

**ГУЛИСТОН ДАВЛАТ УНИВЕРСИТЕТИ**

**Инглиз тили ва адабиёти кафедраси**

**Information technologies in developing Grammar Competence of an English  
language learner (on the example of free online applications)**

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## **Introduction**

The English language has become the main language of world communication, therefore the number of its learners is increasing rapidly. The motivation of learners of English varies. Some people need English for their work, some for travelling, some are interested in the culture of English-speaking countries, and there is a large group of learners that have to study English as a part of their school curriculum. The process of English language learning comprises of acquiring vocabulary, grammatical rules, correct pronunciation, etc. This thesis concentrates chiefly on teaching and learning English grammar through on-line applications.

**Topicality of the research.** For many people grammar is synonymous with learning the grammatical forms, and it is often associated with rules, drills, red ink, and boredom. In my teacher practice I found it slightly difficult to find good ways to teach grammar, apart from the fairly traditional approaches of presenting the grammar on the board and letting the pupils perform a few grammar tasks, the way in which I was taught English grammar at school. Still, grammar is significant in order to learn to use English not only correctly, but also appropriately and meaningfully. Although there are many ways in which this could have been accomplished, I decided to examine the grammar tasks provided in on-line applications.

**The aim of the research** is to study different on-line applications and their usefulness in language learning, especially in grammar.

The following **tasks of the research** were set before the research:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of ICT in English grammar teaching compared to printed teaching materials?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of traditional grammar teaching?

What are the teachers' and students' views on on-line apps?

**Scientific scrutiny of the research.** During the preparation of the research paper we studied lots of book by different researches such as: Broughton

Geoffrey's "Teaching English as a Foreign Language", P. Elbow's "Grammar without teachers", J. Higgins "The computer and grammar teaching" and etc.

**Novelty of the research** is new investigation of apps which has not been carried out in our country so far.

**Methods of Investigation.** During writing our work we used methods of literature analysis, descriptive, comparative methods and the translational method in working with the literature.

**Object of the research** is English grammar.

**Subject of the research** is developing Grammar Competence through on-line applications .

**Scientific value of the research** the results of investigation, which are useful both for teachers and students.

**Structure of the qualification work.** The paper consists of introduction, the main body with its two chapters: theoretical and practical, conclusion and the list of used literature.

## **Chapter I. Teaching Grammar**

### **1.1. Definition of grammar**

There are several ways to define grammar, and many have written definitions of grammar, based on for example their view on language. One definition, which is found in Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar, says that grammar is “the entire system of a language, including its syntax, morphology, semantics and phonology”.<sup>1</sup> Other definitions, often popularly used, include the structural rules of a language, but exclude vocabulary, semantics and phonology. Whether a definition of grammar comprises structural aspects only, or whether it also covers semantics and functions, depends strongly on the current view on language and learning. This will be exemplified later in this chapter by looking at some of the various approaches to grammar teaching over the past century. The term grammar is also used in the sense of a book containing rules of grammar, or it can be used as an individual’s application of the rules. In this thesis I will not give attention to the two latter, but rather focus on grammar as a language system and how grammar is used for communication and to make meaning.

Characteristic for the field is that there have been shifting views on grammar teaching. These shifts are often described as pendulum swings between two main views, i.e. between teaching the function of grammar and the forms of grammar. At the one extreme, grammar is a fundamental part of language teaching, with mastering of grammar as the aim of the teaching. At the other extreme, grammar has little or no place at all in language teaching. Throughout the history of grammar teaching, one extreme often has replaced the other.

The two definitions of grammar presented below, both written by Ur with a time span of twenty years, illustrate some differences between these two views. Although there are traces of the importance of meaning and communication in both definitions, the first is more focused on the rules and forms of grammar, whereas

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<sup>1</sup> Chalker S., Weiner E. Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar. – New York, Oxford University Press. 1994 – p. 177.

the second has a clearer focus on grammar as a means to express meaning acceptably and appropriately.

Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning (...). There is a set of rules which govern how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: we may say that a learner who ‘knows grammar’ is one who has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in what would be acceptable language forms.<sup>1</sup>

Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone. These include the way ideas are grouped and related, and the purposes of utterances (statement, question, request, etc). Grammar may also serve to express time relations, singular/plural distinctions and many other aspects of meaning. There are rules which govern how words have to be manipulated and organized so as to express these meanings: a competent speaker of the language will be able to apply these rules so as to convey his or her chosen meaning effectively and acceptably.

In the first definition, central words are “mastering” of the language, “rules” and “forms”, whereas significant phrases in the second definition are “express meanings”, “purposes of utterances” and “aspects of meaning”. Summer says that the second definition implies that “we are moving towards a perception of a meaning-oriented concept of pedagogical grammar that considers rules as an aid to expressing meaningful language”.<sup>2</sup>

Where linguistic grammar is concerned with what grammar is and how it works, pedagogical grammar is more specifically concerned with how grammar is described for learning purposes and how it should be taught in the EFL

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<sup>1</sup> Ur P. Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide For Teachers. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1998. – p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Summer T. An Evaluation of Methodological Options for Grammar Instruction in EFL Textbooks: Are Methods Dead? – Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter. 2011. – p. 22.

classroom. In other words, pedagogical grammar is grammar developed for learners of a foreign language. According to Newby the main issues discussed in pedagogical grammar are:

- the aims of grammar teaching (knowing about grammar or using grammar; manipulating sentences or free production)
- the categorisation of grammar (form, meaning, use) into units which will form a syllabus or teaching objectives
- the extent to which grammar should be dealt with separately from other aspects of language
- the use of rules, in particular in how far a conscious focus on grammar rules assists acquisition
- the type of grammatical exercises and activities and tasks which will lead to automatization<sup>1</sup>

An important, but often avoided, question when it comes to grammar teaching is: what are the aims of grammar teaching? The way in which grammar is taught, influences how the pupils learn grammar. The aims of grammar learning are formulated in the following way:

The overall aim of learning grammar is to be able to express your own ideas in real situations in language that is as correct, meaningful and appropriate as possible. It is the teacher's task to facilitate this grammatical skill with the maximum efficiency.

Newby stresses language performance; the meaningfulness of grammar; a realistic view on grammatical correctness; and the teacher's role in finding appropriate methodology for the learning of grammar and language. The aims of grammar learning should be reflected in the way grammar is taught. In the citation below, Ellis broadly defines grammar teaching as any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it

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<sup>1</sup> Newby D. Pedagogical Grammar. In M. Byram (ed.) Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning. – London, Routledge. 2000. – p. 1.

helps them either to understand grammar metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it.<sup>1</sup>

The outcome of grammar teaching can be, according to this definition, both learning of formal grammar with a focus on the structures of the language, and/or learning of the ability to use grammar in practice. Throughout the history of language teaching there have been shifting views on how to teach grammar. However, the teaching of grammar can be defined broadly as any instructional technique used in order to learn grammar.

In this thesis grammar is thought of as pedagogical grammar. I shall not go into linguistic details about particular grammatical features and how grammar works. What is of interest here is how the grammar tasks in the textbooks are designed according to some criteria, which are mentioned in the introductory chapter and will be explained in greater detail in chapter three. All the tasks which are included in the grammar parts or under the grammar headlines in the textbooks are included in the analysis. Some of these tasks are not really grammar tasks per se (e.g. they have more to do with mathematics than language). This applies to very few tasks, and will be commented further upon in chapter three.

## **1.2. Definition of Terms**

The following glossary explains the computer terminology and other terms that appear throughout this study:

**Application (app):** An app is a type of software that allows you to perform specific tasks. Applications for desktop or laptop computers are sometimes called desktop applications, and those for mobile devices are called mobile apps. When you open an application, it runs inside the operating system until you close it.

**Browser:** Application software used for browsing through and accessing graphical interactive information on the World Wide Web. e.g. Netscape Navigator, Mosaic.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellis R. *The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum. New Perspectives on Grammar Teaching in Second Language Classrooms.* – New York, Routledge. 2002. – p. 17-34.

**Computer-mediated communication (CMC):** the use of one or more computers to mediate or facilitate communication between two or more people.

**Cyberspace:** It refers to the collective realms of computer-aided communication.

**ESL/EFL:** Acronyms for English as a Second language (where English is the official language) /English as a Foreign Language (where English is not the official language but taught widely as a school subject)

**Home Page:** The startup page of a site, containing identity and index information.

It is a hypermedia document on the web.

**HTML (HyperText Markup Language):** A language in which web pages are formatted and web information is distributed.

**Hypermedia:** A method of presenting information in discrete units, or nodes, that are connected by links. The information may be presented using a variety of media such as text, graphics, audio, video, animation, image or executable documentation.

**Hypertext:** Links (URLs) embedded in words or phrases allow the user to select (e.g. mouse click) text and immediately display related information and multimedia material.

**The Internet:** It is the global network of computers that communicate using a common language. There are over thirty million people that have e-mail access to the Internet.

**Modem (MODulator-DEModulator):** A device connects a computer to a telephone line enabling digital data to be transmitted over phone lines.

**Multimedia:** Computer systems that integrate audio, video and data.

**Perspective:** It is a combination of beliefs and behaviors, points of views, which serve as a basis for the actions that an individual constructs.

**Synchronous:** Communication between individuals that occurs in real-time (as in face-to-face conversation).

URL (Uniform Resource Locator): The form of the site address that reveals the name of the server where the site's files are stored, the file's directory path, and its file name.

Usenet (USEer NETwork): Internet newsgroups, which allow the posting and reading of messages on a bulleting board, (e.g., misc.education.language.english)

WWW (World Wide Web or The Web): Hypertext-based system for accessing various resources on the Internet.

Limitations. One of the main limitations of the study was that most of the Web addresses (URLs) were accurate only during the time the study was conducted. This is due to the fact that Web site addresses are subject to change without notice, and sometimes Web sites merge. Besides, this study was limited only to one university-level adult ESL group who was using the Web resources as a supplementary tool for ESL instruction of grammar. Besides, the Web site NetGrammar had not had a pilot study at the time of the study. Another limitation of this study was that the participants were volunteers and that caused problems because three of the participants withdrew from the study at the end of the semester.

The assumptions basic to this study required that all participating students possessed basic computer skills and Internet knowledge. All participants had basic skills at using electronic mail and the Web. At the same time, participating individuals were free to withdraw from this project at any time and were willing to take part regardless of a grade as a reward.

### **1.3. To teach or not to teach grammar**

The question whether to teach grammar in language classes has aroused educators. Thornbury looks at the issue with a compromise solution when he names cases both for teaching grammar and against it. Let us now have a look at some of his points more closely.

The case for grammar. Thornbury gives seven arguments for putting grammar into the foreground in foreign language teaching. Here are some of them:

- the sentence-machine argument

Part of the process of second language learning is item-learning, which is putting words and phrases into one's memory. However, memory has its limits and there comes the moment when the learner needs to use some grammar rules to be able to produce new sentences. Thus grammar is necessary for conveying the intended meaning.

- the fossilisation argument

Thornbury means that when motivated students with a high ability for learning languages achieve a certain level of proficiency without formal study, it is often hard for them to progress beyond this level. "To put it technically, their linguistic competence fossilises." Such a situation definitely speaks for certain formal study, even if it was self-directed study.

- the advance-organiser argument

The grammar rules and patterns one learns can have a delayed effect. When, for example, a learner communicates with native speakers of the target language, he can perceive that certain grammatical items capture his attention. He simply notices them because these were the grammatical items he learned in his language classes. Therefore, as Thornbury concludes, noticing is a condition needed for acquisition.<sup>1</sup>

- the rule-of-law argument

Since grammar is a system of rules, the learning and teaching of it can be known as transmission. The rules and facts are transferred from the teacher to the learners. Such a kind of teaching and learning is typical for schools, or institutions, that appreciate rules and discipline. It can be of great value for unmotivated groups of teenagers. Thornbury adds that the pure experience of the target language through communication is not enough.

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<sup>1</sup> Thornbury S. How to Teach Grammar. – Pearson, Longman. 1999. – p. 2-15.

Similarly, Thornbury gives several cases against teaching grammar. Let us scrutinize some of them.

- the knowledge-how argument

Contrary to the last case for grammar, Thornbury suggests that enough exposure and chances to communicate in the target language are more desirable than the knowledge of grammatical rules. He calls this learning-by-doing experiential learning.

