainian School. Pupils of primary school should listen, watch, sing and learn video songs at different stages of the lesson to involve them in foreign language atmosphere, learning melody, or rhythm, or practicing phonetics, vocabulary, grammar or communication.

For example, at the beginning of the lesson, we can use an interesting and corresponding song "Hello, hello" (https://supersimple.com/song/hello-hello/) for listening, singing and acting [10]. Learning this song pupils get learned to greet each other, ask about somebody's feelings and interact in everyday life at the elementary level.

it" One more video "If you happy and you know (https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/songs/if-youre-happy-and-you-know-it?) should be mentioned as well as it is interactive and pretty loved by children [11]. The teacher starts learning the song according to the PPP (presentation, practice and production) method. If the children have learned the song she/he could suggest singing the song faster and faster to stir things up. In this way young learners will soon be out of breath and ready for the next activity.

Unquestionably, we can use video songs as basic teaching material in ELT due to the syllabus of primary school. For example, while learning the topic "Animals" we can use such video songs as "Old MacDonald had a farm" (https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/songs/old-macdonald-had-farm), "Walking in the jungle" (https://supersimple.com/song/walking-in-the-jungle/), "Baby shark" (https://supersimple.com/article/baby-shark/) and others, dealing with a great number of animals to know [12], [13], [14]. With the aim of learning primary school pupils to count in English, we can suggest the video songs such as "Five little ducks" (https://supersimple.com/song/five-little-ducks/), "Five little monkeys" (https://supersimple.com/song/five-little-monkeys/), "1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive" (http://www.nurserytracks.com/Counting\_songs.htm), etc. [15], [16], [17]. The suggested video songs are aimed at lexical and grammar competences formation of primary school learners.

Moreover, it should be added, that with the aid of video song material we can form pupils' sociolinguistic competence as an integral part of communicative competence in ELT in primary school. For this purpose, we would like to illustrate our experience of ELT to young learners. There was held a workshop "Christmas Tree" on the occasion of Christmas with primary school pupils. At the beginning of the event, the children got learned about Christmas traditions and greeting in the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Then we demonstrated to them a traditional Christmas Tree made as a sample tree before the workshop and decorated with a star and presents. After that pupils had to paint and decorate the Christmas Tree of their own, listening and watching to the well-known Christmas video songs "Merry Christmas" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNkvV4PR-q0), "Jingle Bells" (:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ34DSTjsLQ), "We wish you a merry Christmas" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO06dK2Lv9WM) [18], [19], [20].



Fig. 6. Photo credit of the workshop "Christmas Tree"

In this way the music was used to set time limits for task accomplishment and create a positive festive atmosphere in the process of Christmas Tree making. The practical aim of the event was to

form pupils' sociolinguistic competence, enrich their vocabulary, informing them about English culture and traditions, and develop their artistic habits and aesthetic values. As a result, the educational goals of the workshop were achieved and emotion-driven young learners were satisfied with an unusual type of ELT at school.



Fig. 7. Photo credit of the workshop "Christmas Tree"

**Conclusions.** Summing up a thorough analysis of modern psychological, linguodidactic and methodolodical literature, new tendencies in education and approaches to ELT, we should point out a great pedagogical potential of digital learning tools in the process of foreign language learning in primary school. The new teaching aids involve such digital learning tools as software tools, online platforms, multimedia and educational channels, ensuring a particular didactic value for young learners' English communicative competence formation according to their age, interests and cognitive abilities.

Based on the presented future English teacher's digital coursebook, we can draw the conclusion that modern software tools and online platforms enable teachers to create their digital materials, digitise English coursebook and enrich the content of the traditional paper book with authentic information using multimedia tools (e.g. video and dynamic images). The suggested digital learning tool, the Storyjumper software programme, for creating and designing digital coursebooks is characterized by a number of advantages: creativity, technology, mobility, accessibility, convenience, interactivity, communicatively orientation and authenticity.

A great educational role of video song material in ELT is determined as well as young learners' speech activities depend greatly on their emotions and motivation. The suggested list of video songs on YouTube is characterized by interest and popularity among primary school pupils and can be used at different stages of English lessons (e.g. as a warming-up activity, relaxation pause, time limits, or basic material for teaching vocabulary or grammar, communication).

The illustrated procedure of Christmas Tree production in the process of video songs listening on YouTube during the held workshop proves digital learning tools contribution to the formation of young learners' English communicative competence effectively, in particular, sociolinguistic competence as an integral part of it.

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## ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ЦИФРОВИХ ІНСТРУМЕНТІВ У НАВЧАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ У ПОЧАТКОВІЙ ШКОЛІ

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Анотація. У контексті модернізації та диджиталізації англомовної освіти актуалізовано проблему використання цифрових інструментів на уроці англійської мови у початковій школі. Крім цього, у статті окреслено трансформаційні процеси у сфері англомовної освітньої політики та імплементацію нових форм, методів, засобів навчання, а також освітнє значення використання цифрових інструментів у навчанні англійської мови. Здійснено ретельний аналіз психологопедагогічної та методичної літератури задля теоретичного обґрунтування основних положень наукового дослідження. Особлива увага акцентована на дидактичній цінності програмних засобів навчання для створення та розробки цифрового посібника з англійської мови. На основі аналізу студентської проєктної роботи проілюстровано низку переваг цифрового посібника, а саме: креативність, технологічність, мобільність, доступність, зручність, інтерактивність, комунікативна спрямованість та автентичність. У статті розкрито педагогічні можливості використання пісенного мультимедійного матеріалу, зокрема відео пісень на каналі YouTube, у навчанні англійської мови учнів початкової школи. Запропоновано низку відео пісень, які можуть бути використані на різних етапах уроку з англійської мови у початковій школі залежно від поставленої мети. У розвідці підкреслено позитивну емоційну та мотиваційну роль пісенного відео матеріалу, оскільки сучасні мультимедійні засоби навчання сприяють англомовній комунікативній діяльності учнів і заохочують їх до цікавого та жвавого вивчення англійської мови. У результаті дослідження встановлено дидактичний потенціал таких цифрових інструментів, як програмні та мультимедійні засоби навчання, освітні канали, що забезпечують взаємодію учителя та учня, а також формування усіх складників англомовної комунікативної компетентності учнів початкової школи у процесі навчання англійської мови.

**Ключові слова:** цифрові інструменти, навчання англійської мови, молодші школярі, початкова школа, мультимедійні засоби навчання, пісенний відео матеріал.

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