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**THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CHATGPT, DUOLINGO,
GRAMMARLY)
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS**

Introduction. A few years ago, when students in English classes began quietly switching between browser tabs, most instructors had little idea what was actually happening on those screens. Today, the picture looks entirely different: AI-powered tools have stepped out of the shadows and become fully-fledged participants in the educational process — whether officially sanctioned or not. According to an EdTech Ukraine (2023) survey, over 74% of students enrolled in language-related and economics programmes regularly turn to at least one AI service when preparing for foreign language classes.

This comes as no surprise. ChatGPT offers instant feedback and unlimited practice of live communicative language; Duolingo transforms daily vocabulary revision into a gamified process with its own internal engagement logic; Grammarly functions as a tireless editor capable of explaining the reason behind every error. Together, they address three longstanding pain points in university language education: insufficient individualisation, limited out-of-class practice, and the absence of immediate feedback.

At the same time, widespread and unsystematic adoption of these tools confronts the pedagogical community with a question that remains largely unanswered: what role do AI services actually play in developing foreign language competence — that of an effective instrument, or a convenient substitute for genuine communicative effort? This paper is an attempt to answer that question through lived classroom experience rather than abstract theoretical constructs

Aim. The aim of the study is to determine the actual pedagogical effectiveness of ChatGPT, Duolingo, and Grammarly in developing students' foreign language communicative competence at higher education institutions, and to develop methodological recommendations for their evidence-based integration into foreign language instruction.

Results. The analytical basis of the study comprises pedagogical observations, student surveys, and analysis of written assignments conducted between 2022 and 2025 at the Department of Pedagogy, Foreign Philology and Translation, Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics. Participants included first - to fourth-year students of economics and management programmes with English proficiency levels ranging from A2 to B2 on the CEFR scale. The analysis combined qualitative observation of learning behaviour, questionnaires, and comparison of written works produced by student groups that differed in the nature of their AI tool use.

ChatGPT: expanding capability or an illusion of progress? Students who used ChatGPT for drafting and editing texts under instructor guidance — that is, with a mandatory analysis of the tool's suggestions rather than blind copying — demonstrated noticeably stronger discursive coherence in their texts and a more deliberate approach to argumentation structure compared to those who either did not use AI at all or engaged with it unsystematically. Qualitative improvement in writing was evident precisely where the student entered into a dialogue with ChatGPT rather than simply receiving a ready-made text.

At the same time, the picture proved uneven. A considerable proportion of students — particularly at the outset of working with the tool — exhibited a characteristic behavioural pattern: prompt → copy response → no reflection. The written assignments of this subgroup showed virtually no difference from those produced without any tools, and in some cases indicated a weakening of the independent text-generation skill. One student put it more precisely than any academic text could during a consultation: "ChatGPT writes better than I do, but I'm

starting to lose track of why mine is worse." That remark, in essence, captures the central pedagogical problem.

Duolingo: motivation as resource and as trap. The platform showed notable results in an area where traditional instruction chronically falls short — sustaining regularity in independent study. Students who used Duolingo as a component of their homework maintained a considerably higher rate of task completion throughout the semester compared to those who received standard textbook exercises. This was particularly evident in the maintenance of vocabulary and the development of a habit of daily contact with the language.

The critical boundary of Duolingo's applicability is around the B1/B2 level. For students above this threshold, the platform effectively ceases to be a challenge: the adaptive algorithm is too accommodating, demanding no real communicative effort from the user. Cases of what might be called "gamified time-serving" were observed — students completing the simplest exercises solely to maintain their streak, with no actual gain in competence. This is an important signal for the methodologist: the tool requires differentiated assignment rather than blanket application across all proficiency levels.

Grammarly: accuracy versus understanding. Among the three tools, Grammarly proved the most pedagogically ambivalent. Students who consistently read the explanations accompanying suggested corrections — rather than simply accepting them automatically — gradually demonstrated a reduction in recurring grammatical errors and, more importantly, began to articulate the underlying rule independently after repeated encounters with the same error type. It is precisely this "moment of awareness" that constitutes the tool's most valuable pedagogical effect.

Students who adopted a strategy of "accept all corrections" without analysis, however, displayed a paradoxical outcome: their texts became grammatically cleaner, yet the authors were unable to explain any of the accepted corrections and reproduced the same errors in conditions without access to the tool. Grammarly created a sense of confidence unsupported by any genuine internalisation of language norms. In the

context of a non-language higher education institution, where a foreign language is an instrumental rather than a core discipline, this is a particularly relevant trap.

The synergistic effect of combined use. The most pronounced qualitative changes were observed among students who used all three tools within a methodologically organised framework: ChatGPT for generating and discussing subject-specific texts, Duolingo for maintaining vocabulary between classes, and Grammarly for editing final written assignments. These students far less frequently described AI use as "a way to get things done faster" and far more often as "a chance to actually understand." This is a fundamental difference in attitude — one created by the methodological context, not by the technology itself.

Conclusions. The analytical work carried out provides grounds for several conclusions that we hope will prove useful in the practice of foreign language teaching at non-language higher education institutions.

First, ChatGPT, Duolingo, and Grammarly are genuinely effective pedagogical tools — but only when their use is methodologically sound. Independent, unsupported application yields either minimal or negative effects on deep language acquisition, even when accompanied by a subjective sense of progress. This is, perhaps, the most important practical finding.

Second, each tool has its own "zone of greatest pedagogical effect": ChatGPT is best suited for developing discursive and strategic competence through reflective work with text; Duolingo is most effective for building vocabulary and sustaining motivation at A1–B1 levels; Grammarly works best for developing grammatical accuracy and metalinguistic awareness through deliberate, rather than automatic, engagement with its suggestions.

Third, the combined use of all three tools within a unified methodological module produces qualitative outcomes that exceed the sum of each tool's individual effects. This suggests that the future lies in integrated AI-enriched learning environments, where the instructor's role shifts from "source of knowledge" to "architect of learning experience."

Fourth, the risks of excessive AI dependency are real and demand systematic attention. Developing a critical stance towards the tool's suggestions must become a mandatory component of any methodological support. Without this, technology that was meant to expand the learner's capacity becomes a crutch that weakens their own communicative resources.

Directions for further research include the study of long-term effects of systematic AI tool use, as well as the development of assessment criteria for foreign language competence formed within AI-integrated learning environments.

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