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THE VALUE OF DIGITAL LANGUAGE IN FULFILLING LEARNERS' NEEDS

 Mohammad Naeem wisal
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Paktia University, afghanistan nhasaand@gmail.com
Call Phone: +93(0)773545858
Saifurahman Rohi
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Paktia University, afghanistan saif.rohiafg@gmail.com
Call Phone: +93(0)774935307
Sayed Rahman Sial
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Paktia University, afghanistan sayedrahmansial@gmail.com
call Phone: 93(0)766707027

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ABSTRACT

As education gains increasing recognition and respect, the relationship between digital technology and learning, especially language acquisition continues to strengthen. Researchers frequently explore the concept of digital language to address learners' diverse needs. This study investigates various aspects of digital language to provide a comprehensive understanding of its significance in providing to learners' different requirements. The rapid advancement of technology has led to the development of digital language tools, which offer accessibility, flexibility, and personalization. This paper explores the benefits and challenges of online language learning, highlighting the potential of digital language to create dynamic, engaging, and effective learning environments. The findings suggest that digital technology is widely perceived as relevant, useful, and essential in an educational context. However, despite its advantages, challenges such as the digital divide, financial constraints, and cybersecurity concerns must be addressed. By acknowledging the importance of digital language tools, educators, developers, and policymakers can create more inclusive and effective language learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Digital language refers to the application of digital tools and technologies in language learning and communication. According to Abdul Samea Qoura (2020), digital language involves using digital resources, tools, and materials in language instruction. Language serves as a medium for exchanging ideas through various modes, including writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The internet has significantly transformed language learning and communication methods.

Digital language learning incorporates digital resources such as e-books, online dictionaries, and language-learning applications to enhance proficiency and accelerate acquisition (Abdul Samea Qoura, 2020). While traditional learning does not involve digital tools, digital language learning relies on technology to provide additional support, including speech-to-text software, automatic translation, and interactive learning platforms.

The concept of "digital teaching" refers to the development of 21st-century skills through literacy in the digital age, creative problem-solving, effective communication, and increased productivity. Researchers such as Shadiev and Wang (2022) and Abdul Samea Qoura (2020) have noted that terms like "digital classrooms," "smart classes," "e-learning," and "interactive learning environments" are used interchangeably to describe the integration of digital technology into education. Consequently, digital language learning is a practice that enhances educational performance by incorporating digital tools into instructional methods.

Here are some justifications for the significance of digital language learning in fulfilling learners' demands.

BACKGROUND

The term "digital language" signifies the utilization of technology and digital tools for communication and expression, encompassing text messaging, social media, email, and various online platforms. This form of language is dynamic, continuously evolving alongside emerging trends and technological advancements. It plays a crucial role in daily interactions, enabling individuals to connect, exchange information, and express themselves in innovative ways. In contemporary society, digital language has become increasingly prevalent, with many relying on digital communication as their primary means of staying connected (Pangrazio, Godhe, & Ledesma, 2020). Understanding and adapting to digital language is essential for effective communication in the modern digital era (Alakrash & Abdul Razak, 2021). According to Sayaf, A. M., et al. (2021), digital language learning involves leveraging technology and digital tools to enhance language acquisition. It integrates various digital platforms and resources to facilitate and improve language practice and learning.

The introduction of computers in classrooms during the early 1980s marked the beginning of technological integration in education. Research suggests that ICT (Information and Communication Technology) will play a pivotal role in future education. Although studies have examined teachers' ICT skills and perceptions of digital tools, there remains a gap in fully utilizing modern technology for enhanced teaching and learning (Sayaf et al., 2021).

In the digital age, technology has an impact on both teaching and learning. According to Gaballo (2019), "digital learning is reshaping education in unprecedented ways." In addition to teaching the core curriculum, the education system's transformation offers both instructors and students several opportunities. Because it offers students a virtual learning environment that shifts from a formal teacher-centered approach to a more informal learner-centered approach, technology-assisted instruction has been shown to improve student learning skills (Gaballo, 2019). Innovations and changes were brought about by the shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered learning approach.

