



The Impact Of Digital Tools In Acquiring English Language for young learners

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1. Abstract

This research introduced the effectiveness and importance of digital tools on English language learning and the challenges experienced in their implementation. The research problem centred on understanding the impact of digital tools on English language learning outcomes and pinpointing obstacles to successful integration. However, it was crucial to assess their efficacy and identify barriers. The results positively impacted English language learning, with increased motivation and engagement reporting. Participants showed improved proficiency and communication skills. Challenges included technical issues, digital literacy gaps, and distractions, underscoring the need for adequate teacher training and support. The findings positively impacted language learning, as evidenced by heightened motivation and engagement among participants. Noticeable improvements were observed in proficiency and communication skills. Technical glitches, disparities in digital literacy, and distractions were identified, emphasizing the necessity for comprehensive teacher training and support. Recommendations include continuous research and student-friendly English language learning applications. Promoting digital literacy among educators and learners is essential in maximizing the benefits of emerging technologies. Addressing these challenges and leveraging digital tools would better prepare language educators for a multilingual and interconnected world.

2. Introduction

In recent years, the rise of digital technology has transformed nearly every aspect of education, with language learning seeing some of the most innovative applications.

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Language apps, online games, and digital resources now offer a new dimension to language acquisition, promising greater accessibility and interactive experience for students. However, as these tools rapidly grow in popularity, questions arise about their true effectiveness in promoting language skills compared to traditional face-to-face methods. While digital tools bring the allure of personalization and engagement, it remains unclear how they shape foundational language skills overtime. This study seeks to bridge the gap, examining the ways in which digital tools impact language acquisition and exploring whether they provide meaningful advantages- or unintentional setbacks- in comparison to established teaching methods. Language acquisition, a fundamental component of human communication, has traditionally been associated with classroom settings, textbooks, and face-toface interactions with native speakers. However, with the proliferation of digital technologies, there has been a significant shift in how language learners engage with their target language. Digital tools have made language learning more accessible, adaptable, and interactive, allowing learners to immerse themselves in real-world language use through apps, websites, podcasts, and videos. While the conventional classroom environment focuses on structured lessons and rote memorization, digital tools offer dynamic and learner-centered approaches, enhancing motivation and making learning more enjoyable. The rise of e-learning platforms and integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language learning applications have further expanded the possibilities for personalized learning experience. For instance, tools like Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise use gamification and spaced repetition techniques to make learning efficient and fun. Yet, despite their popularity, the long-term impact of these tools on learners' proficiency and retention is still an area of active research.

Learning and teaching have been revolutionized with the alterations brought by technology in education. The majority of learning institutions have adapted some types of digital tools and platforms in order to enhance learning with a lot of promise and consequences. (Haleem et al., 2022) [17] Technology provides students and teachers with broad access to multiple information resources which serves as a major benefit for both groups. Through digital libraries and online databases and educational websites students and teachers can explore different subjects while accessing information that goes beyond traditional textbooks. Students can pursue independent research through opportunities that help them extend their insight and understanding of multiple disciplines. (Haleem et al., 2022) [17] With technology, students will participate in

collaborative learning activities instead of meeting at the same venue. There are no geographical boundaries in terms of working together from different locations hence students can employ video conferencing and use online platforms to create virtual spaces for sharing ideas and interactive discussions when working on projects.. The virtual space creates a community atmosphere which supports peer-to-peer learning to enhance intellectual development for everyone involved (Resta & Laferrière, 2007) [29]Technology personalizes learning through performance analysis which adapts instruction and delivers specific feedback to students also it improves students understanding while helping them master material and achieve effective knowledge acquisition (Walkington, 2013) [42]. Technological integration in educational institutions have expanded their reach to include remote learners and students with disabilities thus creating inclusive learning environments with equal opportunities (Sung & Hwang, 2013) [40]. Taking the above discussion into consideration, this study aims to give a thorough overview of the different effects technology has on English Language learning. It looks at the several advantages of technological integration such as, improved motivation, individualized learning, and more access to many digital resources. The present article explicitly delineates an evaluation of major challenges confronting English language learning environments with respect to technology implementation-inadequate access, equipment malfunctions, and lack of training for teachers.

3. Aim of the Study:

This study aims to examine how digital tools affects young school students' ability to learn a language. Specifically, it will look at how digital tools influences their language retention, skill development, and overall motivation compared to traditional classroom methods. The results should help us better understand how digital tools could fit into language learning programs for high school students.

