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ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ В ПРАКТИКЕ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ И В ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯХ МЕТОДИСТОВ

Аннотация: в методике преподавания иностранного языка разработан обширный массив педагогических инструментов, который охватывает методы, приемы, средства, материалы, упражнения и задания, формы организации учебного процесса для обучающихся разного возраста в разных контекстах и форматах с разными целями. Цель статьи – выявить несколько педагогических инструментов, которые широко рассматривались исследователями в последнее время, и, опираясь на результаты анкетирования учителей иностранного языка, определить их осведомленность и востребованность в выделенных инструментах в разработке логики практического преподавания предмета.

Материалы и методы. Материалы для данного исследования отбирались путем мозгового штурма авторов и случайной выборки ряда педагогических инструментов, которые часто освещаются в методических статьях по иноязычному образованию и в выступлениях учителей иностранного языка на семинарах, проводимых кафедрой английского языка. Были отобраны Kahoot / Quizlet как распространенные сервисы для формирования языковых навыков; пары сменного состава как интерактивный способ активизации обучающихся на уроках; ментальные карты как способ структурирования информации для разных задач; способы проблемного обучения для целостного развития иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции; геймификация как способ системного применения игровых элементов на уроке; перевернутый класс как вариант организации самостоятельной работы обучающихся. Также были применены поисковые сервисы для выявления статистики описания выбранных инструментов в методических публикациях. Путем анкетирования определялось, знакомы ли учителя иностранного языка с данными инструментами и применяют ли они эти инструменты в практической деятельности.

Результаты. Исследование показало, что выбранные инструменты известны практически всем участникам анкетирования, однако ряд из них по разным причинам не получили широкого применения на уроках, несмотря на доказанную в исследованиях эффективность (пары сменного состава, ментальные карты и сервисы Kahoot / Quizlet).

Обсуждение и выводы. Существует определенный разрыв между научными исследованиями, знаниями учителей иностранного языка и практическим применением педагогических инструментов на уроках. Мы полагаем, что имеется необходимость в разработке обобщенных обзоров и конкретных инструкций по использованию доказано эффективных педагогических инструментов, сопровождаемых примерами, и в ознакомлении учителей с ними в ходе профессиональной подготовки и переподготовки.

Ключевые слова: иноязычное образование, педагогические инструменты, Kahoot / Quizlet, пары сменного состава, проблемное учение, перевернутый класс.

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DIDACTIC TOOLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING PRACTICES AND RESEARCH PAPERS

Abstract: methodology for teaching foreign languages has developed a wide variety of didactic tools that embrace methods, techniques, aids, materials, tasks, and activities for teaching foreign languages in diverse contexts and formats to people of different ages for different goals. The purpose of the study is to identify a few didactic tools widely covered by researchers lately and, based on the foreign language teachers' answers to a questionnaire, to find out if the teachers are aware of the tools which have proved effective and if they apply them in designing the logistics of their teaching and student learning practices.

Materials and Methods. The materials for the study were selected through the authors' brain-storming and random choice of a few didactic tools which are frequently covered by researchers and highlighted by foreign language teachers during seminars conducted by our department. As a result, the authors focus on Kahoot / Quizlet as popular services for sub-skills formation; mingles as an interactive form of learners' classroom management; mind maps as a way of information processing for varied purposes; problem-solving tasks for the foreign language communicative competence development; gamification as a systematic implementation of gaming elements in the classroom; flipped classroom as an option of independent student activities management. In addition, the authors used search engines, websites and databases to compile statistics concerning the description of the selected tools in academic papers. The questionnaires offered to teachers aimed to reveal if they are familiar with these tools and if they apply them in the classroom.

Results. According to the study, practically all the respondents know the selected tools, though they do not incorporate all of them into their practices for different reasons in spite of their proven effects. Mingles, mind maps and Kahoot / Quizlet appeared to be the least used.

Discussion and Conclusion. The study revealed a certain gap among researchers' focus, teachers' awareness and practical application of the didactic tools in the classroom. The authors conclude that there is an urgent need to work out special summative reviews, or digests, and guidelines based on research and backed up with practical examples and to widely promote them in pre-service as well as in-service foreign language teacher education.

