

A REVIEW ON BENEFITS OF USING DIGITAL TOOLS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The use of digital tools, especially AI technologies, has become a focal point of recent research in the field of language teaching, highlighting their potential benefits for enhancing learning experiences. This paper aims to investigate the benefits of using digital tools in teaching and learning. The paper is conducted as a review of the use of digital tools along with different viewpoints on the role of using digital tools in English classes. The methodology used in this study involves analyzing and synthesizing information to draw valuable conclusions and comments. With sufficient understanding of the concepts, utilizations, the global trend and its benefits, the paper provides some background knowledge, based on which pedagogic decisions about appropriate teaching methods can be made in the actual classroom. It also lays the groundwork for further empirical research on the use of AI tools in teaching and learning. Accordingly, the researchers who are concerned about this field will find the paper helpful and relevant for their studies.

KEYWORDS

Benefits

Digital tools

Review

Teaching and learning

English

TỔNG QUAN KHẢO CỨU VỀ LỢI ÍCH CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÁC CÔNG CỤ SỐ TRONG VIỆC DẠY VÀ HỌC TIẾNG ANH

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TÓM TẮT

Việc sử dụng các công cụ kỹ thuật số, đặc biệt là công nghệ trí tuệ nhân tạo (AI), đã trở thành trọng tâm của nghiên cứu gần đây trong lĩnh vực giảng dạy ngôn ngữ, làm nổi bật những lợi ích tiềm năng của chúng trong việc nâng cao trải nghiệm học tập. Bài báo này nhằm mục đích điều tra những lợi ích của việc sử dụng các công cụ kỹ thuật số trong giảng dạy và học tập. Bài báo được thực hiện như một khảo cứu về việc sử dụng các công cụ kỹ thuật số cùng với các quan điểm khác nhau về vai trò của việc sử dụng các công cụ kỹ thuật số trong các lớp học tiếng Anh. Phương pháp luận được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu này bao gồm phân tích và tổng hợp thông tin để rút ra những kết luận và nhận xét có giá trị. Với sự hiểu biết đầy đủ về các khái niệm, cách sử dụng, xu hướng toàn cầu và những lợi ích của nó, bài báo cung cấp một số kiến thức nền tảng, dựa trên đó có thể đưa ra các quyết định sự phạm về phương pháp giảng dạy phù hợp trong lớp học thực tế. Bài viết cũng đặt nền tảng cho các nghiên cứu thực nghiệm tiếp theo về việc sử dụng các công cụ AI trong giảng dạy và học tập. Ngoài ra, các nhà nghiên cứu quan tâm đến lĩnh vực này sẽ thấy bài viết hữu ích và có liên quan đến các nghiên cứu của họ.

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1. Introduction

Technological devices, ranging from computers to smartphones, have significantly altered our everyday existence, granting us nearly limitless access to information. Educational institutions are adopting digital technologies, acknowledging their capacity to enrich the teaching and learning experience. Therefore, in recent years, educational systems across the globe have significantly enhanced their investments in the incorporation of information and communication technology [1], [2] and have placed a strong emphasis on adjusting their educational agendas to develop strategies or policies that facilitate technology integration [3].

In the 21st century, digital technologies are integral to enhancing students' learning experiences [4], teachers and students are expected to enhance teaching and learning by regular, innovative use of digital technologies [5].

The objective of utilizing digital tools in language education must be recognized by emphasizing the enhancement of the evolving and unique characteristics of language instruction. To realize this goal, language teaching methodologies should incorporate digital educational resources. In the classroom setting, both educators and learners are increasingly inclined to utilize digital technologies.

With the benefits from multimedia through different technology devices for both teachers and students. Robert [6] characterized the digital classroom as a setting that incorporates digital technologies, allowing students to engage actively and have responsibility for their own educational process. These digital classrooms are also essential in equipping future educators and enhancing the skills of the current teaching workforce to effectively utilize 21st-century tools and pedagogical approaches in the teaching and learning process.

Currently, artificial intelligence (AI) is considered as the next major advancement. While AI has existed since the mid-1950s, it is only in recent years that developments in data mining, sophisticated algorithms, and high-capacity computers have enhanced its relevance.