- the communication argument

There have been arguments that knowing the grammar of the target language is not sufficient. The proponents of Communicative Language Teaching have implied that communicative competence consists of more than just linguistic competence, e.g. grammatical knowledge. As Thornbury remarks, “Communicative competence involves knowing how to use the grammar and vocabulary of the language to achieve communicative goals, and knowing how to do this in a socially appropriate way.”

- the acquisition argument

In this argument against grammar the author expands on the fact that children learn their mother tongue without explicit learning of any grammar rules. He then assumes that it should also hold true for second language learning. Thornbury cites Krashen, who implies that there is a difference between learning and acquisition. The former is influenced by grammar instruction and is not very useful for real communication, while the latter is the core of success in a second language. Acquisition is a natural process when the learner is in contact with native speakers, therefore he has the right exposure of the target language.

- the lexical chunks argument

As was mentioned earlier, second language learning entails item-learning, which means ability to remember whole phrases, idioms, e.g. chunks of language. Subsequent unpacking of the stored chunks and putting them under analysis brings success not only in the first language acquisition but also in the second language

learning. Hence we have seen the proposition of the Lexical Approach in the last decades, where the importance lies in learning collocations and chunks.

#### **1.4. Competence and performance**

This chapter deals with a crucial question regarding second or foreign language learning: What does it mean to learn a language? Also the question whether it is possible to decide definitely what a learner might know of a language independently of his performance in the target language is examined.

As Gillian Brown states, there were two scholars who have assisted to structure the way we think about the language today, namely Saussure and Chomsky. They began to use expressions like *langage/ langue/ parole* and *competence/ performance* respectively. The latter two notions will be of crucial importance to this thesis. Brown<sup>1</sup> cites Chomsky who expresses clearly that ideal speakers/listeners who master their language perfectly are unaffected by any memory limitations, distractions, changes of attention and interest, and particularly, errors in making use of their knowledge of language in actual performance. Chomsky thus infers that there is a basic difference between “‘competence’ (the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of the language) and ‘performance’, the actual use of language in concrete situations’.

Contributors to the article about competence and performance at Wikipedia<sup>2</sup> claim that Chomsky distinguishes competence from performance, where competence is an idealized capacity and performance is the production of actual utterances. It is only under the above- mentioned idealized situations when performance is a direct reflection of competence. Thus, the authors of the article suggest, there is a fundamental difference between competence and performance.

In the introduction chapter of the book *Performance and Competence in Second Language Acquisition* Brown also cites Ellis, who suggests that the

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<sup>1</sup> Brown G., Malmkjaer K., Williams J. *Performance and Competence in Second Language Acquisition*. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1996. – p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/linguistic\\_competence#competence\\_versus\\_performance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/linguistic_competence#competence_versus_performance)

competence of the second-language learner is more variable than that of the native speaker, since in the case of the former interlanguage plays a crucial role. Ellis further explains that learner's competence is variable, because second language acquisition involves change, which can happen when new forms are added to the actual system and this leads to a stage where two forms are used by the learner in a given linguistic context.

To examine the competence/ performance theory in practice, both groups of the observed students were assigned a writing task - which was designed so as to cover the past, the present and the future verb forms in English. Their task was to describe their last summer holidays, to write a paragraph about their daily routine and to speculate about their future. The results of this task were quite surprising. Apart from mistakes in spelling, prepositions, articles, quantifiers, the use of capital letters and word order, some of the students were not successful in using the basic verb tenses correctly. Although working with an intermediate-level textbook, the students did not use the first form of the verb appropriately (e.g. *\*I am going sleep at 11:30 p.m.* instead of *I go to sleep at 11:30 p.m.*, or *\*When I came back, I have a shower.* instead of *When I come back, I have a shower.*) The second form of the verb was not used correctly many times, e.g. *\*Last week we have Camp Olympic Games.* instead of *Last week we had Camp Olympic Games.* As far as the future verb forms are concerned, the students struggled both with the form and the use of the correct verb forms, as in *\*I think that will be change every second.* instead of *I think that will change every second.*, or *\*But maybe I am going to be homeless.* instead of *But maybe I will be homeless.* One student expressed herself using a passive structure (predominantly, students avoid the Passive Voice), however, incorrectly. (*\*Its organize FTVS UK.* instead of *It's organized by FTVS UK.*) Regarding modal auxiliaries, the students made a lot of mistakes since the majority of them had not encountered them before. The incorrect modal-auxiliary use being, for example, *\*I did not can do anything.* instead of *I could not to anything.*, or *\*I may not can have a family.* instead of *I may not be able to have a*

*family*. It should be clear now that the results of this writing task show us the students' real use of English – their performance. Despite both being written tasks, the students' usual results in ready-made discrete tests are much better. This probably results from the fact that the tests are commonly gap-filling or matching exercises, where the students do not have to produce longer texts. Thus the discrepancy between the students' competence (tests) and performance (utterances or essays).

To support the output, the students were assigned another task, this time strictly verb-filling grammar exercises. The first part was designed according to Lewis's distinction of English verb tenses and the other was comprised of sentences with the nine basic modal auxiliary verbs (see Appendix I). Evidently, it can be inferred that when more than fifty per cent of students find certain language areas difficult, the teacher should take some action. In this case, the problematic verb areas for the students were: the Passive Voice, expressing the future, the Past Continuous tense, the Past Perfect tense and modal auxiliaries, particularly *might* and *may*. Since results of tests show the learner's knowledge of the target language, we can speak about competence; in the case of the observed students their competence having certain gaps. Moreover, within the course of English lessons in these two classes, the students occasionally fail to use the basic tenses accurately despite their fluency in speaking and writing.<sup>1</sup>

As was mentioned earlier, one of the aspects of language learning is the student's competence. Another attempt was made to find out more about the observed students' real knowledge of the basic verb forms. In a communicative activity, the students, working in pairs, asked and answered questions concerning the self-evaluation of their knowledge of the main verb forms that Michael Lewis has proposed in his book *The English Verb: An Exploration of Structure and Meaning*. These verb forms were: the first, the second and the third form of the verb, continuous forms, the Future, the Passive Voice and modal auxiliaries

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<sup>1</sup> Palmer Frank Robert. *The English Verb*. – London, New York, Longman. 1988. – p. 173.

respectively. Not only forming these structures was scrutinized, but also the students' ability to express themselves politely when using these verb forms was asked to consider. The students were also asked to say whether they think about grammar when speaking/ writing and reading/ listening.

Although there is a year of study at grammar school between these two groups of students, the results were almost identical. The majority of the students (14 students in total participated in answering the competence/ performance questionnaire) expressed their belief that they have almost no problems with the first and second form of the verb. However, about 60 per cent of them responded that they sometimes find the third form of the verb, continuous forms and the verb forms for future difficult. Both classes evaluated the Passive Voice and modal auxiliaries as the most problematic areas. More than pure forming of questions and affirmative and negative sentences of the above-mentioned verb forms, the students assessed their using correct word order and expressing themselves politely as being of medium difficulty (they marked they sometimes cannot use the structures appropriately). However, it cannot be concluded with a hundred-percent certainty from this part of the questionnaire, whether it shows us the students' competence (their real knowledge) or their performance, since some of them evaluated themselves with a great self-confidence.

The last question for the students to respond to was to state how often the teacher corrects them when they use the earlier-mentioned verb forms. Almost all of the students marked the future tenses, the Passive Voice and modal auxiliaries as the most problematic areas. They also admitted that they had sometimes been corrected by the teacher when they had not used them properly. This very last question was supposed to diagnose the students' performance. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the students responded with great self-confidence and it is obvious that their results in practice do not show such a mastery of the verb forms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sheard John. *The Words we Use*. – N.Y., 1954. – p.3.

To conclude, the students' competence and performance cannot be strictly distinguished on the basis of the used questionnaire since a lot of variables (e.g. the fact that the students were provided with examples of these verb forms and the assumption that they probably wanted to present themselves to their best advantage) played their role in it. Consequently, it was decided on the part of the teacher that, taking into account both the results of the questionnaire and the students' general output, together with a regard to the topic of this diploma thesis, six lessons (three for each group of students) would be taught, aiming at covering the three most problematic verb areas, and this being the Passive Voice, future tenses and modal auxiliaries. To test the effectiveness, six distinct teaching methods were used, namely The Audio-Lingual Method, The Content-based Instruction, The Task-based Instruction, Communicative Language Teaching, Grammar-Translation Method, and the last one being a corpus-based lesson.

Prior to concentrating on the taught lessons and their results, another aspect of learner's competence has to be mentioned. Gillian Brown in her essay<sup>1</sup> refers to Ellis and Tarone's research, in which they collected utterances that were produced by second language learners, examining the outcome of performance and from this outcome inferring the characteristics of the competence, which is the basis of the performance. Brown argues against such a process, since, according to her, there is a lack of a theory of performance and how it relates to competence. To cite Gillian Brown, she further writes that "the researcher has no access to evidence about learners' procedural knowledge of the language ('knowing how'), only their attempts to put to work their propositional knowledge ('knowing that')." She explains that this view was reached owing to "learners' ability to judge whether sentences presented to them in isolation are grammatical or ungrammatical." To object, it has been found in the course of working on this dissertation that there is a way of getting to know more about learners' procedural knowledge. The aid to

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<sup>1</sup> Brown G., Malmkjaer K., Williams J. *Performance and Competence in Second Language Acquisition*. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1996. – p. 93.

this is called Think Aloud Protocol. The process of applying it in classroom conditions will be described in the subsequent section.

### **1.5. Implementation of ICT and Internet**

After having settled down some theoretical notions that support my conceptions for the present project, now I am going to develop the practical part. In order to do this, I have created a didactic unit (DU) to be implemented by means of traditional and ICT resources both in and out of the classroom contexts. The topic of the unit deals with constructions, buildings and landmarks. I consider that this topic can be very useful in order to connect language and culture since architecture is considered a cultural symbol of a country. The fact that different buildings, landmarks and architects appear along the unit gives a chance for students to go beyond the grammar patterns and vocabulary units.

It has to be clear from the beginning that this DU is hypothetical since it has not been applied to a real audience. This means that I have taken for granted some of the necessary circumstances that this DU could need for its proper implementation. These circumstances are the ideal conditions and the characteristics of the group. I would like to highlight that the fact that this DU is hypothetical does not imply it is not realistic. What has to be taken into account is the context in which it would fit well. For other contexts, then different changes should be applied.

The ideal conditions. we have called this section the ideal conditions since I consider that the following conditions are relevant for a proper implementation of the DU. As this DU is hypothetical, it is necessary to take into account which the ideal circumstances would be and then try to accomplish the most of them in the moment of implementation (if possible). Some of these ideal conditions are:

- Infrastructure and the Internet both in and out of the classroom contexts: In order to perform activities through ICTs, it is necessary that both the in and out

contexts have, at least, the minimum technical specifications. If not, this DU could not be fully implemented.

- ICT skills by both teachers and learners: The implementation of this DU would be senseless if any member from any of the teams had a lack of ICT skills. Teachers could feel a constant insecurity in their explanations while learners could be more anxious about controlling ICT tools rather than learning the subject.

- The role of motivation: Students with great levels of motivation are eager to pay more attention and be more centred in the learning process. These three conditions would settle down a good environment to teach using ICT tools. Teachers should not expect these conditions to be met in all cases. There can be groups with highly motivated learners but with poor ICT skills. Another possibility is a group where both the teacher and learners have ICT skills and are motivated but it is the context of the school and its infrastructure the one that does not allow this modality to take place. This means that the present DU could be applied in those schools where minimum technological requirements were met. If not, its implementation should be modified according to the characteristics of the centre, the students, etc.<sup>1</sup>

I have designed the DU in order to be implemented in the context of a public school with a good technological infrastructure. Classes are equipped with interactive whiteboards and computers with broadband connections to the Internet. The level of the group is 3<sup>rd</sup> of CSE and the number of students in the class is around twenty-five. These students also have a good level of ICT skills. In technical words, this implies knowing how to use basic computer software such as Microsoft Office and traditional web browsers such as Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox.

Students at this level have started the second cycle of the CSE. This new stage is the last one of their mandatory education. This hypothetical group of twenty-five

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<sup>1</sup> Krashen S. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. – New York, Pergamon Press. 1997. – p. 152.

students is also receptive with the cooperative work that is fostered in some of the activities.