This study is important because it looks at how digital tools affects young school students' ability to learn a language. As more schools use a mix of online and in-person learning, it's useful to understand if this approach helps or makes language learning harder. by finding the strengths and challenges of digital tools for high school students,this research can offer helpful ideas for teachers, curriculum planners, and decisionmakers who want to make language programs more effective for students in a hybrid setting.

The research study holds immense significance from four perspectives. Theoretical importance lies in exploring how digital tools can enhance educational practices,

facilitate engagement, and facilitate personalized learning. From a policy standpoint, understanding the impact of digital integration can inform educational strategies and funding allocation. Sri Lanka Journal of Advanced Research Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences Vol. 13. No. 2 July-December 2023 4 Pedagogically, insights into practical digital tool usage can enrich teaching methods, benefiting educators and learners. Most importantly, the transformative perspective highlights the potential to revolutionize education by democratizing access, promoting inclusivity, and preparing learners for a technology-driven world. Embracing this transformative approach empowers educators to adapt and optimize digital tools to maximize their positive impact on education.

4. Research Objectives :

1. To assess the effectiveness of digital tools on English language learning outcomes among undergraduate students.
2. To explore pedagogical practices associated with effectively integrating digital tools into English language education.
3. To identify the primary challenges in integrating digital tools into English language learning environments.

5. Problem Of The Study:

The effectiveness of digital tools in developing all language skills, especially speaking and writing, remains unclear. Issues like unequal access and overreliance on technology further highlight the need to evaluate their impact on language proficiency and engagement.

The research problem examined the effectiveness of digital tools on language learning outcomes and identified the challenges associated with their integration into English language education. By exploring the positive impacts and challenges of digital tools in language education, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to optimize the use of digital tools in English language learning environments, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of English language education programs.

5. Research Question :

How do digital tools, such as language apps and online games, affect students' language acquisition compared to traditional teaching methods ?

6. Literature Review :

Digital tools have gained significant attention in language acquisition research, given their potential to enhance learning experiences. Scholars have explored how these tools influence various aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, speaking proficiency, and learner motivation.

8. Digital tools :

The following section reviews key findings from recent studies, highlighting both the advantages and challenges associated with digital tools in language acquisition.

1. **Advantages of Digital Tools in Language Acquisition** One of the most significant benefits of digital tools is their ability to provide learners with access to authentic language materials. According to Godwin-Jones (2018), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) platforms, such as Duolingo and Memrise, expose learners to real-world language use through gamified content, interactive exercises, and multimedia resources. These platforms are particularly effective in improving vocabulary retention, as they utilize spaced repetition techniques that help learners commit words to long-term memory. Digital tools also promote self-directed learning. Stockwell (2012)

emphasized that learners can control the pace, time, and environment of their study sessions, fostering a sense of autonomy. Such flexibility is especially beneficial for adult learners balancing education with work or family responsibilities.

technology, such as Rosetta Stone, allow learners to practice pronunciation and receive instant feedback, which is crucial for developing speaking skills. Gamification is another key feature of digital tools that enhances learner motivation. By incorporating rewards, progress tracking, and competition, these tools make the learning process engaging and enjoyable. For instance, a study by Vesselinov and Grego (2016) found that learners who used gamified apps demonstrated higher levels of engagement and consistency compared to those relying solely on traditional methods.

2. **Challenges and Limitations** Despite their advantages, digital tools also present limitations that can hinder language acquisition. One major concern is their limited capacity to foster productive skills such as speaking and writing. While apps excel at teaching vocabulary and grammar, they often lack opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful conversations or produce written texts.

Thorne (2016) argued that the absence of real-time

interaction with native speakers restricts the development of communicative competence. Another challenge is over-reliance on digital tools. Learners may become dependent on structured app exercises and fail to apply their knowledge in

authentic contexts. A study by Lai and Gu (2011) highlighted that while digital tools support language learning, they should not replace traditional classroom practices or face-to-face interactions. The study emphasized the importance of integrating these tools with other learning methods to achieve balanced language development. Accessibility is another issue that cannot be overlooked. Although digital tools are widely available, not all learners have equal access to reliable internet connections or modern devices. This digital divide creates disparities in learning opportunities, particularly for students in rural or underprivileged areas (Reinders & White, 2016).

3. The Role of Emerging Technologies Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR), are transforming digital language learning tools. AI-powered platforms like Grammarly and ChatGPT assist learners in refining their writing skills by providing detailed feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and style. Similarly, VR applications enable immersive language experiences by simulating real-life scenarios where learners can practice speaking in context. Yoon and Lee (2020) found that learners using VR tools showed significant improvement in their speaking fluency and confidence compared to those using traditional methods. While these technologies hold great promise, they also raise ethical and practical concerns, such as data privacy and high costs, which may limit their widespread adoption.

