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Professional
paper

Speaking Activities on Padlet as a Part of an Online Course in French Phonetics Designed for Serbian-Speaking Students

Extended summary

Research on the use of Padlet in university classes highlights its potential for providing support for active and collaborative learning in a digital environment (Deni and Zainal, 2015: 364, Beltrán-Martín, 2019: 203-204). There is some research that also supports the fact that the possibilities offered by Padlet can be very useful and stimulating in the context of learning foreign languages (e.g. in learning English grammar and practicing writing skills: Harris et al., 2017: 783).

The aim of this paper is to present our experience in organizing speaking activities on Padlet as a part of online practical classes in French phonetics during the summer semester of 2020/21 at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The proposed activities on Padlet were primarily aimed at identifying possible phonetic-phonological and morphophonological mistakes of students in their oral presentations. A total of 20 students participated in the speaking activities, which were organized in such a way that the students used the virtual collaborative wall to upload audio recordings of shorter oral presentations (approximately one minute long), of their own choice, on the following set general topics: presenting their favorite francophone songs, destinations, and films. Since all the recordings were available on the virtual collaborative wall, the teacher encouraged interaction among the students by asking them to listen to the recordings of their peers within their group and to leave short audio comments (if, for example, they liked the selection of the song that was presented or if, for example, they would like to share their opinion on the topic of the presented film, etc.). The students had the

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opportunity to enrich their column on the virtual collaborative wall with various thematically appropriate multimedia content of their choice.

The collected audio corpus (58 recordings of speaking activities, with a total duration of 74 minutes and 6 seconds, and 21 audio comments, with a total duration of 9 minutes and 7 seconds) was analyzed in the following manner: the teacher, having carefully listened to all the recordings, would single out the most common phonetic-phonological mistakes; they would then indicate these mistakes to each student individually in electronic correspondence (in the form of textual and, if necessary, audio comments), followed by a compiled analysis of common mistakes and exercises based on the principle of the articulatory approach of phonetic correction in synchronous online classes on Zoom. The analysis of the collected audio corpus and the pedagogical implications of the obtained results are shown on the example of the typology of the most frequently observed mistakes in the production of nasal vowels (/ɑ̃/, /ɛ̃/, /ɔ̃/).

Our paper also presents the results of a qualitative research conducted among students (an anonymous survey on Google Forms) on the use of Padlet for the above-mentioned purposes, with the participation of 14 respondents. All the students positively marked the application of this digital tool in the given context, highlighting its main features: encouraging creativity, interactivity of the content, as well as its achievement of multiple effectiveness in the context of learning French as a foreign language. Namely, the students confirmed that these activities were "extremely useful in every way": from the phonetic correction of pronunciation, through the adoption of morphosyntactic structures and expansion of vocabulary, to familiarization with francophone civilization content, planning and organizing oral presentations. The students confirmed that, from the creation of the first to the third speaking activity on Padlet, they noticed their progress in the perception of certain sounds (e.g. the nasal vowels /ɑ̃/, /ɛ̃/, /ɔ̃/), and generally speaking, in pronunciation, especially of certain vowels of the French language that do not exist in the Serbian language and which Serbian natives often acquire with difficulty (such as the vowel /y/), as well as in the prosodic characteristics of speech, and, finally, in general understanding of the presented text as well as in oral expression in French.

Keywords: online teaching, Padlet, French phonetics, nasal vowels, French as a foreign language

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