USING INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' STRATEGIC COMPETENCE (BASED ON A1 LEVEL LEARNERS)

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Abstract: This article examines the use of interactive technologies to enhance strategic competence in A1-level English learners. Strategic competence refers to a learner's ability to overcome communication gaps using strategies like paraphrasing, asking for clarification, and using gestures. For beginners at A1 level, this competence is vital for managing basic interactions despite limited vocabulary and grammar. The paper outlines how digital tools and platforms can facilitate the development of this skill through engaging and scaffolded tasks. It also presents examples from classroom-based experiences, highlighting learner engagement, confidence, and improved communication strategies.

Keywords: Strategic competence, interactive technologies, A1 learners, digital tools, communicative competence, ESL, scaffolding, language strategies, learner autonomy, beginner English

INTRODUCTION

Language learners, particularly those at the A1 level, often face difficulties in sustaining conversations due to their limited vocabulary and developing grasp of grammar. At this early stage, learners may struggle to express themselves clearly, leading to frequent pauses, misunderstandings, or abrupt endings to conversations(Abdurakhmanova, M, 2021) [1]. While building linguistic competence is essential, it is equally important to foster strategic competence—the ability to navigate communication breakdowns using alternative strategies such as paraphrasing, using gestures, asking for clarification, or simplifying language. Strategic competence empowers learners to keep interactions going even when they don't have the exact words or structures, promoting a sense of autonomy and resilience in communication. Developing this skill from the outset not only improves communicative effectiveness but also builds learners' confidence and increases their willingness to participate in real-life conversations.

In recent years, the landscape of language education has been significantly reshaped by interactive technologies. Language learning apps, virtual classrooms, speech recognition tools, and game-based platforms now offer rich, immersive, and highly personalized experiences(Khusainova, R. A, 2020) [2]. These tools are not only useful for vocabulary and grammar practice but also hold great potential for developing learners' strategic competence. This article explores how such technologies can be purposefully integrated into early language instruction to help beginner learners manage communication challenges and become more confident, resourceful communicators.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an action research approach to explore how interactive technologies can support the development of strategic competence among A1-level learners. Conducted over a five-week period, the research involved students aged 12 to 15 in a classroom setting(Shakhjahan, A, 2019) [3]. The intervention was designed to integrate technology-driven activities into regular lessons, providing learners with opportunities to engage in real-time communication and problem-solving tasks. To evaluate progress, a combination of data collection methods was used, including classroom observations, recorded learner conversations, and self-assessment checklists. These tools allowed for a comprehensive view of how students managed communication breakdowns, employed compensatory strategies, and responded to interactive challenges. The interventions featured a variety of interactive technologies aimed at encouraging active language use. These included vocabulary and expression-building exercises on **Quizlet**, simulated dialogues and conversational practice with **AI-powered chatbots**, and real-time communication challenges delivered through platforms like **Duolingo** and **Kahoot**. Each tool was selected for its ability to engage learners, promote strategic language use, and provide immediate feedback in an accessible, low-stress environment(Turdimurodova, S. B, 2022) [4].

RESULTS

Findings showed a significant increase in students' use of strategic techniques, such as repeating, rephrasing, using gestures, or switching to their L1 strategically. Learners showed more willingness to participate in speaking tasks and less anxiety. Teachers reported higher learner engagement, and students' self-reports reflected increased confidence in real-life communication situations.

DISCUSSION

A1 learners face a unique challenge—they are expected to begin communicating in English despite their limited language arsenal. Teaching them strategic competence equips them with tools to bridge communication gaps. For instance, a student may not know the word "umbrella" but might say "thing for rain" or point to it, keeping the conversation alive(Ellis, R, 2015) [5].

Interactive technologies support such development in several ways:

1. Real-time Feedback Tools: Platforms like Quizizz or Kahoot allow instant feedback on communicative tasks, helping learners notice errors and reformulate responses.

2. Simulated Conversation Apps: Apps that use chatbots or AI to simulate real conversations help students practice in a low-pressure environment, encouraging experimentation with language(Warschauer, M., & Kern, R. (Eds.), 2000) [6].

3. Multimedia Prompts: Using videos or audio clips followed by guided tasks prompts learners to guess meaning, paraphrase, or describe visuals when unknown words appear.

4. Collaborative Tasks: Online breakout rooms or shared documents (e.g., on Zoom or Google Docs) push learners to negotiate meaning and work around vocabulary gaps collaboratively.

5. Visual and Gesture-Based Learning: Incorporating gesture recognition or drawing apps allows learners to express themselves nonverbally, enhancing overall communication.

It is essential to scaffold these tools with clear strategic aims. For example, teaching how to say, "I don't understand" or "Can you say it another way?" prepares learners to actively manage difficulties rather than freeze.

CONCLUSION

Interactive technologies offer a powerful platform for developing strategic competence among A1-level learners. By creating a supportive, engaging, and multimodal learning environment, teachers can help students learn to navigate communicative challenges even with limited language. As education continues to embrace digital tools, focusing on strategic competence ensures learners become confident, resourceful communicators from the very beginning.

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