:Theoretical Foundations

TEYL is grounded in several theories about how children learn

.:languages

:Critical Period Hypothesis .1

,Research suggests that there is a "critical period" for language acquisition •
typically before puberty, during which young learners have a natural
advantage in learning a new language. Lenneberg (1967) proposed that
,children's brains are more adaptable and receptive to new sounds
.vocabulary, and grammar

This theory supports the idea that starting English instruction early can lead •
to better pronunciation and intuitive grammar skills, as children are more
.open to learning the sounds and rhythms of a new language

:Social Constructivism .2

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory emphasizes that children •
learn through social interactions. In TEYL, group activities, games, and
communication are key, as children learn language best when they can
.practice it with peers and adults

This theory highlights the importance of a supportive, interactive •
.environment where english is used in a meaningful and engaging context
:Input Hypothesis .3

Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis suggests that children acquire language •
most effectively when they receive "comprehensible input"-language input
.slightly above their current level of understanding

In TEYL, this means that teachers should provide rich language input •
through stories, songs, and other age-appropriate activities that stretch
.children's language abilities without overwhelming them

Benefits of Teaching English to Young Learners TEYL has several
:advantages that make early English instruction beneficial
:Better Pronunciation and Accent .1

Younger children are often better at picking up the sounds and intonation •
patterns of English, which leads to a more native-like accent. Studies by
,Cameron (2001) show that children have greater phonological flexibility
.making them more capable of learning new sounds
:Natural Curiosity and Enthusiasm .2

Young learners tend to be more curious and less inhibited about making •
mistakes compared to older learners. This willingness to take risks in
.language use helps them acquire language faster (Moon, 2005)
:Development of Cognitive Skills .3

Learning a second language at an early age has cognitive benefits, such •
as improved problem-solving skills and creativity. It also enhances memory
and
.multitasking abilities, which are advantageous for overall learning

9. Methodology:

This study employs a quantitative research design to evaluate the impact of digital tools on language acquisition for young learners. Quantitative data will provide measurable insights into learners' experiences and proficiency improvements.

10. Data Collection

1. Surveys: Structured questionnaires will collect data on the frequency of digital tool usage, preferred tools, and perceived impact on language skills.
2. Language Proficiency Tests: Standardized tests will assess participants' skills before and after using digital tools to measure improvements.

11. Data Analysis

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The data collected will be analyzed using statistical methods, such as descriptive statistics and paired t-tests, to identify trends and measure the effectiveness of digital tools in language learning for young learners.

12. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study provided valuable insights into the influence of digital tools on English language learning outcomes and the challenges encountered in their implementation. Through a mixed-methods approach, digital tools' quantitative impact and qualitative experiences were researched using digital tools in English language education. The findings highlight the positive impact of digital tools on language learning, including heightened motivation, improved proficiency, and enhanced communication skills among learners. These results underscore the potential of digital tools to revolutionize English language education and create more engaging and personalized learning experiences. However, this study also identified several challenges associated with integrating digital tools, such as technical issues, digital literacy gaps, and potential distractions. Addressing these challenges is crucial to increasing the benefits of digital tools in language learning and ensuring equitable access to language education for all learners. In light of these findings, continuous research and development of student-friendly digital tools and targeted teacher training and support are recommended to effectively integrate these tools into language instruction. Additionally, promoting digital literacy skills among educators and learners is essential to harnessing the full potential of technology in English language learning. Overall, this research investigation contributes to the growing literature on digital tools in English language education and underscores the importance of addressing challenges to optimize their impact. Language educators can better prepare learners for success in a multilingual and interconnected world by addressing challenges.

And this research focuses on finding effective ways to teach English to young learners by exploring better teaching methods, it aims to help children learn English more easily and enjoyable, the results of this study could support teachers and schools in creating better learning experiences of young students.

Digital tools have become a significant part of language acquisition, offering learners accessible, engaging, and flexible ways to develop their skills. While they provide numerous benefits, such as enhancing vocabulary retention and fostering learner autonomy, challenges like limited development of speaking and writing skills, over-reliance, and unequal access remain. This study highlights the importance of

integrating digital tools with traditional learning methods to create a balanced and comprehensive approach to language education. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging their strengths, digital tools can play a crucial role in modern language acquisition, supporting learners in achieving greater proficiency and confidence.

Despite the importance of SLA, many students face difficulties in acquiring second language skills, especially in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Teachers employ various instructional methods, but it remains unclear which strategies yield the best results in classroom settings. This research seeks to identify effective teaching strategies that support students in overcoming these challenges, contributing to improved SLA outcomes.

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