ONLINE VOCABULARY GAMES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE BACHELORS’ IN APPLIED MECHANICS ENGLISH LEXICAL COMPETENCE

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Nowadays, more and more digital platforms and services are used in language teaching and assessment. Online vocabulary games may be an effective tool in language learning process. They might be of great interest in particular in teaching English for specific purposes. Future bachelors in applied mechanics in their professional communication have to deal with a large number of terms related to technical and scientific topics. To make sure these terminological lexical units are mastered by the students, formative and summative assessments are applied. Online vocabulary games may be successfully used as a means of formative assessment of students' lexical competence.

As defined by Ukrainian scholars, lexical competence is the ability of a person to correctly arrange one’s expressions and understand other people’s speech, based on the system of lexical skills, knowledge and language awareness [1, p. 16]. Thus, future bachelors’ in applied mechanics English lexical competence is a complex concept that consists of lexical skills, knowledge and lexical awareness that provide the ability to correctly understand and use terms in communication in a job-related context. Assessment helps to measure and evaluate students’ progress. Based on its main function, assessment can be formative and summative. While summative assessment is more formal as it is aimed at summarizing students’ achievements and evaluating results of what has been learned in order to put some marks, formative assessment according to Brown (2004), is evaluating students in the process of forming their competences [2, p. 6] in order to make changes to teaching plan. Formative assessment is less formal and can include a variety of forms. Online vocabulary games in a fun, interactive and engaging way help to track and measure students’ progress in terms of their lexical skills and knowledge. Some popular resources include vocabulary quizzes, word associations, crosswords, wordsearches,
puzzles, flashcard games etc. These games test a number of skills, from recognition to recall, and can be modified to fit the specific needs of the learner. Some of well-known and widely applied platforms are Quizlet, Kahoot, Wordwall, and Classtime. Not only do they allow using extensive libraries of resources but also creating teacher’s own activities. Quizlet is used to create flashcards with terms which can be used for individual or group training and testing of new vocabulary. It is a useful tool for memorising and practising terms and then testing to get a sense of a study progress. Kahoot is a game-based learning platform that lets the teacher test students’ lexical skills and knowledge in the form of a quiz (question – answer and true – false format are the most popular). The games can be played in a classic or team mode either live or as an assignment for self-paced learning. Wordwall offers a huge number of templates to create resources that include activities such as match up, quiz, random wheel, missing word, group sort, matching pairs, unjumble, random cards, find the match, open the box, wordsearch, anagram, labelled diagram, gameshow quiz, flash cards, crossword, flip tiles, whack-a-mole. These can be applied for the assessment of vocabulary skills and knowledge. The classtime platform also provides possibility to engage the students in a collaborative challenge, which can turn the usual test task into an interactive team game.

Using online vocabulary games for the formative assessment of lexical competence offer a great number of advantages. They are engaging and entertaining and keep students motivated; convenient (can be played live and in a self-paced mode); interactive (engaging with materials and interacting with other players helps to reinforce vocabulary words and make them more memorable); personalizing (are customized to suit individual needs and preferences); offering immediate feedback (allows players to adjust their learning strategies and improve their skills faster).

To conclude, integrating online vocabulary games into lexical competence assessment can provide a fun and engaging way for learners to improve their vocabulary skills while also measuring their progress.

References:
[6] https://wordwall.net/