For the development of the DU both in and out of the classroom contexts I have planned to use different ICT resources. Following the blended learning approach, I do not suppress the use of traditional materials. Nonetheless, the relevance of ICT tools will be higher out of the classroom context. For the development of the lessons in the class, I have considered the use of interactive whiteboards in order to show images, presentations, play games or show video listening comprehension activities. In the out of the classroom context and taking into account hardware, a simple computer with the traditional peripherals and a connection to the Internet is enough. The main resource out of the classroom is going to be the class blog Englalnd. I created this blog some years ago with the purpose of having a contact with my students of private and extracurricular English classes.

### **1.6. Using an interactive whiteboard in the language classroom for apps.**

An interactive whiteboard is a teaching aid that at first sight looks like an ordinary, ceramic board, but in fact it is a board connected to a computer which enables you not only to write on it, but also show a prepared presentation, change it further on, add other features and save these changes.

The basis of a modern classroom is an interactive whiteboard and special software installed on the teacher's computer. The view on the computer screen is then projected on the board with the help of a data projector that is usually mounted to the ceiling in the room.

Everything is operated directly on the board with a special electronic pen. The sensitive tip of this pen reacts to the pressure you apply when writing on the board and also can be used as a left mouse button. On the pen body there is an orange button, which serves as a right mouse button. It's very convenient when working with different applications.

For other teaching purposes there is sound distribution and obviously an internet connection.

“The core components of interactive learning are a computer, a broadband internet connection, an interactive whiteboard, loudspeakers, a learner response system and appropriate software.”<sup>1</sup>



Some of the interactive whiteboards also include response systems:

Some manufacturers are providing classroom response systems that are integrated with their interactive whiteboard products. These take the form of hand-held 'clickers' operating via Infrared or Radio signals. Simple clickers offer basic multiple choice and polling options, while more sophisticated clickers offer text and numeric responses and will export an analysis of the student performance for subsequent review.

With classroom response and interactive whiteboard systems combined, teachers can present material and receive feedback from students in order to direct instruction more effectively as well as carry out formal assessments. For example, the interactive whiteboard allows students to solve puzzles and maths problems and then demonstrate their knowledge through a test. The test would be delivered via the classroom response system.<sup>2</sup>

The two interactive board types widely used in schools are Promethean ACTIV Board and SMART Board. They were developed directly for education

<sup>1</sup> [www.prometheanworld.com](http://www.prometheanworld.com)

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive\\_whiteboard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive_whiteboard)

purposes. The material and surface are made of are very hard, resistant against damaging, scratching etc. so it is very suitable for schools.

Presently interactive boards are starting to emerge more and more, they are gaining a great popularity among both pupils and teachers. Every lesson prepared for an interactive board is preceded with much teacher preparation. However, the result is more students' increased interest and activity. As interactive boards become more common, their popularity with students and teachers will grow.

To be able to use the interactive whiteboard Promethean fully and appropriately software ACTIVstudio is essential. It is a user friendly set of various tools which enable to create a proficient presentation (so called flipchart).

Another method of using of the board, which is less demanding for the teacher, is to use some educational software. For instance the Terasoft company offers a wide range of educational CD-ROMs not only for English language classes.

There are also many online sources of prepared lessons that can be easily downloaded and used in the lessons. One of them is to be found for example here: "Promethean's free online community designed to provide Active classroom teachers around the world the ability to share new and innovative lessons, access a wide variety of professional development materials, and connect with fellow Active classroom teachers from around the Planet."<sup>1</sup>

It is a great resource for teachers who are willing to work with an interactive board, but do not have time or find the work on making their own presentation not only tedious, but also demanding many skills and do not believe they are able to use all the functions the software offers.

Making your own presentation in the ACTIVstudio software. A presentation or a flipchart can be made relatively easily. It depends only on the teacher who has to get acquainted with the software and learn how to use it. It can take a lot of time and energy, but the effort is certainly worth it.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.promethenaplanet.com](http://www.promethenaplanet.com)

After opening the programme, the first thing we can see is a tool bar which can be positioned anywhere on the computer screen. There are many tools available on this tool bar. It can also be easily minimized so it will not prevent us to use all the space on the board or screen if we need to.



Among the basic options is a colour selection. There are not only eight colours available as you can see in the picture above, but you can change it and get a twenty-four colour variety and even then if you right-click on any colour, you can temporarily make a change. You can change colour of the background, shapes and images with the Fill tool. First we click on it, then on the chosen colour and finally on the screen or shape etc. Another situation we may want to change colours is when writing or drawing. For this purpose we use the Pen tool, we can change its width on the scale. This scale also controls the width of the Highlighter and Eraser tools.

With the help of the Marquee Select tool we can for example move the objects on the board and it otherwise functions as we know it from the 'ordinary' work on the computer.

The text can also be written using the keyboard after clicking on the Text tool.

We can reveal the page gradually from the top/bottom or from the side when we use the Reveal tool. If you want to show only some part of the page, use the Spotlight tool.

The button with the picture of hammer and spanner on it reveals the next tool bar including the calculator, clock, ruler, protractor, dice and other functions available.

On the board there is always one more tool bar present. At first there are two arrows which enable the user to skip to the next or previous page of the presentation.

Also the buttons Page Organiser and Page Selector make the work with the flipchart very user-friendly. The first one helps us to make the right order of the prepared presentation. The latter is for easy orientation when we need to skip to an appropriate page.

The Resource Library button reveals many pictures, sounds and backgrounds, ready to drag and drop wherever in our flipchart we want.

With describing all the tools and techniques the webpage [www.iwbskills.com](http://www.iwbskills.com) is concerned.

On the internet there are online training courses available. For users of Promethean products (ACTIV board) - one of the most frequently used interactive boards in schools - there are courses found at.<sup>1</sup>

After creating your own account and logging in you can enter the courses offered in three levels – according to your choice and experience with the interactive board. There are Foundation Skills course and Advanced Skills course on the first level, Curriculum Developer course with “the main emphasis on good classroom practice”<sup>8</sup> on the second level, and finally on the third one Training and Resource Developer course and Developing Interactive Whiteboard Pedagogies course “aimed at experienced users who want to share their skills and best practice with others and want to continue their professional development”.

All the courses are designed in the moodle system which is very user friendly. You can work on the course whenever and wherever you want to and you can return to the work whenever you wish.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.prometheanlearning.com](http://www.prometheanlearning.com)

There are video guides showing basic functions of the interactive whiteboards available, too. One very illustrative is to be found on the Oxford University Press website and it is called 'Step-by-step video guide to Interactive Whiteboards'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.oupeltpromo.com/interactive/iwbs\\_step\\_by\\_step.php](http://www.oupeltpromo.com/interactive/iwbs_step_by_step.php)

## **Chapter II. Developing Grammar Competence through On-line Applications**

### **2.1. Computer-mediated Communication**

Much of the previous research and reviews of literature on computer-mediated communication-augmented instruction suggest that its advantages are a result of asynchronous communication, efficient information access, and augmented social distance. Asynchronous communication means that people do not have to be logged onto the computer system at the same time in order to communicate.<sup>1</sup> In away, it frees students and teachers from time and distance limitations. It also allows either reflective or spontaneous interaction. The benefits that emerge from asynchronous communication include a series of issues such as convenience, more contact among class participants, more control of communication for students, and the necessity and motivation to communicate in writing.

Computer-mediated communication as a supplement to classroom instruction allows both students and teachers more convenient communication. This convenient way of using time means that students can get questions answered quickly, and that communication can be continuous. As Batson and Bass have indicated concerning teaching and learning in the computer age:

The increased involvement of faculty in electronic environment is helping to breach the traditional boundary between scholarship and teaching. Why? Because just as new technologies help make the process of knowledge creation more public, so too they help faculty make their teaching more public. Whether in the case of distance education (through videotape, teleconference, cable television, or the Internet), or in the rapidly practice of mounting course materials on the World Wide Web, teaching materials are becoming ever more public—and thus open to peer review.<sup>2</sup>

Another advantageous factor of computer-mediated communication is the ability to communicate directly with a particular sub-group or audience within a

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<sup>1</sup> Warschauer M., Kern R. Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2000. – p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Batson T., Bass R. Teaching and learning in the computer age. *Change*, 28(2), 2006. – p. 47.

larger class. Instructors can respond to students' particular questions and needs, without taking up class time to work on a problem affecting only one group. In a way, CMC means more interaction and more flexibility in communication among class members, more exchange of ideas, increased participation and variety of interchange.

According to Warschauer computer-mediated communication (CMC) turns more of the control of the instructional communication over to students. Students can read or print online materials that they feel they need, instead of having to wait until class to get materials.<sup>1</sup> As he has demonstrated, having class materials on the mainframe encourages student initiative and responsibility. With online handouts, students must be responsible for getting their own materials, instead of waiting passively for the instructor to hand them out.

Other benefits of asynchronous communication deal with the need to communicate in writing. The limitation to written communication encourages a clearer and more organized articulation of ideas, which fosters critical thinking habits. For example, since the students cannot express their emotions through facial expressions, they are forced to express them in writing. Thus, a student using computer-mediated communication must make ideas, questions, direction of thought, and so forth, completely explicit. The time for reflection allows the slow thinker or shy person the opportunity to interact, just as much as the quicker or bolder person, at their own pace.

Much of the previous research has shown that, the responsibility involved in writing is... much more serious than that involved in the spoken word. What is heard from the living voice can be modified by passing from one hearer to the other, be adapted to situations, be forgotten. The written word remains.

Students could ask questions without publicly embarrassing themselves. They could argue and disagree without involving excessive emotions or personalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Warschauer M., Kern R. Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2000. – p. 140.

Thus, shy students are at less of a disadvantage for they have opportunities to enter discussions, which would intimidate them, had they conducted face-to-face interaction. Warschauer found that electronic discussion creates opportunities for equal chances in the classroom without disadvantaging more verbal students. The students used language, which was lexically and syntactically more formal and complex in electronic discussion than it was in face-to-face discussion.

In another study, Warschauer found that CMC increased students' motivation for learning. That is, the students had a positive attitude toward using computers. Warschauer observed that a factor analysis revealed that the factors, which influenced student's positive attitude toward computers, included such propositions as perceived benefits of communication, feeling of personal empowerment, and perceived enhancement of learning opportunities. In the information age, it is important that teachers who are fortunate to have computer labs help gain knowledge in computer skills by giving them ample opportunities to communicate via computers and by integrating computer activities into the regular structure and goals of the course.

**On-line Resources. The Internet.** The Internet has gained widespread use in all professional and commercial fields, organizations (public and private), and even the political arena in the last years. Recently, it is becoming a “household word”. In fact, it is on the Internet that people are finding valuable instructional resources of all kinds such as electronic books; electronic libraries; show biz, sports, magazines and journals; video-clips, and newspapers states.<sup>1</sup>

I wish to propose that the use of the WWW as a resource has the potential to engender learning, which is active, constructive and collaborative. Active learning involves “mindful processing of information” and responsibility on the learner's part for the results of that learning. Constructive learning allows an accommodation of new ideas into prior knowledge, in order to make meaning or

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<sup>1</sup> Armstrong K, Yetter-Vassote C. Transforming teaching through technology. – Foreign Language Annals, 27(4), 2004. – p. 475.

reconcile discrepancy, curiosity or puzzlement. Collaborative learning sees communities of learners exploiting, modeling and observing the contribution of other learners.

It is a fact that there is valuable information as well as misinformation or materials with little value on the Internet since it is an “unfiltered medium.” But it all depends on who is reading what and on the means used to value and judge the quality of the information found on the Internet. As Bancheri explains, “The greatest challenge, for kids and teachers, has to do with the undigested nature of the information that they’ve suddenly encountered on the Net. Kids have never before been exposed to information in such a variety”<sup>1</sup>. This cautious step about electronic information leads us to consider the means to measure the reliability of that information. Bancheri suggests checking out the source of the information and the links provided by the author(s) by emailing them with questions to gauge the reliability of the information. Little has been done, unfortunately, to establish conventions that would identify the quality of material on the Internet. There is no doubt that with the increasing use of electronic communication, users of all walks of life will meet a variety of new forms of texts: e-mail, online chat, newsgroups, Web pages, etc. These constitute for the ESL field a rich, challenging and exciting area for a different form of teaching and learning languages. For this reason, it is the responsibility of language teachers to be trained and well-equipped to work effectively hand in hand with students in this new and exciting digital environment. It is an environment, which will enhance teachers’ development, and profession as well as the students’ performance.