Keywords: foreign language education, didactic tools, Kahoot / Quizlet, mingles, mind maps, problem-based learning, gamification, flipped classroom.

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Education in any context is based on a curriculum which is a structured plan of instruction that outlines the goals and content for teaching and learning of any academic course in compliance with standards requirements. It sets general guidelines for teachers which need to be practically implemented in everyday classroom activities both online and offline through the use of varied didactic tools. Didactic tools can be generally defined as a reasonable combination of diverse methods, aids, materials, tasks, and techniques, both digital and traditional, which are expected to promote student quality learning.

In foreign language education, related national standards and curricula often rely on the CEFR which is a worldwide standard framework for language skills and abilities [17] where six levels of foreign language competency are described. The subject-specific aim of foreign language education is defined as the foreign language communicative competence at a certain level of its development. This competence is based on the system integration of language sub-skills, skills, soft skills, knowledge, and personal qualities which enable the student to effectively use the foreign language for varied meaningful purposes [2]. To achieve any competence level, teachers need to design such student practices that will lead to the desired outcomes. Obviously, a complex character of the expected outcomes as well as a diversity of learners with different features and needs require a great variety of didactic tools to facilitate learning. Thus, designing lesson and homework plans is based on didactic logistics which we define as the overall process of planning, organizing, and managing practical teaching and learning. An essential part of didactic logistics refers to identifying effective and accessible ways and tools to engage students in appropriate activities to become familiar with the content, to store and process information, and to develop the target competence components while using the content for real life goals. It is evident that there must be coherence and consistency among the goals, the tools, and the agents who apply them to optimize education processes from beginning to end. An education logistics management system therefore implies making efficient decisions in selecting appropriate tools and placing them wisely in the teaching plan intended for student learning.

The aim of the present article is to find out if foreign language teachers are aware of some didactic tools that have been highlighted in foreign language methodology in recent years and if they apply these tools in their practices to improve the student learning outcomes. Through this study, we will be able to conclude to some extent if teachers are skilled at the logistics management system applied in foreign language education. Our choice of the didactic tools for foreign language education was random based on our research and practical experiences. We brainstormed for

those that are often described in related articles and discussed at research conferences and then we investigated if they are used in foreign language teachers` practices.

Literature Review

There has been a lot of research of varied scope concerning the use of diverse didactic tools and their effects on learners in different education contexts, both offline and online. The world's largest and the most impressive one on what works best in schools to improve student learning is that compiled by J. C. Hattie since 2009 who has synthesized nearly 1,850 meta-analyses of varied factors that affect student achievement comprising more than 108,000 studies [7; 24]. These factors are related to seven areas that contribute to learning: the student, the home, the school, the curricula, the teacher, teaching and learning approaches, and the classroom [7; 23; 24]. The application of the quantitative-empirical research method allowed Hattie to create a data-rich result and scale up smaller studies from the point of view of their influences on school-aged students` achievements.

Another broad study deals with top digital tools for learning in the 21st century based on the open annual survey conducted by Jane Hart [21]. It reveals the overall rankings of different platforms, apps, technologies, resources, or networks that voters use for learning. In contrast to Hattie`s research, there is no analysis of the possible effects that these tools may produce on the learning outcomes. Still, it provides a broad picture of the possibilities that teachers and students have at their disposal to improve learning.

What we can conclude from the studies mentioned above is the idea that course book writers and teachers have access to an enormous range of tools and techniques to choose from in designing the logistics of their teaching and learning practices. The issue is whether university foreign language teachers are aware of this variety and whether they implement at least the most widely described tools in the classroom.

For our study we selected a few didactic tools of diverse character: Kahoot / Quizlet, Mingles, Mind maps, Problem-based learning, Gamification, and Flipped classroom.

To identify whether these tools attract the interest of researchers in teaching languages, we have compiled some statistics using the search engines, websites and databases which provide access to academic papers in the sphere of education. The criteria which influenced the choice of these search engines / websites / databases were:

- free access since many teachers do not have access to databases of Scopus and Web of Science, and
- the provision of some numerical data on the number of the articles on a particular topic as it can illustrate research interest in this area and indicate the occurrence of the tools in scholarly literature.