Despite the undeniable success of the technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) industry, the majority of these tools are still quite basic. Although there are a variety of instruments available for language learning, they nevertheless have certain drawbacks and are unable to meet the needs of students. This is due in part to the field's disconnection from research in the areas of corpus linguistics (CL) and natural language processing (NLP), which have the potential to significantly increase the efficacy of the majority of teaching resources (Granger, Antoniadis, Kraif, & Ponton, 2014). According to research conducted within the Kaleidoscope network, integrating NLP technologies is both feasible and desirable, as long as certain requirements are met: (1) only highly reliable technologies are used; (2) the techniques are applied in carefully chosen contexts; and (3) teachers are granted complete control over the output to enable correction in the event of an error (Granger, Antoniadis, Kraif, & Ponton, 2014). Combining NLP with CL approaches can result in significant advancements in automatic rating and mistake feedback, two areas where Milton (2002) states "it is particularly worth investing in research."

To find out more about how students use ICT for digital learning as sustainability, Sayaf, AM, et al. (2021) used confirmatory factor analysis at Saudi institutions. The results showed a relationship between perceived enjoyment, computer anxiety, and computer selfefficacy—all of which were important determinants of reported utility and usability. Students' continuous intention to use and pleasure were similarly influenced by perceived utility and simplicity of usage. This model, which was developed through research, was successful in explaining why students were still interested in and satisfied with ICT.

According to Mukherjee's (2004) survey of German English language instructors, most of them are not very familiar with corpus tools and techniques. A linguistic methodology based on the utilization of sizable electronic collections of naturally occurring texts, or corpora, is known as corpus linguistics. Corpora come in a wide variety of forms, including written and spoken, monolingual and multilingual, diachronic and synchronic, and more. Texts from a variety of written and spoken sources, including fiction, journalese, academic work, casual conversation, political speeches, and more, are included in some corpora because they are intended to be representative of a language as a whole.

In their 2019 research, Attri and Kushwaha examined the impact of digital learning resources on students' academic performance and the placement packages they received. This exploratory study analyzed primary data from 240 students who had completed a two-year business management program at an Indian business school. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between students' academic achievements and the amount of time they dedicated to digital learning tools. However, the study revealed only a minimal and statistically insignificant connection between the final placement package offered to students and their engagement with digital learning resources.

The shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic influenced both instructors' workload and the quality of education, particularly due to the lack of digital literacy training for both students and educators. The study highlighted that teachers' working hours were affected by factors such as the mode of instruction, students' accessibility to digital learning materials, and the necessity for online teaching training during the lockdown period. As a result of these changes, many educators reported experiencing excessive workloads, reduced student interaction, and an overwhelming sense of job-related stress.

These challenges have had a direct impact on the quality of education and the ability of instructors to effectively engage with their students. Ensuring that learners have access to digital educational materials and providing adequate training for teachers in online instruction are crucial steps in addressing these issues. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can maintain high academic standards and encourage innovation in education, particularly in situations similar to the pandemic-induced shift to online learning (Aguirre, Aperribai, Cortabarría, Verche, & Borges, 2022).

DIGITAL NATIVES

The young people born in the 1990s may be referred to as "digital natives" due to their familiarity with mobile and internet technology. They are accustomed to multitasking and engaging with digital platforms from an early age (Abdul Samea Qoura, 2020).

BENEFITS OF USING DIGITAL LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

Students become more actively involved in the learning process and find digital language lessons more stimulating. Various digital educational software programs, particularly those designed for language learning, contribute to creating a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. The integration of multimedia elements such as images, graphics, and animations enhances the learning experience by making instructional materials more engaging and visually appealing (Johnson, Jacovina, Russell, & Soto, 2016).

For students who may struggle with traditional textbooks, digital courses provide access to a broader range of valuable resources. These digital materials help learners develop a more profound understanding of the subject matter while fostering greater engagement with the content. Additionally, digital learning promotes peer collaboration, facilitates communication, and empowers students to take an active role in their education with increased confidence (Abdul Samea Qoura, 2020).