**Web-based grammar activities.** An important aspect of ESL sites is the fact that most of them provide the user with valuable links to other sites of interest to language teachers. Most of them will have a section for teachers and another for students. The section for teachers includes aspects such as software publishers,

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<sup>1</sup> Bancheri S. Computer-assisted language learning: Context and conceptualization. – Oxford, Oxford University Press. 2006. – p. 92.

journals, ESL schools, discussion lists, and linguistics. Whereas the section for students will include topics such as grammar exercises, vocabulary games, quizzes, readings, listening, and email projects.

One of the best sites developed for ESL students is the one created by Dave Sperling. There are thousands of interactive exercises that deal with listening, writing, reading and speaking skills, and sections where students can pose questions and an ESL teacher will respond to them. There are specific sites designed for each skill. Grammar Help provides students with suggestions and examples of problematic grammatical structures for ESL learners. Another ESL site that contains useful grammar exercises is The Internet TESL Journal which includes not only exercises but also articles, research papers, lesson plans, and teaching ideas). One site that is an outstanding resource for students and teachers is Online English grammar. One can find the explanation of grammatical points with contextualized examples as well as interactive exercises. It is worth noting that publishing houses are putting their paper textbooks online.

**Web-based support materials.** There are many ESL Web activities, which instructional educators have developed, combining the Web with other network tools for language learning. ESL sites are especially useful for teachers and students who do not have easy access to cultural printed materials about the target language. The ultimate example is Web site “Adventure Game Project”. Three major types of techniques are used: fill-in-the-blanks, multiple choice and glossary tests, where students can create their own language games and obstacles. One of the advantages of the Web is that it has full graphical interface. That is, you can not only read text, but also see photos, listen to sounds (including songs), and even view a full-motion video directly on the screen. Developers of language learning Web activities should make every attempt to elicit feedback with several alternatives to the home page activity format including book reviews, food reviews, how-to- pages, fairy tales, local folklore, recipes, serialized stories, superstitions, TV reviews, want ads, movies critiques, and the like. The students

would have the opportunity to give feedback via e-mail after reading any of those activities. Kitao has collected what he called Useful Resources and Learning Material for Students that contain Web-based activities of all kinds such as journals for students; grammar practice (e.g. English as a Second Language Homepage, Online English Grammar); vocabulary and poetry. Most of those sites present excellent ideas for exploiting information and facilitating language learning and instruction. Warschauer has suggested, “the Web can be used not only to provide interesting reading materials and information resources for your students but also to give them a place and opportunity to publish their own work”.<sup>1</sup> This is the case with the online magazine EXCHANGE that is dedicated to publishing English writings of non-native speakers of English.

**Discussion lists.** Discussion lists have brought different opportunities and ways of accomplishing educational goals. Student Lists were established to provide a forum for cross-cultural discussion and writing practices for college and university students in English language programs around the world. There are nine major ESL-related student lists, which served as a means of sharing language experiences including INTRO-SL (For New Members), CHAT-SL (Student EFL/ESL General Discussion List -Low level), DISCUSS-SL (General Discussion List -High level), ENGL-SL (On Learning English); EVENT-SL (On Current Events); MOVIE-SL (On the Cinema), MUSIC-SL (On Music), and SPORT-SL (On Sports). There are important procedures for introducing Lists to students. For instance, the students first subscribe to the main List (e.g. INTRO-SL), which is designed to give first-timers a chance to hone their e-mail skills before joining the other topically-based lists. Once they are there, the students can introduce themselves and reply to the introductory messages of other students around the world. And when they feel ready, they can then join any of the other Lists and

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<sup>1</sup> Warschauer M., Kern R. Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2000. – p. 86.

participate in the discussions. According to Robb students Lists were created to help students deal with the type of language used in such lists. He further explains:

Why “student lists”? Thousands of lists already exist, many of which are of potential interest to students. These lists, however, are often complex in vocabulary, jargon and slang, and deal with topics at a fairly high technical level. While students might profit from monitoring these lists, most would be hard put to contribute something of value to the other subscribers. With the student lists, the students will be ‘in their element’ which makes posting less problematic. In addition, these lists provide an opportunity for students to interact with their peers around the world, which makes participation interesting, enjoyable, and motivating.

Modern foreign language faculty may find lists of use in four main areas: for scholarly research, pre-publication and publication, professional networking and development, and classroom activity. The first area deals with current awareness services, sources of highly specialized information, book reviews for professional or classroom use and supplements to library material. The second one, prepublication and publication, sees lists as opportunities to place finished book reviews, or first drafts of articles, and requests for publications. And the third area deals with Lists as a means for scholars to find and keep in close communication with others, arrange projects, and test and refine ideas. Finally, Lists can be used as sources of bibliography and pedagogical ideas for the teachers and young researchers.

## **2.2. On-line materials as one of the best Teacher Development sources**

It is often the case that ESL teachers, especially those teaching in non-English speaking countries, have little opportunities for their own professional development. It is likely for them to feel a sense of isolation and remoteness from the real action in the disciplines. With the existence and use of computer network teachers of languages can easily contact colleagues and peers around the world in a

cheap and efficient way. Higgins has presented various ideas about the potential of the WWW as a resource for the teaching and learning of ESL. He has explored the effects that the use of the WWW in a classroom setting might have on the role of the teacher. As Higgins further explains:

The teacher explores the WWW for resources, evaluates and selects potentially useful sites and then stores and categorizes them for later retrieval and use by the students. In storing and categorizing the resources the teacher is establishing a frame through which the students can enter the WWW.<sup>1</sup>

By the same token, Sokolik has suggested top ten spots of important links or connections for ESL teachers and students. She asserts that these sites are excellent in that they have valuable language-related material; student writing samples and sample syllabi; weather information with meteorological stations worldwide; information on applied linguistics and ESL programs.

Internet is changing the many paradigms related to education. For teacher development, the growth of electronic journals, conferences, and exchange of ideas with other teachers is continual and numerous. Kitao shows how ESL teachers can develop professionally and keep up with trends in the teaching of English as a second language by suggesting a series of links they have collected for teachers and students. Electronic newsletters and journals blogs and apps are good sources of information about teaching materials and about what is happening in the field. Mailing Lists are a convenient way of communicating with other ESL teachers. TESL-L is the largest List in ELT, and it has more than 12,000 members; many professional organizations are now online which is a perfect way to keep up with new trends in the profession.

In order to improve your teaching, you can get information and discuss issues with other teachers on mailing lists or web sites. You can subscribe to many newsletters and journals using the Internet.

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<sup>1</sup> Higgins J. The computer and grammar teaching. – New York, Longman. 2008. – p. 31.

You can obtain lesson plans, teaching materials, and lessons....access to dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, and other reference materials...on the Internet.

For those who desire to do research and write academic papers, the Internet is a plausible place to go. There are massive resources for language teachers available on the Web to help them with writing such as article reviews, grammar handbooks, writer's handbooks, dictionaries, APA and MLA style sheets. For example, there is an extensive literature review designed to be an online resource to aid teachers and researchers seek information on computer technology and its applications in second language teaching. It consists primarily of journal articles' summaries, along with a limited number of books' summaries. This ESL and bilingual bibliography offers a collection of extended article summaries drawn from the performance and portfolio assessment literature of the past decade. Kitao's Home page is also an excellent starting point for anyone interested in using the Internet sources in the classroom. One of the best ways to be up to date about any field is being subscribed to a discussion "List." As Gavin states, "By subscribing to E-mail lists concerned with second language teaching teachers can participate in and initiate 'discussions' relevant to their professional concerns".<sup>1</sup> There are all kinds of interesting and sometimes, controversial discussions and topics of interest to anyone. If a teacher wants to know about a teaching technique, syllabi or simply wants suggestions about doing something, he or she will receive many replies from colleagues around the world. There is a clear spirit of collaboration and exchange without boundaries of time, space, and geography. Several benefits of using e-mail and the WWW for professional development deal with teaching materials and ideas, meeting and sharing with other colleagues, downloading all sorts of information, and lesson planning.

As new technologies such as the Internet become available for teaching and learning, a different kind of classroom will definitely develop. This environment

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<sup>1</sup> Gavin D. The Internet and the Language Classroom. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2007. – p. 95.

[new technologies] has lead our children to learn differently than we did years ago. Today's children grow up in a multi-media environment of hi-tech. That is why a different type of approach in dealing with this generation of emerging 'hi-tech' students in the near future is required. Cyberspace is probably the richest source of creative, diverse, empowering and democratizing communication ever to connect people across the globe.

Empowering students to accept responsibility for their own learning is a critical factor in the student's intellectual development and an improvement in their quality of life. The use of technology is about "empowering the learner and encouraging students to leave behind the notion that learning means rote memorization. It is about exploration and the realization that there are multiple pathways to knowledge"<sup>1</sup>.

The self-directed learning process allows the student to be an effective information user and to apply that knowledge in diverse situations. For Ward and Davis, the Internet is becoming a means to allow students to become self-directed.

Digital libraries will revolutionize how students, faculty, researchers, and citizens access and use information. Warschauer found that student empowerment is one of the various factors affecting positively students' attitude towards use of computers. In other words, student empowerment positively affected such aspects as "enhancing personal power, overcoming isolation, and making it less threatening to contact people"<sup>2</sup>. To support these ideas even further, Warschauer found that "computer learning networks do have a potential to empower students, when they are used appropriately". Students should learn to use the computers, rather than feel used by them. Warschauer examined three aspects of empowerment in their study: student autonomy (a shift in authority from teacher to student); equality (computer networking as democratizing effect); and learning

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<sup>1</sup> Armstrong K, Yetter-Vassote C. Transforming teaching through technology. – *Foreign Language Annals*, 27(4), 2004. – p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> Warschauer M., Kern R. *Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice*. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2000. – p. 140.

skills (critical learning). Teachers should strive for developing strategies to help students use the Internet as a more effective tool, fostering student-student communication.

The Internet can add to and improve upon what ESL teachers have been doing for years. The Internet provides ESL students with opportunities for exposure to natural language outside the classroom, collaboration (both inter- and intraclass), student responsibility for learning, motivation and enjoyment of the learning, cross- cultural communication and awareness of global issues and concerns.

### **2.3. Foreign Language Teaching Standards and the Internet**

When examining the goals of foreign language (FL) teaching, one will soon discover that the use of the Internet can be a useful aid in attaining these objectives. If one looks, for example, at the American Standards for Foreign Language Learning, one will see that there is a focus on language, communication, and culture that makes the application of authentic materials increasingly important. Moreover, in this context teachers are looking for better ways of providing experiences that will improve their students' knowledge and skills in these target areas.

According to LeLoup & Ponterio by using Internet activities teachers can devise them in such a ways that they could be good exemplars of the goals of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning. Standard 1.1, for instance, says that students should 'engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.'<sup>1</sup> If there is only the teacher to talk to, then engaging in real and meaningful conversations is virtually an unattainable goal. This is where the Internet comes in. Through various applications, such as e-mail and Internet Relay Chat (IRC), an exchange of ideas and opinions can take place.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.actfl.org/htdocs/standards/standards.htm>

By having access to vast resources of authentic material about foreign cultures, students will be able to gain knowledge and understanding of these cultures (Standard 2). The Internet enables them to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world (Standard 5), so that they will use the language both within and beyond the school setting. The ultimate goal of turning students into life-long learners ‘by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment’ (Standard 5.2) becomes much more realistic when students continue to use the Internet.

Rutherford views teaching language as a paradigm which sees language as communication; emphasizes real language use; recommends a student-centered classroom; encourages real language acquisition instead of just learning a set of grammatical rules; develops humanistic, interpersonal approaches; and considers the nature of the learner, the learning process, and the learning environment.<sup>1</sup>

The Internet can play an important role in each of these categories. The Internet is all about communicating and offers possibilities that would never be feasible in a traditional classroom setting. The language used on the Internet is real language and not especially designed for textbooks. Furthermore, the use of the Internet supports the shift from the traditional teacher-centered classroom to one in which the student is in the center--students are motivated by using computers and talking 'live' to others. Without being conscious of it, students will no longer consider learning a language a boring enterprise. They will be encouraged to learn more. Finally, since conveying messages plays a paramount role on the Internet, students will learn social skills and as such the Internet can be seen as an agent for socialization.

In the end, it will be up to the teacher to integrate the application of the Internet into the curriculum. Since target language communication and cultures are well within reach through these new technologies, this will make a tremendous impact on the ability of students to communicate directly with native speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> Rutherford W. Second language grammar: Learning and teaching. – New York, Longman. 2011. – p. 104.