The statistics presented in Table 1 prove that these tools are a subject to numerous research articles and attract scientific attention. As the access to these materials is free, it could be assumed that these tools can be widely used by teachers in their practices.

Table 1

Didactic tools frequency on academic search engines

Didactic Tools	Google Scholar	Academia.edu	ERIC Project Institute of Education Sciences	Cyberleninka (accessed on 24.07.2022)
Kahoot / Quizlet	37 600 / 14 800	410 / 103	97 / 37	345 / 264
Mingles teaching language	71 600 (929 reviews papers)	4942	3	2
Mind map Teaching language	1 300 000 (18 100 reviews papers)	15177	1068	479
Problem-based learning Teaching language	343 000 (7 950 reviews papers)	120 348	111548	1186
gamification teaching language	37 400 (2 460 reviews papers)	13 700	23	641
Flipped classroom	83 300 (4 450 reviews papers)	21888	17192	586

Researchers highlight the following characteristics of the selected tools.

Kahoot / Quizlet are special game-based platforms for content knowledge, vocabulary and grammar practices as well as formative assessment which enhance student motivation, provide immediate feedback, and encourage learners to use the language flexibly [8; 9; 11]. Researchers conclude that Kahoot! can capture, sustain, and increase student motivation, allowing them to feel more comfortable [9]. Similar advantages are mentioned by researchers of Quizlet which is a multifaceted software that helps language learners to develop vocabulary fluency [11]. Quizlet presents learners with «metacognitive strategies in the sense that they can decide on which/how/how often words to practice» (11, p. 52) learning vocabulary at their own pace, and improves the tracking of individual student progress (teachers can create a class and have students join) [11].

A *mingle* is an activity which involves learners` interaction with one another to complete a task with different partners in turn [10–13]. Mingles are an effective form of both offline and online classroom management technique when students can improve the flexibility of language sub-skills (vocabulary and grammar) and of productive speech skills (mediation, discussion, and conversation) being actively involved in interaction for different purposes with different partners. The biggest advantage of this tool is their multifunctional character because, in addition to subject specific skills and competences, they contribute to the enhancement of soft skills (higher order thinking strategies, communication, and collaboration,) due to their potential to amplify the learning environment [2].

A *Mind Map* is a graphic tool which contains a central key word or image and secondary ideas that radiate from the central idea as branches. The key idea crystallizes the subject of attention while the branches represent the connections established

with the central idea, forming a connected nodal structure [16]. Mind maps as well as other ways of visualization can be widely used in teaching and learning foreign languages for varied objectives: to practice vocabulary and grammar, to scaffold listening and reading comprehension, and to develop the learner's oral fluency [14; 15; 16; 26]. They make it easier to process and store information and the related vocabulary because they present any topic visually as a whole with numerous inherent links and logic.

Problem-based Learning (PBL) suggests the use of problem-solving and inquiry-based tasks when students acquire and master knowledge and skills while working on a complex problem similar to those in the real world [10]. This method can be implemented through a series of tasks such as projects, case studies, complex role-plays, creative writing, or debates, etc. [1; 27; 28; 32; 33]. The goal of the tasks is to have students investigate a problem and come up with a well-grounded and well-thought-through solution, generating questions, identifying key ideas, collecting data and analyzing facts and opinions, thus working their way to a potential solution which they will present to the class for discussion. It is evident that to this end they have to pool all their resources (listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills, thinking strategies, versatile knowledge, communication, cooperation and creative abilities) [1; 27; 28; 32; 33]. In this case, learning takes place through self-directed discovery and critical reflection.

Gamification implies the use of game-based elements which make teaching and learning a more collaborative and enjoyable process [6; 12; 22; 25; 30]. According to Shahri et al. [27], it uses game-based components and game principles in a non-game context to engage users more, to increase retention capturing a positive change in human behavior [26]. There is a wide range of gamification elements such as storytelling, competition, feedback, points, level, leaderboards, time-based, avatars [6]. Gamification elements can be combined with different techniques and tasks, they can accompany the use of different aids and materials, promoting student emotional comfort [11].

