THE ROLE OF ICT IN ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Abstract

This article deals with digitalized world of recent day's information and communication technologies (ICT) which play a transformative role in various sectors, including education. This paper explores the integration of ICT in foreign language learning and teaching, highlighting the benefits and challenges associated with digital platforms and educational apps. Software programs such as *Future Learn*, *UNLOCK*, *NEWSMART*, and *TED-Ed* are examined for their ability to support language skill development. Through the analysis of previous studies and practical examples, this paper demonstrates how technology can enhance learners' curiosity, autonomy, and language competence. Additionally, the role of gamified tools like *Kahoot* in fostering engagement is discussed. The findings underline the necessity of integrating ICT thoughtfully to support language acquisition in dynamic and meaningful ways.

Keywords

ICT, foreign language teaching, language apps, e-learning, digital education platforms, gamification

Introduction

The advent of digital technologies has profoundly altered the landscape of education. In the realm of foreign language learning, ICT has become an essential tool for both educators and learners. Its integration has made language education more interactive, learner-centered, and flexible. ICT-based platforms and applications not only provide diverse resources but also create opportunities for real-time communication and collaboration across cultures. Moreover, digital technologies enable **personalized learning**, allowing learners to progress at their own pace and receive immediate feedback, which is particularly beneficial for language acquisition. This level of customization can help address the varying needs and learning styles of students, enhancing both motivation and effectiveness. Particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, digital tools enabled the continuation of education through remote learning. As Rasool (2000) notes, the

implementation of technology must be sensitive to context and culture, ensuring it empowers rather than marginalizes learners. This paper investigates the use of ICT in foreign language learning, focusing on its impact, effectiveness, and the perceptions of both students and teachers.

Literature Review

The integration of ICT in language education has been explored by numerous scholars. Ashcroft and Imrie (2014) examined the effectiveness of digital flashcards in vocabulary acquisition, finding that students benefited from spaced repetition and multimedia content. Their research supports the broader argument that digital tools can enhance learner retention and engagement. They specifically emphasized how digital flashcards enable learners to engage with content more actively, contributing to long-term retention.

Dudeney and Hockly (2007) described ICT as an interactive and collaborative medium that allows the creation of educational content easily shared in digital spaces. They emphasized that technologies enable students to discover and practice language in a dynamic and meaningful context. According to their findings, ICT contributes to developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills while supporting autonomous learning. Their work underscores the importance of interactive and student-centered learning environments facilitated by ICT tools.

Rassool (2000) cautioned that while technology has transformative potential, it could also reinforce linguistic and cultural hegemonies if not implemented thoughtfully. Therefore, he advocated for context-sensitive adoption of ICT, particularly in multilingual and multicultural learning environments. His research stresses the need for an inclusive approach to technology integration that respects the diversity of learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Kopecky (2009), as cited by de Wit (2012), highlighted the importance of games in the language classroom. Games not only provide practice in various skills but also offer a welcome break from traditional teaching methods. When games are tied clearly to learning objectives, they can maintain student engagement and confidence in the learning process. Kopecky's findings support the idea that gamification, as part of the ICT toolkit, can foster motivation and engagement, particularly in environments where students may otherwise struggle to stay engaged with traditional pedagogical methods.

Fitria (2023) explored the opportunities and challenges of using ICT in English language teaching (ELT), emphasizing that ICT can be a powerful tool for enhancing the learning experience. Fitria noted that while ICT provides numerous benefits such as increasing accessibility and fostering student collaboration, challenges like technological inequality and the need for teacher training remain

critical concerns in its implementation. Her study supports the idea that ICT tools can be instrumental in creating an inclusive, flexible learning environment, but their success depends on how well they are integrated into the teaching process.

Francis and Ezeife (2007) argued that integrating ICT into the school curriculum requires a focus on professional development models for educators. They emphasized the importance of continuous training and support for teachers, noting that technology integration will be most effective when educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to use digital tools effectively. This aligns with the broader perspective that teacher preparedness is crucial in ensuring that ICT enhances rather than hinders the learning experience.

Graham (2015) examined the role of game-based learning systems, such as Kahoot!, in enhancing student engagement. His study demonstrated that Kahoot! effectively promotes active learning, offering a game-based environment that enhances student motivation and participation. Graham found that students were more likely to engage with the content and retain information when presented in a gamified format, supporting the argument that games can be an effective tool for increasing student interaction and making language learning more enjoyable.

These studies collectively show that technology-supported language learning, when grounded in pedagogical principles, can enhance both teaching and learning outcomes.

Methods

This study relies on a qualitative review of relevant literature, supported by a case analysis of technology usage in language learning environments. In particular, data from a classroom implementation of the *Kahoot* quiz platform was examined. This case involved 30 nursing students learning general English as an extracurricular subject. Feedback was gathered through questionnaires administered before and after introducing *Kahoot*. The results were analyzed to determine changes in student engagement, motivation, and perception of technology-assisted learning.

Results

The analysis shows that students exposed to ICT-supported learning tools demonstrated higher engagement and motivation. In the case study involving *Kahoot*, the pre-implementation questionnaire revealed dissatisfaction with conventional teaching methods. However, post-implementation results showed that most students found the game-based approach enjoyable, challenging, and interactive.

Students expressed that the use of games like *Kahoot* reduced anxiety, increased classroom participation, and made the lessons more memorable.

Similarly, apps like *UNLOCK* and *NEWSMART* provided structured, skill-based development opportunities. *UNLOCK* enhanced academic skills through scaffolder tasks and videos, while *NEWSMART* enriched learners' vocabulary and listening skills using current business news articles.

TED-Ed was also identified as a significant platform promoting global learning. It offers animated videos, interactive lesson plans, and tools for presentation skills expanding students' cultural and intellectual horizons.

Discussion

The integration of ICT in language teaching is not merely a trend but a pedagogical evolution. Tools such as *UNLOCK* and *TED-Ed* serve as valuable supplements to traditional instruction by encouraging critical thinking and active engagement. These tools accommodate different learning styles and promote learner autonomy.

Gamification, as seen with *Kahoot*, can enhance motivation and attention, especially among learners who may find traditional formats disengaging. Games provide a low-pressure environment for language practice and stimulate interaction and cooperation.

Despite these advantages, the success of ICT in education depends on thoughtful implementation. Teachers must understand their students' needs, interests, and contexts to select suitable tools. Moreover, professional development is essential for educators to effectively integrate these technologies into their practice.

As Rassool (2000) emphasized, technology must be used in ways that promote inclusion and diversity, rather than reinforcing existing inequalities. This requires educators to be critical users of technology, continuously evaluating its pedagogical value.

Conclusion

ICT tools, when appropriately integrated, have the potential to enhance all aspects of foreign language learning. While no single app or platform can address every skill area equally, using a combination of tools like *UNLOCK*, *NEWSMART*, *TED-Ed*, and *Kahoot* creates a balanced and effective language learning environment. These technologies not only improve linguistic competence but also develop critical thinking, cultural awareness, and digital literacy.

Encouraging innovation in language instruction through ICT makes the learning experience more meaningful and aligned with real-world communication needs. As technology continues to evolve, its thoughtful adoption in education will be key to developing globally competent language users.

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