

IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES AND
ASSESSING SPEAKING THROUGH UTILIZING FLIPGRID

Xushmamatova Aminaxon Rustam qizi
EFL Teacher, UzSWLU
aminaxon.xushmamatova@gmail.com

ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
Integrating innovative methods in assessing language ability of learners are critical part of language teaching and learning. The present paper is dedicated to explore integration of digital platform “Flipgrid” where instructor posted tasks and students answer in video format. This innovative tool allowed to process students learning about the content. Students recorded videos were peer and self-assessed with follow-up teacher’s feedback relying on rubric (Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, Interactive Communication). After the implementation of Flipgrid, subjects were asked to take a survey on benefits of Flipgrid where most of them highlighted the advantageous as the tool allowed them to be a part of assessment process and to be aware of areas that needs improvement in their oral proficiency.	“Flipgrid”, interactive communication, Communicative competence, digital platform

Introduction

In today's digital age, technology plays a pivotal role in transforming various aspects of education, including language assessment. Language assessment, particularly in the domain of language learning and teaching, has seen significant advancements with the integration of technology. This essay delves into the role of technology in language assessment, exploring its benefits, challenges, and implications for language learners and educators.

Enhanced Interactivity and Engagement: Technology-rich assessments provide students with interactive tasks and engaging activities that simulate real-life language use. For instance, online platforms like Duolingo and Babbel offer gamified language exercises that assess students' vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills in a fun and engaging manner.

Immediate Feedback and Personalization: Technology allows for immediate feedback on assessments, enabling students to self-monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. Automated scoring systems and AI-based tools provide personalized feedback based on students' responses, offering targeted guidance for language development.

Authentic Performance Assessment: Digital tools like video recording platforms (e.g., Flipgrid) allow students to demonstrate their speaking skills in authentic contexts, such as recording presentations, engaging in virtual conversations, or participating in role-plays. This authenticity enhances the validity of language assessments by reflecting real-world communication scenarios.

Flexibility and Accessibility: Technology offers flexibility in assessment delivery, allowing students to complete assessments at their own pace and convenience. Online platforms and mobile applications make language assessments accessible to a wide range of learners, regardless of their geographical location or time constraints.

A mobile software application called Flipgrid (Flipgrid.com) was chosen as an asynchronous platform for conducting speaking activities with students. Flipgrid is a cross-platform application that works on iOS, Android and computer which enables users to make a video recorded “response” which is posted to a thread which Flipgrid calls a “Topic.” Flipgrid was acquired by Microsoft in 2018 and all of its robust offerings of features (video creation tools, unlimited storage, extensive database of free images, etc.) are available for free for teachers as well as students. Flipgrid is by far the most widely used online video creation and sharing platform in the education domain. It has been used in classes of various fields, especially in America. There are also many studies in the literature investigating Flipgrid’s effectiveness in oral skills (Mango, 2019, 2021; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019; Petersen et al., 2020; Shin & Yunis, 2021). However, literature around the utilization of Flipgrid and its effects on Japanese language students are less common. This paper centers on the efforts to implement Flipgrid in asynchronous courses along with investigation of its efficacy for conducting speaking activities in a communicative-centered EFL course. The positive and negative experiences from students will be presented and examined in this paper too.

Following the university’s curriculum, I conducted a lesson on the topic of “Summary writing”. Equipping students with main principles of writing summary, we analyzed weak and strong written summaries being as a group. I created discussion on how to use Reporting Verbs appropriately, while summarizing main ideas of original work. The online educational tool “Flipgrid” was introduced to students and follow up tasks were explained; phrases that are used in giving and receiving compliments were presented. The classroom implemented communicative teaching in language classrooms by incorporating linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences through the use of authentic material.

Linguistic competences involve a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are interrelated and mutually supported in order to conduct a successful scientific communication that may be destined to different communities or audiences (scientific or the general public), who will be able to understand the communicated knowledge and even use it, provided that they have been correctly materialized from a linguistic point of view. However, the basic notion is the competence of an individual in a language. Knowing the importance of increasing student linguistic competence, I followed the key principles so students can enhance their knowledge about grammatical patterns like form, meaning and use. By addressing linguistic competence, I was able to conduct effective and engaging class and have an opportunity to develop students’ speaking skill with the combination of grammar. I applied “brainstorming” technique to gather students’ knowledge on grammatically correct formal and informal phrases do they use while giving and receiving compliments in English language and what

Reporting Verbs can be used while summarizing the source material. Then, some correct ways of phrases for complimenting a person's appearance/clothes, performances, possessions in formal and informal were presented. The activities provoked wonder and motivation in learners; moreover, they were able to connect previous knowledge to the school's curriculum and to real world issues. Nevertheless, it was noticed that to design this type of activities could be time demanding, and that constant reflection in language learning theory is required to improve the effectivity of further results. Sample of question:

- What kind of "weak and strong" reporting verbs do you know?

Designing tasks based on digital language resources helped to develop pragmatic competence. Since materials are available at any time, and the type of language used in online forums, chat-lines, or social media often consists of features typical of spoken, written which is suitable for communicative competence development. As stated by Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni (2000), online resources represent a very useful language tool for creating differentiated teaching tasks that support collaborative learning and individual research by students, while also requiring innovative pedagogical practices and technological competence (Furstenberg, 1997; Hampel, 2006). Such tasks targeted at pragmatic competence development prove to be extremely useful because of their innovative character. It is important to note that learning a language includes learning everything behind the language and beyond the grammar. **Sociolinguistic competence** is the ability to communicate appropriately by using the right words, expressions, and attitude towards a specific topic, setting, and relationship. It also has a strong role in the way learners use the language they are learning to enrich the knowledge they possess. Therefore, I integrated this competence by applying an activity where students have to analyze the authentic video material on "Giving Genuine Compliments" and summarize main ideas following the steps that were presented on Flipgrid. The socio-oriented questions such as when and how to use complimenting in appearance, performance, possessions, personality traits activated what specific functions of language to convey while communicating in different social contexts. By doing this, I reached the development of sociolinguistic competence making use of authentic use of language for meaningful purposes which can guide learners in the choice of appropriate forms. Sample of question:

- What is different between British/American Culture and your own in complimenting others?
 - Does this positive value of being "slender" apply to both men and women in the U.S.? Would it be all right to say "You've lost some weight, didn't you?" as a compliment? What's the possible danger?
- The lesson under discussion used **Task-based learning** benefiting my students because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication, and often provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. As the tasks are likely to be familiar to the students (e.g.: giving and receiving compliments), students are more likely to be engaged, which may further motivate them in their language learning. Task Based Language Teaching focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language.

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