The flipped classroom approach [5; 19; 31] makes learning self-directed when students are engaged in completing homework assignments that are based on new knowledge or language, preparing for the next class independently. In this way it is possible to enhance their subject-specific as well as soft skills and develop responsibility for the outcomes, promoting learner engagement and autonomy.

Rational

The list of the didactic tools described above is not exhaustive. It is impossible to examine a broad variety of all those that foreign language teachers use. Nevertheless, while selecting the tools for the study, we focused on those that comply with the major approaches of modern foreign language education, such as *the action-oriented approach* «based on real world communicative needs and organized around real-life tasks» [17, p. 26] when «teaching and learning process is driven by action» [17, p. 27] aimed at self-expression, active thinking, interaction, and collaboration; *the learner-centered approach* seeing learners as language users and social agents [17, p. 27] who self-regulate and direct their actions to attain certain outcomes; *the in-*

quiry-based developmental approach to learning which allows each student to grow as a person and as an agent.

A combination of the tools in the teaching process covers all the principal objectives of modern foreign language education (subject-specific and soft skills), promotes enjoyable and diversified learning conditions, thus increasing motivation in learners. There fore, it is possible to assume that the use of the tools under study promotes student social, intellectual, emotional and behavioral engagement which is considered a significant prerequisite of effective teaching and learning.

The review of the research papers allows to conclude that foreign language teachers need to be aware of the tools selected for the study and should incorporate them into their practices on a regular basis.

Methodology

The study was conducted from September 2021 to May 2022 and aimed to reveal (A) if the teachers are familiar with didactic tools which are widely discussed in research papers and at various events (conferences, round tables etc) and (B) if these tools are used by the teachers in their regular practices.

87 teachers of levels of education took part in the study. As the range of the tools selected for the study is universal, polyfunctional, and can be used in varied contexts for different purposes, teachers of all levels of language education (primary, secondary, tertiary) took part in the study. Their teaching experience varied from 2 to 42 years. A more detailed information on the proportion of teacher participants by their professional experience is presented in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2

Participants` work experience

Work experience	Teacher's percentage, %
1–10 years	38
10–20 years	24
20–40 years	33
More than 40 years	5