With the advent of the Internet in schools, old-fashioned teaching methods, such as teaching grammar for the sake of grammar, will hopefully become a thing of the past, if this is not already the case.

On-line Instruction at the University Level. As institutions of higher education become more involved in the rapid acceleration of the use of on-line instruction as a means of delivering instructional content, there is the urgency to uncover various issues of relevance which are being raised concerning how content, instruction, learning, quality, etc. are being tackled in order to validate this new medium of instruction. In general traditional instruction involving face- to-face interaction between students and instructors has come to be viewed as the most effective form of teaching. There are general guidelines and principles that apply to traditional teaching, but they are rarely judged to prove effectiveness of one's teaching or the quality of a course. However, the emergence of asynchronous teaching on-line has caused questions to be raised about this mode of instruction and how the quality compares with traditional forms of instruction.

In on-line instruction planning, there is a need for universities to directly address issues related to faculty such as release time, training for distance teaching, tenure and promotion, and team approaches to course design. Access to content should be in different formats and the institution should facilitate resources (computers to faculty and students). In addition, some of the institutional questions that will need to be addressed include:

- (a) What will be the management structure for on-line instruction, and how will it relate to academic units and continuing education?
- (b) Where will responsibility for technical support be vested, and how will the unit relate to academic units?
- (c) How will the development costs be covered?
- (d) Will on-line courses be noted as such on transcripts?
- (e) For on campus students wishing to enroll in on-line instruction, will they be limited in the number of on-line courses they can apply to graduation?

The answers to those questions will certainly cover a lot of terrain concerning the availability of new policies and standards. On the other hand, there are some barriers for faculty to adopt and participate in on-line instruction. Some of these barriers deal with promotion and tenure at college and institutional levels, overload in distance teaching assignments, intellectual property and academic quality.

Lynch argue that central to the emergence of the Internet as a delivery mode is the issue of who decides if an institution will become a participant in using the Internet for instruction.<sup>1</sup>

State educational agencies and systems of higher education are making commitments that are system- wide, in contrast to institution by institution... Governors are also becoming involved and taking the lead as in the case of Western Governors' University. Partnerships being developed between major industries and institutions. And you are seeing this occurring at a rapid rate. The delivery technology is in its infancy, but its potential is clear. The availability of the Internet and the movement toward the capacity for asynchronous learning creates a paradigm shift that has yet to be fully accepted by all faculty. This is largely due to the speed at which the capacity for on-line instruction has occurred. As more universities go online with courses and degrees the more quickly the education community will come to accept the paradigm shift. A determining factor will be the level of acceptance of on-line instruction by students.

So much work must go into the design, development, and maintenance of each course that it becomes an economic imperative to do it "right the first time" or at least evolve it into the best it can be. Once the courses are online, they are subject to constant scrutiny by students, academicians, and professionals in the field, and accreditation bodies. In relation to the type of effect online instruction will have on traditional education.

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<sup>1</sup> Lynch B. Language Program evaluation: theory and practice. – Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2010. – p. 71.

I think that online instruction will have a very significant positive effect on traditional instruction, because of the fact that it does focus on engaging students. It focuses on making good decisions about content, structuring content, and providing assessment that's really relevant to what you taught.... I just think that the instructional accountability that's placed on you in teaching online eventually will splash over to traditional instruction and will drive the quality of traditional instruction up.

Standards, of course, will help to jump-start the process of creating effective online instructional products by establishing criteria for determining product quality. It is in everyone's best interest to develop standards for online instruction.

Skepticism about Internet Use. Even though there are thousands of people that believe in the benefits of the Internet and computer-mediated communication, there are still many who are skeptic about its use in the classroom, too. One anecdote which portrays this issue is: This time a year ago, I approached someone in our faculty about being one of my thesis advisors. When I explained my ideas about using the Net to teach English, he told me that wasn't very interesting (no joke!) and that he would not want to be part of my project. Two weeks ago, at my seminar presentation on my project, the same instructor was amazed to not only hear about the results, but also see my Web page, and a Web page created by my students. He asked questions with enthusiasm and even approached me afterwards to tell me how proud he was of the work I'd done.

Actually, the skepticism about computers and networks in education has been discussed in various Lists. There is a concern for some teachers who think that Internet access will distract students from their course work, and that they will 'play' on the Internet rather than do their required coursework. As Corio expressed:

What a world. Academics are still in their monastery mode, where they assume that everything that occurs outside the main wall is corrupt. Why do you suppose people are flocking to the Internet and the Web? Because their 7<sup>th</sup> grade

social studies teachers are assigning it? Because English instructors have recommended it? No, because the written word is compelling, more so to the writer than the reader, and the Web is creating a new culture of writing in America.

Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot have a suggestion for all those skeptics or critics of technology: “Let us adopt the technologies which will allow us to do those things that we cannot presently do in the foreign language classroom, or which will significantly improve those things that we already do well”<sup>1</sup>. They assert that “any new technology threatens to change the culture...we are a culture of print, and our educational structures are built around that premise”. That is why there is a need of real and meaningful dialogue capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. A clear forecast is not likely to appear until implementations are in place and thoughtful evaluations are conducted. Thus, explaining the many inherent benefits of CMC to stake holders is a commitment and responsibility all of us have in the years to come.

#### **2.4. Advantages and disadvantages of Web-based support materials for learning English grammar**

It was important to find out what the advantages and disadvantages of using the Web were from the participants' viewpoint. The perception of the majority of participants towards the Web was consistent with other studies and/or the literature.<sup>2</sup>

Perceived Advantages. Accessibility. One of the advantages of the Web according to the majority of the participants is that you can get information fast and easy. You do not have to leave the Web environment to look for other related materials. Most of the participants specifically said that the availability of the

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<sup>1</sup> Armstrong K, Yetter-Vassote C. Transforming teaching through technology. – Foreign Language Annals, 27(4), 2004. – pp. 480.

<sup>2</sup> Warschauer M., Kern R. Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice. – Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2000. – p. 141.

information on the Web 24 hours a day makes it ideal and advantageous. They felt that they were not restricted to the four walls of the classroom. The following quotes summarize this theme:

"You can get information fast and easily"

"The advantage of on-line apps are that you can use them anytime, anywhere"

The accessibility finding supports the contention that, The Internet and its multimedia version, the World Wide Web, allow the instantaneous exchange of information both to and from archive sites and between and among individuals. Language learners may post messages to a bulletin board, which users may "drop by" to look at, or they may enter "live" chat areas where communication is simultaneous, as if one were "talking" by typing. A number of sites now exist specifically created for ESL learners (and for learners of other languages as well) to exchange ideas on topics of interest to them.

The increase of on-line resources accessible from home has made autonomous learning more feasible in many cases by removing time- and location-related constraints on access to technology.

**Inexpensive resources.** Many participants expressed that the advantage of using the Web was the fact that they did not have to spend extra money on more books, or workbooks for practice. This is important since many of these students had limited budgets.

**Pressure-free and self-pacing.** The majority of the participants found that they did not have to wait for anybody to tell them whether what they did was right or wrong. There was immediate feedback on every exercise with suggestions, hints, and reference to other materials in order to improve their knowledge on specific grammar points. Their self-esteem went up, and the participants felt they were in control of the exercises. Since there were a variety of exercises and Web sites to choose from, the participants felt good that they were in control of how many exercises they had to do. They did not feel the pressure from anybody; they worked freely. The majority of the participants felt that studying English through

computers allowed for self-pacing and individualization of their learning experience. Thus, students can decide how often and for how long to work on a specific program. The following quotes summarize pressure-free and self-pacing:

"You feel more free when you are with the Web;" "I feel confident when I am alone next to the machine. It is a very important moment because I can go on my own pace, and I don't have the pressure from my teacher<sup>1</sup> or other students to finish the sentence or exercise. I feel free to work." "In conversing with my friends I have noticed that by using apps I have learned a lot now I feel the confidence to talk more English and now I can understand more structures."<sup>1</sup>

Transferability. It was also very interesting to find that for many of the participants, the use of the Web was perceived to help them transfer what they learned to other contexts such as reading, writing, and speaking. They felt that their interaction with the Web exercises improved their reading and writing skills. They seemed to make a connection between what they practiced on the Web and how they wrote a composition. They felt more fluent in reading and writing. One of the advantages of working on the Web was that the participants came across many new words. They felt that their vocabulary had grown significantly. The majority expressed that by working on the web, they felt more confident. The following quotes summarize the transferability of what the participants learned:

"I feel more confident to use grammatical sentences in the essays;" "By doing the exercises and by studying with apps helped me to do better in the proficiency exam;"<sup>1</sup> "I feel more fluent in reading and writing, too;" "You can apply what you learn on the web directly to your reading and writing skills;" It [the Web] helps you to improve your grammar, reading, vocabulary."

Although computers could not be used as a substitute for classroom teachers, in some cases, particularly in grammar practice, some of the participants felt that the Web environment offered them more than what the traditional grammar class did.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/viewarticle.php?id>

Perceived Disadvantages. Hypermedia nature. On the other hand, one of the disadvantages of the Web according to the majority of participants was its chaotic format. That is, the hypermedia nature of jumping from one place to another made it difficult to track where things were. There was also the concern that there were not clear directions as to how to use the exercises. Many exercises needed clearer objectives and guidance. And they could easily be distracted from the targeted goal by jumping to other sites or topics. One of them expressed, "At first, I felt like lost. I did not know where to go or how to go back to where I started."

Access to Computers. Another inconvenience of using the Web was that there were students that did not have a computer at home or who did not have easy access to computers. As one participants put it, "inconvenient to some students who don't have a computer at home."

Lack of training/computer skills. The majority of the participants in this study noted that lack of computer training might discourage students to use the computer and the Internet. All of them expressed the necessity to have workshop sessions at the beginning of the semester to show students how to take advantage of the many resources available. As one participant expressed, "I think that it may be hard for some students who lack the computer skills."

Asynchronous interaction. There were some participants who were concerned about the lack of face-to-face interaction on the Web. They felt that there should be more collaborative tasks on the computer, where two or more students had to interact with one another in order to complete an exercise. For example, one of the participants said, "I would need to use the information in many contexts, and with more people involved." And the majority also complained about the lack of time to work on the exercises. Since there were so many of them to work on, they felt overwhelmed. "I don't have time to go over every exercise," said one participant. Another participant expressed, "I need more time to use the web efficiently." Besides, we have to take into account that the majority of the participants had a load of 16 credits with plenty of personal and academic responsibilities to fulfill.

One of the participants expressed, "The number of tasks for several courses overwhelms us. We have 16 hours of work weekly." Another participants complained, "I am taking Grammar III, reading and writing, listening comprehension. We have many things to do."

### **2.5. The Results of Using On-line Apps**

We do not have one of the world's most advanced cellular networks, but most of the student population here possesses a mobile phone. In part due to the ubiquity of Wi-Fi, smart phone users have become the norm rather than the exception. There are three main reasons for this trend. First, smart phones connecting to Wi-Fi have the same connectivity as computers. Even in the current 3G and 4G environment, the data processing capability of phones gives users far greater flexibility than ever before. The change is not just limited to the wireless environment; mobile phone hardware has seen exponential progress as well. Another reason for widespread smart phone use is that the screen size of some smart phones has increased to five inches or larger and the resolution has improved to around 1980\*1080 pixels. Finally, the processing power of mobile phone CPUs also continues to evolve, and the memory cards on smart phones can store dozens of gigabytes of data, comparable with many PCs. It is clear that the gap in the operational functionalities between mobile phone and PC technology has narrowed, providing educators greater freedom for extending learning outside of traditional learning environments.

While some limitations for mobile phone use in education existed in the past these have begun to dissipate due to advances in information technology. For instance, the problem of small bandwidth has been remedied by the technologies of Wi-Fi, 3.5G, and 4G networks. Similarly, problems associated with manual text input are being resolved through the use of speech recognition technology, touch screens, and styluses. Since the emergence of smart phones in 2007, more and more functions specific to PCs and other hand-held devices have been integrated

within mobile phone devices. In sum: today's digital environment has blurred the differential between mobile phones and PCs. As the price of smart phones continues to fall, they have ceased to be a tool of an elite minority.<sup>1</sup>

Though it may be too early to judge the effectiveness of mobile phone learning, collaborative, learner centered pedagogical approaches have undoubtedly informed and inspired developments in mobile learning programs.

