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STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITIONING EFL STUDENTS FROM A2 TO B1 LEVEL: A CASE STUDY ON THE TOPIC "FAMILY"

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1. Introduction

The transition from A2 to B1 level in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education can be challenging for learners. Students encounter more complex grammatical structures, vocabulary, and communicative tasks, which often result in common issues in speaking, writing, and listening. This paper overviews teaching strategies to support this transition, using the theme of "Family" as a case study to illustrate practical methods for addressing these issues.

2. Challenges Encountered in the Classroom

2.1 Speaking

2.1.1 Pair and Small Team Conversations

One of the main obstacles at the A2-B1 transition is students' difficulty in engaging in pair or small group discussions. With the general school

education, many learners lack experience in interactive tasks, which leads to avoidance, hesitation, or incomplete responses. For example, paired dialogue activities like "Talking About My Parents" often fail as students struggle with turn-taking and maintaining a conversation flow.

2.1.2 Monologue Speaking

When students are required to speak alone, their language use often reveals common grammatical and lexical mistakes that affect fluency. Some observed errors include:

Misuse of verb tenses: "*they like to spent time*"; "*what was your emotions*"; mispronunciation: "[‘also]"; structural errors: "*like to fishing*"; awkward phrasing: "*we managed to win the French team*." These mistakes disrupt the coherence and accuracy of their speech.

2.3 Writing Skills

In writing tasks, students frequently confuse the structure of essays and paragraphs. Their assigned paragraphs are often developed as essays which may lack organisation and logical connectors, while paragraphs, if properly sized, often fail to develop a single coherent idea around a topic sentence.

2.4 Listening Skills

Listening comprehension is another challenge. While students perform adequately when listening to slow-paced material with basic vocabulary, they struggle when the speed or complexity of the listening input increases.

2.5 Grammar and Verb Tenses

The most significant grammatical challenges include confusion between verb tenses and aspects, particularly the Present Perfect and Past Simple, due to differences between English and the students' native Ukrainian. Other frequent issues include: omitting third-person singular -s in Present Simple; confusing present and past forms of irregular verbs; using "double past" (e.g., "*she did not gave*"); subject-verb agreement errors such as "*my aunt have*" and "*they was gathering*."

3. Targeted B1 Level Skills in EFL

At the B1 level, students should focus on developing a range of intermediate language skills to enhance their communication abilities. According to *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* [1], the key skills include the following:

Speaking:

Engaging in conversations on familiar topics, such as family and leisure.

Expressing opinions and explaining viewpoints in discussions.

Using basic grammar more accurately, particularly with verb tenses.

Listening:

Understanding the main points in clear, standard speech.

Following everyday conversations, such as interviews and dialogues.

Improving comprehension of news and descriptions with straightforward language.

Reading:

Comprehending texts on familiar subjects and understanding more complex opinions.

Writing:

Writing structured texts such as personal letters and essays, using appropriate paragraphing and linking ideas clearly.

Grammar:

Correct use of verb tenses, especially the Present Perfect, Past Simple, and Past Perfect.

Subject-verb agreement and mastery of irregular verbs.

4. Strategies for Overcoming the Transition Challenges

4.1. Pair and Small Team Conversation Strategies

To improve interactive speaking, teachers can introduce the following structured conversation techniques.

Role-playing: Students fill in simple sentence templates such as "My mom likes to __," helping them to develop confidence in responding to their partners.

Scaffolded conversations: Using visuals or prompts to guide dialogue construction.

Gradual progression: Start with controlled dialogues, gradually moving to freer conversations.

4.2. Monologue Speaking Strategies

To address grammatical and fluency issues in monologues, the following strategies are offered:

Structured outlines: Providing students with clear outlines to organise their speech.

Pronunciation drills: Focusing on difficult words, using them in drills.

Peer feedback: Pairing students to elicit feedback.

4.3. Writing Strategies

To help students distinguish between paragraphs and essays, the teaching strategies may include:

Paragraph breakdowns: Teaching the components of a paragraph (topic sentence, supporting details, conclusion).

Essay structure: Guiding students through organising multi-paragraph essays with logical transitions between ideas.

4.4. Listening Strategies

Listening comprehension can be improved in the following ways:

Gradual exposure: Starting with slow, clear audio and gradually increasing the speed and complexity.

Listening for gist and detail: Teaching students to focus on both the main idea and specific details.

4.5. Grammar and Verb Tenses Strategies

To address tense confusion the teachers may implement the following strategies:

Timeline activities: Visualising the differences between Present Perfect, Past Simple, and Past Perfect using timelines.

Subject-verb agreement drills: Assigning regular exercises can help to eliminate errors like "*my aunt have*."

Frequent practice: Using quizzes, drills, and oral practice to reinforce irregular verbs and correct use of tenses.

5. Case Study: Implementing the Strategies through the topic "Family"

5.1. Sample Lesson Plan on "Cultural Identity"

Activity: Introducing cultural family traditions through a sample EFL text.

Speaking task: Students discuss their own cultural identity, using guided questions.

Writing task: Comparing family practices in their orn culture with those from another culture.

5.2. Sample Lesson Plan on "Generation Gap"

Activity: Showing a video or reading on generational differences.

Monologue task: Students present their views on the generation gap in their families, with the teacher's focusing on correcting common grammar mistakes.

6. Conclusion

Transitioning students from A2 to B1 level in an EFL classroom requires targeted strategies to overcome specific language obstacles, particularly in speaking, listening, and grammar. With engaging and relevant topics such as "Family," teachers can enhance student motivation while simultaneously addressing students' language issues. Through structured conversation tasks, speaking and writing practice, and consistent grammar reinforcement, students will make a smoother transition to B1, building both confidence and competence in English.

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