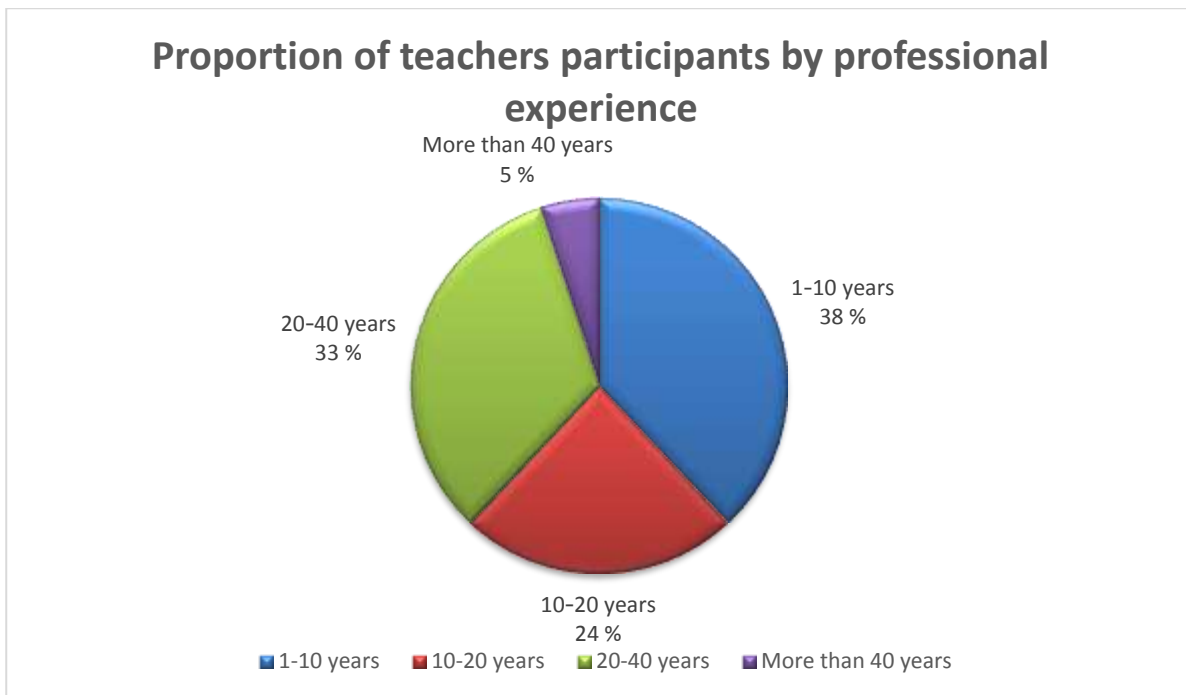


Fig. 1. Proportion of teachers participants by professional experience

All the participants filled in the questionnaire which included the following questions.

Q1. Are you familiar with the following types of activities:

- mingles;
- problem-based learning tasks;
- mind-maps / spiders / clusters;
- gamification tasks;
- flipped classroom tasks;
- kahoot / Quizlet.

Q2. Do you use the following types of activities in your teaching practices of-
fline and online?

- mingles;
- problem-based learning tasks;
- mind-maps / spiders / clusters;
- gamification tasks;
- flipped classroom tasks;
- kahoot / Quizlet.

As the answers to Question 2 could vary, Questions 3 and 4 were divided into 2 options 3(A) / 3(B) and 4 (A) / 4(B). The teachers used the following algorithm (Figure 2) while answering these questions:

- if the respondent answered Q2 positively (yes), they had to answer Q3A and Q4A;
- if the respondent answered Q2 negatively (no), they had to answer Q3B and Q4B.

		Question 2 Yes / No
YES		NO
Q3A. Why do use these didactic tools?		Q3B. Why do not you use them?
Q4A. Give examples of the activities that you use. – mingles; – problem-based learning tasks; – mind-maps / spiders / clusters; – gamification tasks; – flipped classroom tasks; – kahoot / Quizlet		Q4B. Give examples of the activities that you could use. – mingles; – problem-based learning tasks; – mind-maps / spiders / clusters; – gamification tasks; – flipped classroom tasks; – kahoot / quizlet

Fig. 2. Question sequence algorithm

Results

Answers to questions 1 and 2 were analyzed and presented in tables 3–4.

Table 3

Familiarity with the didactic tools under review

Question 1	Number of teachers	Total percentage of the teachers, %
Mingles	83	95
Problem-based learning tasks	87	100
Mind-maps / spiders / clusters	79	91
Gamification tasks	83	95
Flipped classroom tasks	87	100
Kahoot / Quizlet	76	87

As it can be seen from table 3, teachers are very well aware of the didactic tools selected for the study as from 87 % to 100 % of the participants answered question 1 positively. The overwhelming majority of the teachers are well-versed in these didactic tools.

Table 4

Practical application of the didactic tools by teachers

Question 2	Number of teachers	Total percentage of the teachers, %
Mingles	24	28
Problem-based learning tasks	73	85
Mind-maps/spiders/clusters	15	17
Gamification tasks	81	93
Flipped classroom tasks	80	92
Kahoot / Quizlet	27	31

Turning to the answers to question 2, they appeared to be quite different from the answers to question 1. This mismatch between the teachers' familiarity with the didactic tools under review and their practical application in teaching is presented in Figure 3.