Despite the challenge of integrating phones into a learning environment, it has been shown that as users become more adept at using digital interfaces, their learning styles and how they perceive the learning material are both likely to change. Delivering smaller modular chunks—such as miniessays and grammar quizzes—may be more suitable for better mobile phone learning experiences. With this in mind—and in order to address an absence of data on the development of reading and grammar skills via mobile phones—we initiated a trial in 2014, providing students with English grammar learning apps addresses.

Compared with mobile phone vocabulary learning and trial practices with listening and speaking, there is significantly less research on the advantages of mobile phone programs for grammar practice. In addition to the shortage of research into mobile grammar learning, another important factor which inspired this project is the popularity of mobile phone novels in Uzbekistan.

With these factors in mind we wanted to provide students with a learning opportunity that would help improve their English and allow us to have a better understanding of grammar learning on mobile phones while also giving us the opportunity to assess the degree to which students are motivated to learn outside the classroom on their mobile phones.

Students were then required to complete the activities on their mobile phones in their own time. During the project, several questions came up repeatedly and became a motivating force for the study. These questions include:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-application-software-definition-examples-types.html>

1. Are students prepared to engage with grammar quizzes on their mobile phones? When students read on mobile phones, what kinds of topics motivate and what kinds of topics fail to captivate their interest?
2. When given the choice between accessing material on mobiles or PCs, which device will students instinctively use?
3. What general perception do students have towards reading and grammar on mobile phones?
4. What concerns do students have about learning languages using their mobile phones?

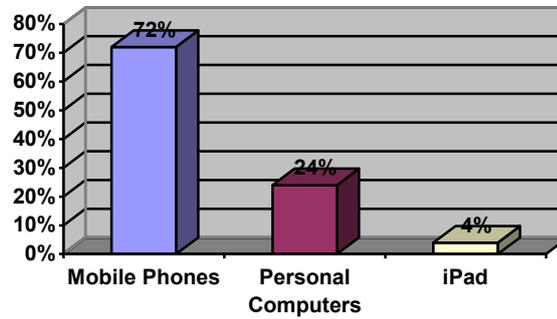
By addressing these questions, this paper aims to redress the gap in current research into mobile learning for grammar practice as well as inform future research of important observations regarding this specific student population.

Alongside the reading text, which was usually a short story, a joke or an anecdote, two types of grammar materials were provided: grammar knowledge and grammar quizzes. During the lessons, we had discovered that most students at our university are typically weak at using nouns, the subjunctive mood, participles, and negative forms. To address these areas, the grammar interpretations sent to students focused on these items. Each grammar item interpretation was attached with a grammar quiz URL. From a project objective, the grammar knowledge delivery was a form of explicit teaching (i.e., pushing student learning) whereas the grammar quiz was seen as a test of their understanding (i.e., pulling student learning). Sometimes trivia associated with English grammar were added to the grammar activities in order to increase students' motivation. Because most of the readers were at the pre-intermediate level, part of the grammar section was written in Uzbek.

#### Research Question 1: The Position of Mobile Learning Devices

Question 1 asked which device each student used for receiving the learning materials. 18 (72%) respondents reported that they used a mobile phone. Only 6

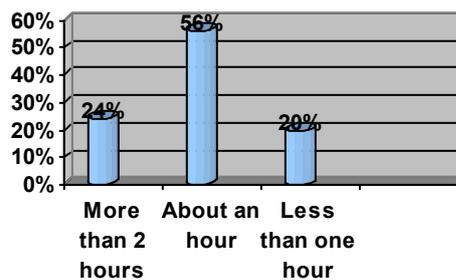
(26%) said they used their PCs. Only one student reported using an iPad to work with materials.



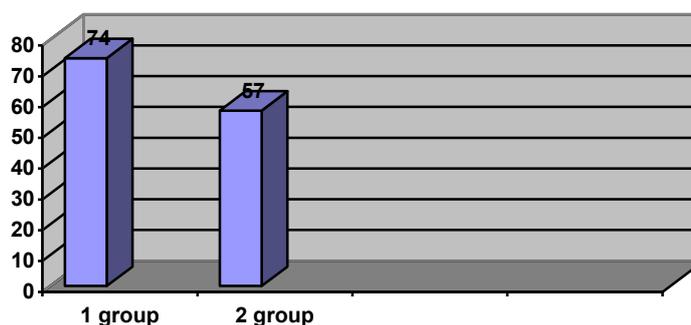
The data is consistent with the email registration when recruiting subscribers for the project. This further illustrates the willingness and confidence that first-year students have towards using mobile phones for language learning. Furthermore, our results echo recently published figures that show a high use of mobile phones: indeed, 95.6 % of college students possess mobile phones, of which 85.1% have Internet connection; of senior high school students, 65.6% use the Internet more than two hours every day. The same survey results show that first-year college students, have been using mobile phones for some years and have become adept at using them on many levels. This could explain why such a large proportion of our respondents (73%) reported that they used a mobile phone to access the learning materials.

Research Question 2: How much time do you spend on learning materials?

Six students (24%) replied that they spend more than 2 hours, 14 (56%) said that they spend about an hour, and five (20%) indicated that they use less than one hour.



According to our questionnaire, the project was well-received by the students. As the project was not associated with any mandatory English course, students were free to opt out or disregard any of the learning materials. At the end of the project the progress of subscribers' grammar abilities was assessed. Two groups were given 100 questions each. The students in the group who used on-line apps got on an average 74 points. Another group who participated only academic classes got 57 points on an average.



However, as stated earlier, the purpose of this project was to provide a relaxed reading and grammar practice environment for students. We also wanted to explore the impact of delivering informal reading and grammar exercises to mobile phones. As participation was voluntary, and students were not tied to any physical classrooms, any form of assessment would be a significant challenge. Assessing mobile learning outcomes may be difficult if learners cannot be brought together into a controlled testing environment.

Finally, Question 3 was an open-ended question inviting general comments about the project, to which 26 respondents gave comments. Most students (84%) perceived on-line apps as a helpful tool towards improving their Grammar.

Some of them said that it was sometimes difficult work without a teacher.

Participants indicated that they liked the mode of reading content delivered by phone. Interestingly, many also commented that they would prefer receiving the material in an ad hoc fashion as opposed to receiving them on specific days each week. One implication of this is that students do not want to make a commitment to study; therefore, receiving the material in a less predictable manner may provide

a less formal quality to the program. Similarly many students commented favorably on the short and easy-to-understand format of the reading material. As feedback indicated that students were inclined towards topics on cultural differences, as well as jokes and proverbs, native-speaker teachers integrated grammar and vocabulary components into those topics.

Despite the popularity of the reading content, this did not extend to the grammar quizzes, which received less participation than some of the reading materials. On average, each grammar quiz had only 25 volunteer participants. In an interview with a student who was active for the whole project, we asked why he felt students were less favorable towards online quizzes. He answered:

We are tired with so many classes and do not want to use our brains to think about quizzes after class. Taking quizzes is not like reading interesting essays; it is not enjoyable at all. In addition, our teachers are probably monitoring our performance. It would be embarrassing if I did poorly in the quiz. Therefore, unless it is made into a compulsory assignment, I don't want to do the grammar quizzes.

This remark implies that unless there is an element of compulsion to the program, students are reluctant to do anything overly demanding unless it is linked to their overall grade—even if it is delivered via mobile phones. The lesson here is that optional learning materials designed for mobile phones should not be too challenging: this may reflect the fact that students may also not have the time or the energy nor the tools to engage in study outside of class that is seen as too time-consuming.

As we have noted, given the strong association between phones and gaming, motivating students to use their phone for learning is an ambitious task. This is compounded by the fact that reading in another language is one of the hardest skills to acquire, as it requires higher-level comprehension processes. Therefore, the hard work needed to gain even modest improvement is perhaps the reason why many learners find reading one of the most challenging tasks among the four skills.

There are many technological advantages to using mobile phones for reading and grammar learning. Materials sent via email can be stored in the receiver's inbox folder and can be retrieved and accessed at any time. Because students always carry their mobile phones, they can review the reading materials as many times as they want. With 3G and 4G technology development and Wi-Fi enabled for smart phones, the cost of connecting to the Internet is within the means of most students. The concept of mobile phone learning, although not yet prevalent, is likely to become accepted by more and more learners.

However, the disadvantages of mobile phone learning are still significant. As stated above, students are not used to reading learning materials on small screens. Taking quizzes or answering reading questions requires them to scroll up and down; interaction on mobile phones is not as easy as on PCs; and most importantly, students view mobile phones as their private domain which should remain disconnected from formal study. The distinction is clear: many students accept the concept that learning should be done in class or on a PC, whereas mobile phones are for their personal affairs. Changing this perception may require a shift in thinking as well as teaching. Indeed, given the high ownership rate of mobile phones, it is surprising that university students rarely use the mobile phone as an educational tool.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor obtained from the feedback is a concern about security. Students are wary of clicking on any URLs that they are unfamiliar with. They fear that clicking on an unknown URL could result in spam email in the future or lead them to an untrustworthy website. In the interview with an active student, we asked her concerns about receiving the learning materials on mobile. She reported: Clicking an unfamiliar URL sometimes directs one to a bad site. Not only does it cause spam emails, but also there is a high risk of being connected to potentially improper sites. So most of us are very wary about clicking on any suspicious looking links.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.makeuseof.com/.../7-apps-help-anyone-improve-english-grammar/](http://www.makeuseof.com/.../7-apps-help-anyone-improve-english-grammar/)

Indeed, in Uzbekistan, Internet fraud cases are becoming a major problem, as there have been cases whereby people have unknowingly clicked on a suspicious web link at work or in the public domain, with embarrassing consequences. In computer literacy courses high school and university students are repeatedly told not to click on any URLs that they are unsure of as computer viruses and personal information leaks may follow. For such reasons, concerns about security are regarded as a significant reason for low participation on grammar quizzes.

Although quantitative assessments were not carried out on a yearly basis, objective data were collected throughout the project in various ways: through registration records, quiz results, comments and the learning history stored on the server. The data combined with the results of interviews lead to the following conclusions: in general, mobile phone-assisted learning is perceived positively by students as an effective method for improving reading and grammar ability. But for learning to take place, the material must engage the learner, without being too demanding. For young university students, reading topics that focus on cultural differences and student life are the most relevant, as are jokes, and entertaining stories—which are regular favorites. Items such as grammar quizzes need to be kept to a minimum to avoid the perception of being seen as study. Security is always a big concern for mobile learners. Before launching a mobile learning project, Internet security should be carefully considered. This means that a secure learning platform, a secure mode for delivering learning materials, and a secure way to monitor students' progress should be in place. Our study also instructs us of the necessity to empower the students in some form of material development, as students themselves are best placed for knowing their own learning preferences. Additionally, mobile learning content is destined to be short and segmented.

Our findings also highlight the importance of respecting a student's right to privacy. For a project to have any significant impact on learning outcomes, it must be highly responsive to any feedback—positive or negative. Finally, in order to

compete with the ubiquity of games and social media, it may be necessary to offer students some form of inducement or incentive. We fully believe however, that having incentives is not the panacea, as learning should always bring its own reward. However, linking mobile learning to a formal course evaluation may be a crucial step to improving the efficacy of mobile learning. We hope that this study will help focus the attention of other mobile learning practitioners to embrace a mobile phone learning culture. By working as partners with students, educational institutions can build an effective reading and grammar mobile program that places students at the forefront of learning.

## 2.6. On-line applications used during the experiment

**English Grammar 101** is a very good and useful online application both for beginners and for those who want to enhance their knowledge with a very simple and easy-to-use interface.<sup>1</sup> On the left side a user can choose a theme he or she wants to learn. Explanations with examples are given for every theme. Then a user can do exercises.

Module 1. Word and Phrase Patterns.

Lesson 1-24. Compound Verbs.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://lessons.englishgrammar101.com/EnglishGrammar101/Module1/Lesson1-24.aspx>. The page title is "Compound Verbs" and the lesson number is "Lesson 1-24".

**Prompt:** More than one verb may be used in a sentence. Often we use a common part of speech called a conjunction (and, but, or) or a comma to combine two or more verbs in a sentence. Two or more separate verbs make a compound verb.

**Example:** Note the compound verb in the following sentence: "The performer sang and danced."

**Directions:** Below are listed several groups of words with compound verbs. Click to select the compound verbs in each group.