Darvin (2016) highlights that digital technology enables learners to study at their own pace and according to their skill level. A wide range of tools and applications are available to support learning across different subjects. Digital assessments provide instant and interactive feedback, allowing students to identify misconceptions and improve their understanding through adaptive hints and time-ly corrections.

Digital education fosters creativity and active engagement by encouraging students to think innovatively. Learners can create and share their own digital content, such as blogs, videos, and digital stories, which enhances their creative expression and participation in the learning process (Abdul Samea Qoura, A. 2020).

Additionally, digital technology streamlines task management and assignment submissions for both teachers and students, enabling them to work efficiently from any location. Educators can track students' progress and provide prompt feedback using digital assessment tools. Furthermore, digital platforms allow individuals to refine different aspects of their academic knowledge. Another key benefit is that parents can monitor their children's activities remotely, gaining insights into their progress and addressing any misunderstandings in real time.

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Integrating technology into the classroom enhances digital language learning by equipping students with essential digital literacy skills, which are crucial for success in today's technology-driven world. Developing these skills can significantly improve students' employability and future career prospects (Gaballo, 2019).

Digital learning also allows teachers to provide personalized and private feedback, enabling them to tailor lesson plans and curricula to meet individual student needs. In Afghanistan, the Higher Education Learning Management System (HLMS) introduced a Moodlebased platform for universities, offering features such as lecture recording, individualized feedback, customized assignments, and more. Digital education enables students to access recorded lectures as reference materials, enhancing their understanding of course content. GSJ: Volume 13, Issue 4, April 2025 ISSN 2320-9186

A variety of educational software programs, including Google Classroom, Moodle, Powtoon, Schoology, Lumen5, Google Forms, Google Docs, WhatsApp, and WeChat, provide students with opportunities to tackle academic challenges independently, collaboratively, and in peer groups. These tools facilitate communication and teamwork between students and teachers, fostering a sense of academic community and encouraging language practice through online discussions, group assignments, and language exchange programs. Additionally, digital learning promotes sustainability by reducing the reliance on printed materials, minimizing paper consumption, and creating a more environmentally friendly classroom environment (Skolon, 2023).

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL LANGUAGE ON LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Digital technology plays a crucial role in enhancing learner engagement within the classroom. The integration of tools such as learning management systems (LMS) and video conferencing software has expanded students' opportunities to create and record content, collaborate with peers, and actively participate in subject discussions. These technological advancements have not only made learning more interactive and enjoyable but have also improved teaching efficiency and boosted student motivation.

When educators incorporate digital technology into their instruction, they observe a positive impact on student engagement. The hands-on experience gained from using these tools enables teachers to develop innovative teaching approaches and alternative assessment methods. According to Julian S. (2014), these creative instructional strategies have further strengthened student participation and engagement in the learning process.

IMPROVING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

Multiple studies have shown that digital technology plays a significant role in improving students' speaking and listening skills. Various software programs are used to help learners identify and correct errors in language learning.

For example, YouTube provides an extensive collection of authentic content across different genres, which teachers can organize into customized playlists to support learning. Chinese language learners benefit from applications such as HelloChinese, SuperTest, and Duolingo, which comprehensively cover different aspects of the language. These platforms offer an interactive learning experience through short lessons that students can easily engage with, even in everyday situations like waiting in line for coffee.

Al-Ahdal utilized computer-assisted tools to analyze students' errors and improve their communication skills. Similarly, Al-Saleem found that Facebook-based activities contributed to enhancing students' spoken communication abilities. These case studies high-light how digital technology can effectively support language learners in developing their speaking and listening proficiency. Additionally, applications like Duolingo, Super Chinese, and HelloChinese help learners strengthen all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

ENHANCING READING AND WRITING SKILLS

It's also said that digital technology helps pupils become better writers and readers. According to studies, students' writing abilities may be enhanced by utilizing digital resources such blogs, screencasts, wikis, flipped classrooms, Facebook, WeChat, and WhatsApp (Alakrash & Abdul Razak, 2021).

CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING DIGITAL LANGUAGE IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Despite the numerous benefits of digital teaching and learning, its implementation comes with challenges and risks. In some cases, the use of digital technologies in education can create obstacles rather than solutions. One major issue is the digital divide, which separates learners into two categories: those with access to technology and the internet and those without. This disparity leads to unequal learning opportunities. Additionally, concerns such as information security, the high cost of technology, and accessibility further complicate digital education.

The financial burden of acquiring and maintaining digital tools poses a significant challenge for institutions. Implementing digital learning requires substantial investments in software and devices, which can be particularly costly for organizations, especially those in remote areas with limited infrastructure. Managing expenses while ensuring the necessary resources are available remains a challenge for many educational institutions. Another difficulty lies in determining the appropriate methods, timing, and purposes for using digital technology in the classroom. Many educators struggle to integrate technology effectively due to a lack of proper training and expertise (Abdul Samea Qoura, 2020).

Finding relevant digital content that aligns with curriculum goals can also be a challenge for teachers. Transitioning from traditional, print-based teaching materials to digital formats takes time and effort. This issue is particularly significant for individuals unfamiliar with modern technology. In Afghanistan's remote areas, many older educators are unable to incorporate digital tools into their teaching due to a lack of training and resources. Providing access to digital tools and equipping educators with the necessary skills is essential for the successful implementation of digital learning.

To minimize distractions and maintain focused learning, clear guidelines and protocols for digital education must be established. Ad-

ditionally, slow internet connections remain a major hurdle in the learning process, further complicating the adoption of digital education (Abdul Samea Qoura, 2020).

Aguirre, Aperribai, Cortabarría, Verche, and Borges (2022) found that online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted teachers' workloads and the overall quality of education. Many educators experienced excessive working hours, high levels of stress, and a lack of personal time. The study indicated that instructors' workloads were influenced by factors such as teaching methods, students' access to digital resources, and the need for online teaching training during the lockdown. These challenges have affected both the quality of education and educators' ability to engage effectively with students. To address these issues, ensuring student access to digital learning materials and providing teachers with online education training is essential. By tackling these challenges, educational institutions can maintain high teaching standards and promote innovation in future digital learning environments.

Conclusion

The concept of "digital language" refers to the exchange of information and communication through electronic means such as email, social media, and text messaging. It involves sharing messages and ideas via digital platforms and devices. As digital communication has become the primary mode of interaction for many people, the significance of digital language has grown in modern society. To communicate effectively in today's digital age, individuals must understand and adapt to digital language (Alakrash & Abdul Razak, 2021).

The generation born in the 1990s is often referred to as "digital natives" due to the rise of mobile and internet technologies during their formative years. This generation is accustomed to multitasking and frequently engages in multiple activities simultaneously (Abdul Samea Qoura, A. 2020).

In the realm of education, digital tools have enhanced student engagement, making both teaching and learning more interactive. Johnson, Jacovina, Russell, and Soto (2016) highlight that various digital tools used in language education bring lessons to life and create an immersive learning environment.

A wide range of digital platforms and applications are utilized for language learning and improvement. Tools such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Powtoon, Schoology, Luman5, Google Forms, Google Docs, WhatsApp, and WeChat provide opportunities for problem-solving on an individual level, in groups, and through peer collaboration. These digital resources facilitate communication and cooperation between students and teachers. Furthermore, online discussions, group projects, and language exchanges contribute to community building and language practice.

Digital learning resources also promote student collaboration, independent study, and group discussions, reducing the stress associated with traditional learning methods. Moreover, digital education minimizes reliance on printed materials, reducing paper consumption and fostering a more environmentally sustainable classroom (Skolon, 2023).

Despite the numerous benefits of digital learning, it presents certain challenges and risks. In some cases, the use of digital technology in education can create difficulties rather than solutions. One major concern is the digital divide, which results in unequal learning opportunities by distinguishing between those who have access to technology and the internet and those who do not. Additionally, digital users must contend with issues such as data security, the cost of technology, and disparities in access to digital resources.

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