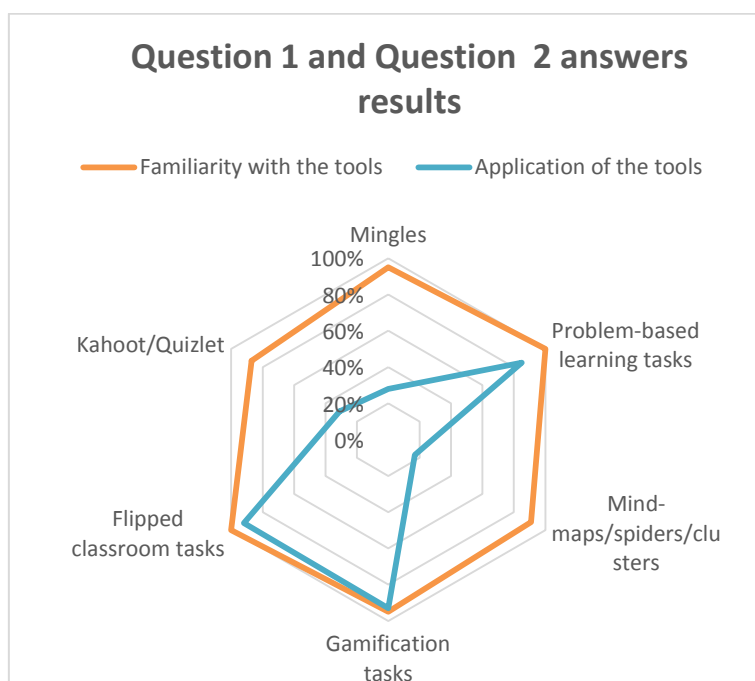


Fig. 3. Question 1 and Question 2 answers results

Apart from gamification tasks, flipped-classroom tasks and problem-based learning tasks, all the other didactic tools are underused by the teachers.

The reasons why the teachers implement the didactic tools in their professional activity are presented in table 5.

Table 5

Reasons for using the didactic tools under review

Question 3A	Number of teachers	Total percentage of the teachers, %
Learners' active involvement	32	37
Better learning outcomes	18	21
More fun for students	16	18
More creative	27	31

The reasons why the teachers refrain from using the didactic tools are presented in table 6.

Table 6

Reasons for not using the didactic tools under review

Question 3B	Number of teachers	Total percentage of the teachers, %
Not clear how to use them	28	32
Lack of practical experience	39	45
No time during the lesson	51	59
Stick only to the coursebook which does not contain such tools	42	48
It takes time to incorporate them into lesson plans	23	20

The teachers were asked to give some examples of the activities they use. Their ideas are presented in table 7 and 8.

Table 7

Teachers` task examples

Question 4A	
Mingles	Make up a questionnaire (2–5 questions about...) and interview your classmates Interview / poll your groupmates. Present your experience at least to three groupmates and listen to their experiences. Choose the one that impressed you and explain why. Present the news you have learned from your partner to your groupmate and listen to the news they have learned
Problem-based learning tasks	Make up a questionnaire (2–5 questions about...) and poll your classmates. Consider several ways to deal with the problem of... Look at the problem from different perspectives (parents, teachers, teenagers, etc.) Study the situation and offer a solution which could benefit different people involved
Mind-maps / spiders / clusters	Make up a mind map /spider to present the key ideas of the text/ vocabulary on the topic/ problem issues
Gamification tasks	Role-play Interview Quiz Grammar / vocabulary / phonetics contest Team competition (vocabulary, ideas, advantages –disadvantages, etc.)
Flipped classroom tasks	Read the text at home and prepare for the problem discussion in the classroom
Kahoot / Quizlet	Make up a list of the topic vocabulary for your group / for yourself to complete a task on Kahoot

Tasks offered by the teachers who do not use the didactic tools under review

Question 4B	
Mingles	Discuss in pairs
Problem-based learning tasks	Discuss the problem and offer a solution Project Consider the pros and cons of...
Mind-maps / spiders / clusters	Make up a mind-map of the topical vocabulary
Gamification tasks	Role-play a dialogue Quiz Team competition Contests
Flipped classroom tasks	Read the text at home / study the topic at home
Kahoot / Quizlet	Make your quiz / vocabulary list using Kahoot or Quizlet

Discussion

The results of the study turned out to be quite unexpected in terms of the authors' assumption that if the didactic tools chosen for the study are widely presented in scholarly literature, these tools should be widely used in the language learning classroom.