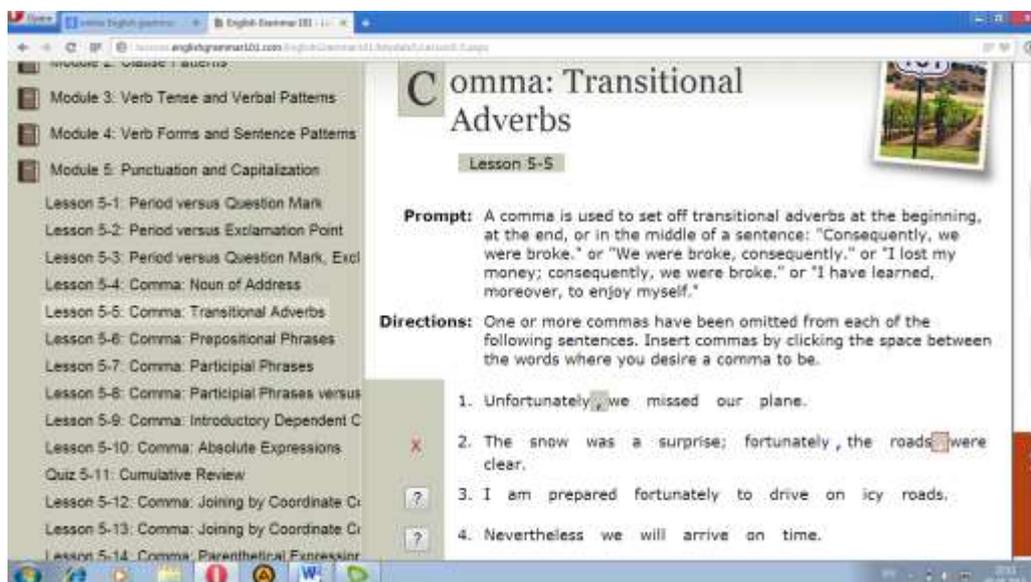
1. Jane **sat** and **drew** ... Ann **talked** and **sang** ...
2. Cats **jump** and **run** ... Fish **swim** and **eat** ...
3. Ducks swim and fly ... Geese honk and land ...
4. The pitcher stretched and threw the ball.

<sup>1</sup> <http://lessons.englishgrammar101.com/EnglishGrammar101/Module1/Lesson1-24.aspx>

If the user clicks the icon with the mark of interrogation, the program checks answers.

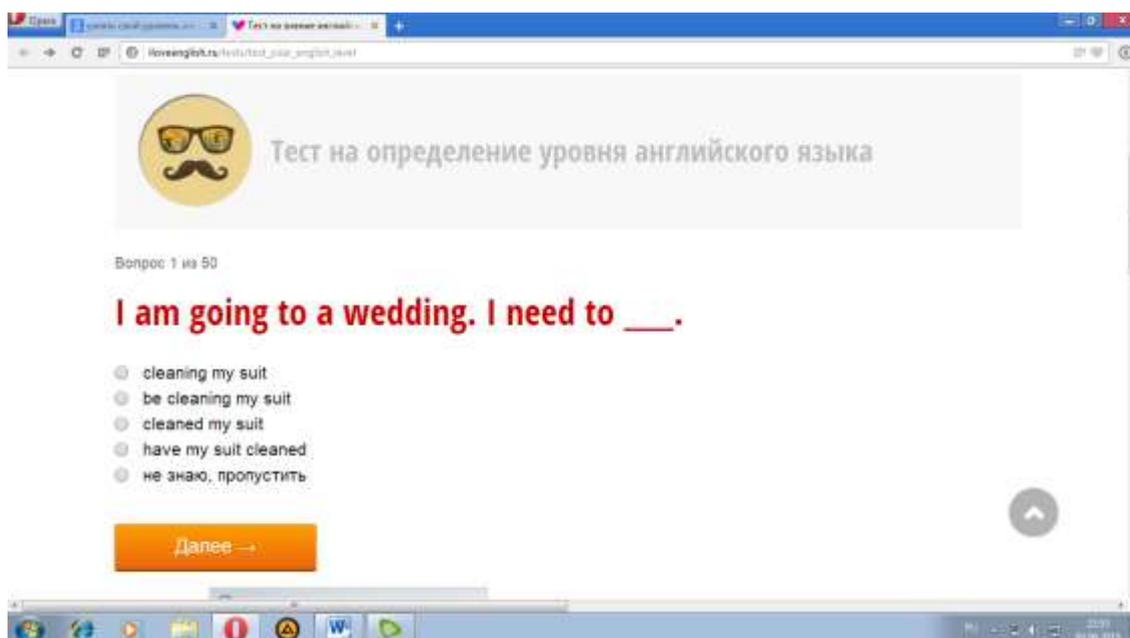
## Module 5. Punctuation and Capitalization.

### Lesson 5-5. Comma: Transitional Adverbs.



As you can see that the application corrects mistakes if they are made.

Since we adopted assessment criteria CEFR, we begin to pay more attention to the level of our knowledge of English. **Iloveenglish** test<sup>1</sup> is very good tool to know one's knowledge on grammar.



<sup>1</sup> [http://iloveenglish.ru/tests/test\\_your\\_english\\_level](http://iloveenglish.ru/tests/test_your_english_level)

A user should answer for 50 questions and according to them application sends on user's e-mail a certificate conforming his/her level.



### Check Your English Grammar Level<sup>1</sup>

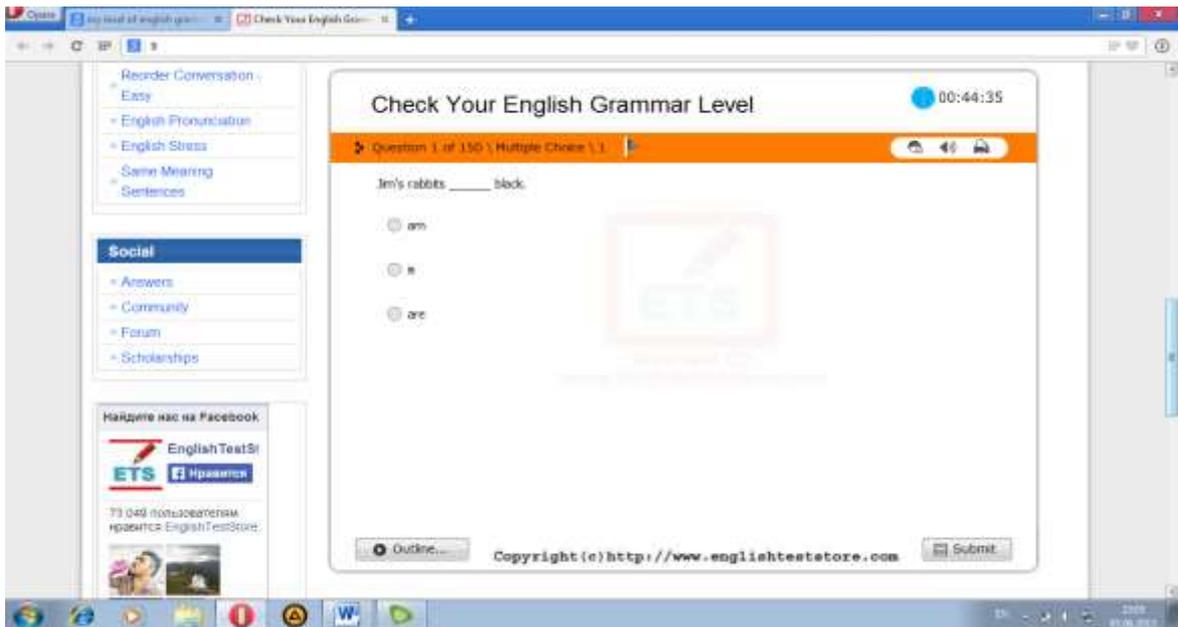
Do you know your English grammar level? It is very interesting and useful if you know where you are in English grammar level. This test was designed to help you check your English grammar level. The test covers almost all English grammar aspects. The test contains 150 questions. Be patient if you really want to check your English grammar level. Try your best to answer all questions.

Before taking the test:

Instructions: In this test will check your English grammar level. This test contains 150 questions. Questions 135-150 you have to find mistakes in the given sentences. After you read a question, read the choices and choose the best answer to the question you have read.

You should choose answer then click "Submit" button.

<sup>1</sup> [http://englishteststore.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10713&Itemid=473](http://englishteststore.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10713&Itemid=473)



### After taking the test:

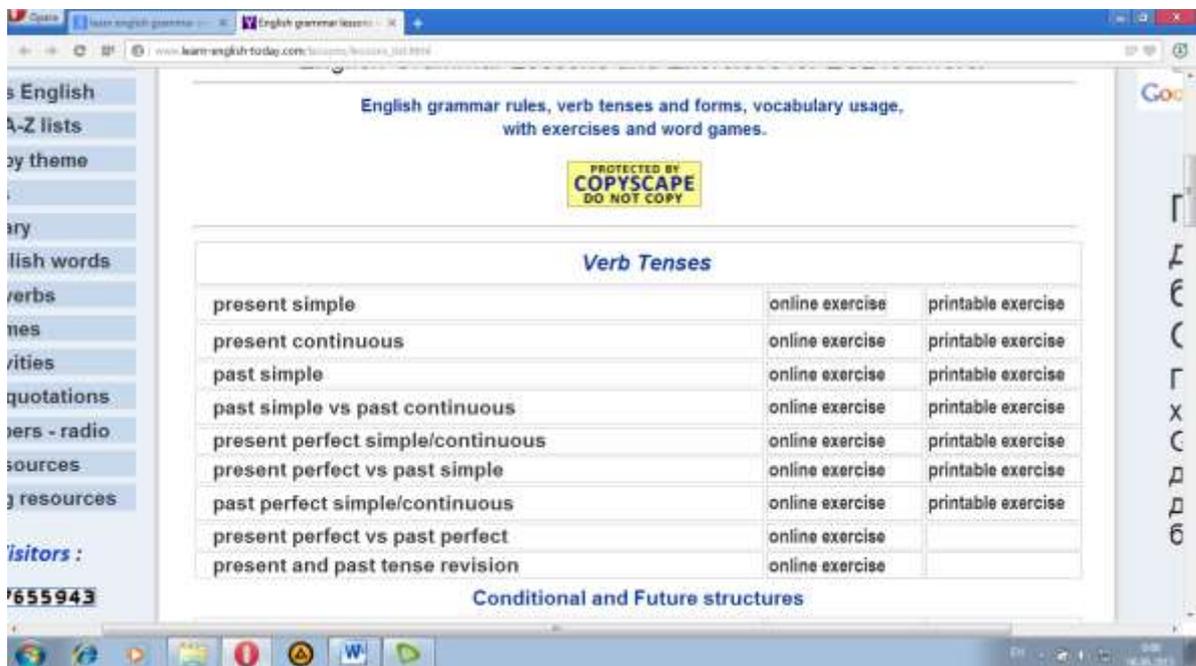
When you finish your test, compare your score with the following range to know your English grammar level:

- From 0-40 - Beginner Level
- From 41-60 - Elementary Level
- From 61-80 - Pre-Intermediate Level
- From 81-100 - Intermediate Level
- From 101-125 - Upper-Intermediate Level
- From 126-150 - Advanced Level