The respondents' answers to the first question which aimed to reveal the teachers' familiarity with these tools have shown that a vast majority of the teachers know about these tools (mingles, problem-based learning, mind-maps, gamification, flipped classroom, Kahoot / Quizlet). Problem-based learning and flipped classroom are familiar to 100 % of the respondents, 95 % of the teachers have heard/read about mingles and gamification, 91 % of the teachers have some idea about the use of mind-maps/spiders/clusters while Kahoot and Quizlet were mentioned by 87 % of the respondents which makes it the least common answer. It can be concluded that teachers of all levels of education have theoretical knowledge about these tools.

However, when it comes to the practical application of these tools, the situation changes dramatically. The didactic tools widely used in language teaching practices have proved to be gamification, flipped classroom with focus on self-directed learning and problem-based learning. 93 %, 92 % and 85 % of the respondents respectively apply gamification, flipped classroom and problem-based learning in their practices. The number of teachers who use other tools (mingles, mind-maps, and Kahoot / Quizlet) varied from 17 % to 31 % with mind-maps being the least common option. Mind-maps/clusters/spiders potential to practice vocabulary and grammar, to scaffold listening and reading comprehension, and to develop the learner's oral fluency [14; 15; 16; 26] is underused by the teachers. The second and third least practically used options turned out to be mingles and Kahoot / Quizlet which are put to use by approximately the same number of the teachers which accounted for 31 % and 28 % respectively. However, those who use them, are well aware of their benefits, among which the teachers mentioned learners' active involvement (37 %) and better learning outcomes (21 %) along with more fun (18 %) and creativity (31 %).

Among the reasons for not using the didactic tools under review, the teachers named the lack of knowledge and practical experiences in the area which accounted for 32 % and 45 % respectively. The lack of time during the lesson appeared to be the most common reason with 59 % of the respondents providing this answer. Meanwhile 48 % of the teachers stick to the coursebooks that do not offer such tasks which correlates with the results of the teachers' agency study [4]. This fact indicates one more area for concern as coursebooks used at different levels of language education do not contain the tasks based on the use of these didactic tools.

The examples of the tasks used by the teachers in their practices turned out to be more diverse than the tasks offered by the teachers who do not use them.

The study has revealed a gap between teachers' knowledge base of didactic tools and their practical skills in applying this knowledge. The vast majority of the respondents have a theoretical background while only a third part of the teachers use these tools in their teaching practices.

Familiarity with didactic concepts and scholarly literature does not ensure the implementation of the didactic ideas and tools in everyday teaching. It can be assumed that teachers need clearer guidelines on how to use these tools backed up with a variety of practical examples and focus on multifunctional tasks which can simultaneously develop subject-specific and soft skills and lead to integral learning outcomes [13]. Pre-service and in-service teacher trainers as well as teachers themselves should have access to summative reviews or digests based on practical research data which present the logistics management system guidelines applied in blended foreign language education. Clear task requirements and algorithms on how to build such techniques, activities, materials, aids, and tasks can encourage both teachers' agency and a more active and creative application of effective didactic tools which have been proved effective by researchers. This may be one of the ways of how to bridge the gap between academic research and practical application of its results.

However, we admit that the study has some limitations as the number of the questioned teachers was limited and they were not divided into groups according to the level of their student language education they teach. There needs to be a further study with more focus on different tools used at different levels of blended language education. The second limitation touches upon the list of the didactic tools used as only a limited range of tools was selected for the study.

Conclusion

In spite of the teachers' awareness of a variety of effective didactic tools and some theoretical background in this area, only some of the tools are widely put into practice by the teachers at all levels of language education. Much attention is paid to self-regulated learning (flipped classroom), problem-based learning and gamification, all of these tools being present in the foreign language coursebooks. Meanwhile, when it comes to less popularized by foreign language coursebooks tools such as mingles, mind-maps and the use of apps, their practical application tends to be inconsistent with their potential.

It reveals a significant gap between theory and practices of teaching foreign languages and enhances the need to develop clearer guidelines and step-by-step algo-

rithms to encourage teachers to become more agentic in their teaching activities and introduce a wider variety of effective didactic tools into their classrooms.

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