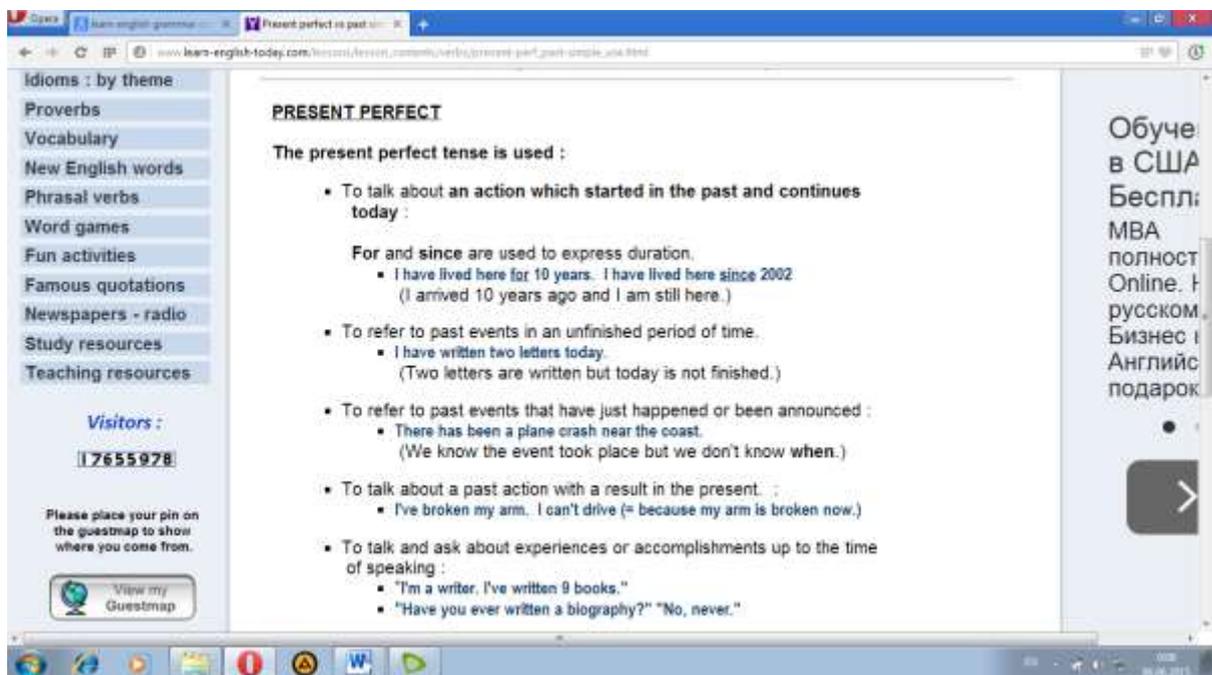


## Learn English Today

Free English resources and materials for ESL-EFL learners of all levels.<sup>1</sup>



There are brief rules and examples for each theme:



Exercises are auto-checking:

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.learn-english-today.com/lessons/lessons\\_list.html](http://www.learn-english-today.com/lessons/lessons_list.html)

Present Perfect - Past Simple

Find the Mistake - Exercise 1

Each of the sentences below contains a mistake. Find it and write the correction in the space provided. Then press "Check" to check your answers. If in difficulty, you may ask for a hint (?), but you will lose points.

1. I have visited New York two months ago.
2. Anne isn't here at the moment.    
 'two months ago' is in the past.
3. In your life, how many differ
4. They've opened the new shopping centre last week.

## Ego for You<sup>1</sup>

Test on Past Progressive 1

Free TOEFL Practice

Improve your English, study in the USA

Start Test

Test your knowledge on the Past Progressive. After submitting your answers, you will see how well you have done in the test.

**Test**

Write the *ing* form of the verbs.

1. live → living
2. stay → staying
3. run → \_\_\_\_\_
4. win → \_\_\_\_\_
5. cycle → \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the table in past progressive.

positive	negative	question
It was raining.	It was not running.	_____
They were _____	They were not playing.	_____
_____	_____	Was I listening?
_____	Caron was not eating.	_____
You were singing.	_____	_____

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/tests/past-progressive-1>

English grammar online... | Приложение на Google... | English Test on Past Pt... | +

https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/tests/past-progressive-1

Calendar 2015

**Teach In**

- Cultural Studies
- Lessons

You were singing.

**Was or Were?**

- We  dancing.
- The dog  barking.
- The printer  printing out a photograph.
- The pupils  writing a test.
- Sue and Ge  walking up the hill.

**Write sentences in past progressive.**

- he / the car / wash → \_\_\_\_\_
- she / home / go → \_\_\_\_\_
- they / not / the match / watch → \_\_\_\_\_
- you / in the shop / work → \_\_\_\_\_
- I / not / a magazine / read → \_\_\_\_\_

**Write questions in past progressive.**

- she / on a chair / sit → \_\_\_\_\_
- you / your bag / pack → \_\_\_\_\_
- his head / ache → \_\_\_\_\_
- we / tea / drink → \_\_\_\_\_
- you / the bike / repair → \_\_\_\_\_

Ask for the information in the bold part of the sentence.

English grammar online... | Приложение на Google... | Exercise on English Adj... | +

https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/adjec/3nessemer/42748

Tests

- Study Tips
- Daily English
- Pronunciation

**Read On**

- Countries
- Animals/Sports
- Literature
- Newsticker

**Business**

- Communication
- Grammar
- Business-Info

**Chill Out**

- Games & Riddles
- E-Cards
- Chat with Egon

**Take On**

- Newsletter
- Calendar 2015

**Teach In**

Free TOEFL Practice

Improve your English, study in the USA

Start Test

Fill in the correct form of the words in brackets (comparative or superlative).

- My house is (big) bigger than yours.
- This flower is (beautiful) more beautiful than that one.
- This is the (interesting) most interesting book I have ever read.
- Non-smokers usually live (long) longer than smokers.
- Which is the (dangerous) most d animal in the world?
- A holiday by the sea is (good) \_\_\_\_\_ than a holiday in the mountains.
- It is strange but often a coke is (expensive) \_\_\_\_\_ than a beer.
- Who is the (rich) \_\_\_\_\_ woman on earth?
- The weather this summer is even (bad) \_\_\_\_\_ than last summer.
- He was the (clever) \_\_\_\_\_ thief of all.

**Check Answers**

- Mark wrong answers
- Replace wrong by correct answers
- Show all correct answers

Grammar School Online

Alhite stx distance laemo... AR1 Grammar program

https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/adjec/adv/adjec/exercises

## LearnEnglish Grammar (UK Edition)



Improve your grammar skills with LearnEnglish Grammar, the number one educational mobile app.<sup>1</sup>



Improve your grammar skills with LearnEnglish Grammar, the number one educational mobile app. LearnEnglish Grammar is the best way to improve your English grammar at home, on the move, anywhere!

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Practise sample questions at the Elementary and Intermediate level. Download more questions at Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels. Each set of questions covers 12 grammar topics, with over 20 activities per topic.

Achieve better grammar accuracy

Forget about repetitive multiple choice questions that only help you recognise correct grammar. Answer over 1000 practice questions across 10 unique activity

<sup>1</sup> <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/apps/learnenglish-grammar-uk-edition#sthash.uXtTbvjS.dpuf>

types, including fill-in-the-blanks, reordering words and labelling, to achieve better grammar accuracy.

Interactive practice activities help you learn

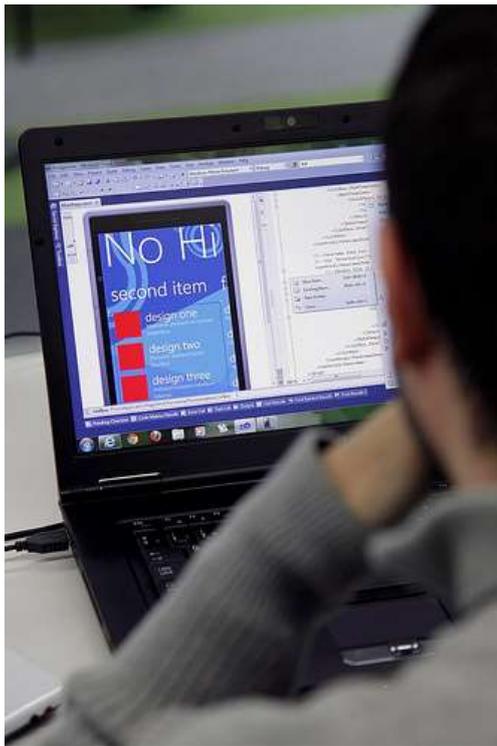
Drag and drop answers and rearrange words for a fun way of learning. Each question uses text, images and audio to keep things interesting. Test yourself at the end of every level to check your understanding.

In-app help

Easy-to-access help files within each question demonstrate how to complete the activity types. The help section is supported in multiple languages.

- See more at: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/apps/learnenglish-grammar-uk-edition#sthash.uXtTbvjS.dpuf>

### **Grammar Jammers**



Grammar Jammers, created by Pearson, is an app to help children to practice grammar skills. There are three different leveled apps including primary, elementary, and middle school editions. Each edition contains age-appropriate songs, rhymes, and animations to help children to remember grammar skills. After each singing lesson, children are provided an opportunity to take a quiz to test

what they have learned. Here is an example of the app in action. As an adult, I really enjoyed this app and started to sing along and can see how it can really help kids to learn and remember various English grammar skills.

### **Grammar Games by Tap to Learn**

Grammar Games is another highly engaging grammar app for children in grades K-6. Instead of using songs like Grammar Jammers, this app utilizes pictures. The pictures are used as the learning portion of the app that helps to teach children the different grammar skills. The practice portion of the app is a game that has the child place the various parts of speech onto the correction area of the animated plane screen. This app is very easy to use and to learn. However, I can't see it being as engaging for older children as Grammar Jammers.<sup>1</sup>

### **Painless Grammar Challenge**

Painless Grammar Challenge is a quiz and game based review app created by Barron's. This app provides children with grammar quizzes. If the child receives and 80 or above on the quiz, then it opens up the ability for the child to play a grammar-based game. The downside, as noted in many reviews, was that there was no feedback given on what answers were incorrect and why. This made it difficult if a child didn't understand the concept for them to unlock the game modes. I can see this quickly sending a child into "frustration level". However, if a parent is working with the child to help build the skills, then they could then provide the feedback. Hopefully, there will be an update soon for this app to fix these problems and it could potentially be a great app for grammar review.

### **Grammar Dragon Education**

Grammar Dragon Education is an app designed for 2nd-6th graders to learn the parts of speech as well as vocabulary and sentence structure. This game-based program has children read passages to determine the parts of speech. As they answer correctly, they are moved through the castle to try to save their friends from the dragon.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.popsugar.com/tech/Best-English-Apps](http://www.popsugar.com/tech/Best-English-Apps)

By just digging a little deeper into the App Store, I was able to find many great grammar apps that can help children to learn and practice grammar skills. These apps would be great additions for home learning to help build upon skills learned in school and provide a practice environment.

## Conclusion

By using the resources on the Internet via the different web sites students who need extra practice in mastering English structures will have a place open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ESL teachers can be more flexible in adapting to the various situations in the classroom and can pay closer attention to individual students' problems. However, learning languages with the Internet will definitely present challenges. Sometimes it will require skills that teachers and students do not have initially. This demands preliminary work by the teachers in determining which tools are available at their institution and are best suited for their purposes.

This study shed light on important online issues that will guide ESL teachers to better use and integrate this new Internet technology into traditional grammar classes in particular and in all the other language skills in general. The literature review covers two main areas: computer-mediated communication in the ESL field and the Internet resources potential for language learning. Chapter 1 describes the methodology to be used, as well as the theory that will support the study. Chapter 2 presents the data collected and analyzes the major findings and implications of the study.

In this review of the literature, advantages of computer-mediated communication and many ways in which the Internet can sense as an educational tool have been discussed. It was widely expressed that asynchronous communication can provide more convenience for participants, potential for more contact, more control for students, and the necessity to communicate in writing. The fact that computer-mediated communication increases social distance might encourage shy students to communicate and ask questions without embarrassment, as well as encourage discussion of ideas. It also enriches our experience as teachers, allowing us to communicate easily with thousands of people.

The Internet could become an ideal place where students may continue their learning outside of the classroom and after a course ends. Although using the Internet for teaching and learning a second language is not so new, we need to

explore ways to find those materials and experiment with them in order to improve our teaching. Overall, It is important to emphasize the fact that technology supplements rather than supplants the role of the teacher in the classroom. Thus, computers, in general, should be accepted as useful educational tools. Without a doubt, computers in education are here to stay, and their impact is being felt more each year.

This qualitative study has provided a detailed description and an interpretive account of how students with different knowledge perceived the use of apps for practicing and learning grammar. Based on the participants' data, a model for using apps was developed and explained. This study emphasized the need to include more teacher-made materials for practicing grammar using new technologies such as the e-books and apps.

Most of the participants found differences in the content of the CD-ROM programs, on-line apps and the textbook. It was found that most of the participants followed a similar pattern in the mode of use of the Web material. They either practiced directly on the computer and/or printed out the exercises in order to work on them later on. The findings suggested that the students require ongoing Internet training, technical support, that Web-based materials use can increase students' self-esteem, motivation, and improve their attitude toward the computer and grammar learning. The study participants pinpointed advantages and disadvantages with respect to the use of Web-based materials for learning and practicing grammar. On the whole, most of the participants had a positive attitude towards the use of the on-line applications to practice and learn grammar. We would like to suggest the other researcher; the result of the study can be used as additional reference to further research with the different sample and occasions.

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