In the field of higher education, the incorporation of artificial intelligence technologies presents significant opportunities to revolutionize conventional teaching and learning methodologies. ChatGPT, a significant AI chatbot created by OpenAI, has become a transformative force in the field of education, facilitating engaging and human-like interactions through natural language processing. According to Bin-Hady et al [7]; Shaikh et al. [8] and Xiao and Zhi [9], it is valuable and essential to adapt AI tools like Chatgpt in the teaching and learning process because it is considered as an effective way of teaching and learning. Hence, it is significant to provide a comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of using digital tools, including AI tools in teaching and learning English.

With regard to the research design, this review article aims to provide a constructive analysis of existing literature concerning the use of digital tools. With critical analysis of previous studies, this paper was expected to present a review on: first, the definition of digital tools; second, the role of digital tools in education, teaching and learning English; third, the global trend of digital tools; and last, the benefits of using digital tools based on related studies.

2. Methodology

In this overview article, we mainly use the following research methods:

Document analysis: This method involves reviewing previously published materials related to the topic under discussion in the literature review. It helps assess the current state of research, identify questions, and highlight some issues in the field of using digital tools in teaching and learning English.

Content analysis: This method helps evaluate previous documents to identify key issues and trends within the field of the literature review about using digital tools in teaching and learning.

Synthesis: This method integrates findings from multiple sources, allowing for the identification of common patterns, theoretical frameworks, research gaps, and potential future directions. Thereby, it ensures the identification, development and further investigation of the research topic.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Digital Tools

Online digital tools comprise software, applications, technologies, plug-ins, add-ons, or websites that can be accessed through an internet connection. These tools significantly improve learners' capacity to perform comprehensive literature reviews and acquire the necessary knowledge for their studies. By utilizing online digital tools, learners can enhance their learning efficiency, increase their awareness of language mistakes, and engage in collaborative efforts with their peers. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased the popularity and utility of online digital tools within the educational process [10].

3.2. Digital Tools in Education

The advent of computers in the 1950s marked a significant transformation of digital sources through the process of digitizing content. Digitization is defined as the conversion of analog materials and sources into digital formats, utilizing the binary system of 1s and 0s inherent in computer language. According to Stuart [11], the digitalization of education represents a significant movement towards the reform and modernization of the worldwide educational landscape. The innovative application of digital tools and technologies in the educational process is commonly known as Technology Enhanced Learning or e-learning.

Education can be digitalized through various methods, many of which are widely recognized and utilized in numerous educational institutions both nationally and internationally. These methods include blended learning, online learning, and electronic learning (e-learning), among others. Each of these approaches possesses distinct characteristics and has contributed to the enhancement of the educational system in different ways. Roberts [6] characterized the digital classroom as a genuine setting that incorporates digital technologies, allowing students to engage actively and assume responsibility for their own educational journey. Such digital classrooms are essential in equipping future educators and enhancing the skills of the current teaching workforce to effectively utilize 21st-century tools and pedagogical methods in the teaching and learning process.

The integration of computers and various digital tools empowers students to take a more active and central role in their educational journey. In this context, the teacher assumes a pivotal position, capable of assessing the effectiveness of the learning experience. With an abundance of digital resources at their disposal, students can easily access necessary information or share their own content. The internet facilitates content creation, collaboration among peers, peer evaluation. Technology is enhancing the inspiration and significance of education.

3.3. Digital Tools in Language Teaching and Learning

The integration of digital technologies into educational practices is to enhance and transform how languages are taught and learned. This shift leverages various digital tools and platforms to create more interactive, personalized, and efficient learning environments. The following are essential elements of using digital tools in language education.

For Enhanced Access to Resources: Online Course Platforms, E-books and Digital Libraries, AI-powered lesson plan (Lessonplans.ai)

For Interactive Learning Tools: Language Learning Apps, interactive Whiteboards and Smartboards

For Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning: AI-powered Tutors, ChatGPT, Grammarly

For Digital Assessment and Feedback: Online Quizzes and Tests (Quizlet and Kahoot), automated Essay Grading

For Multimedia and Content Creation: Video and Audio Resources: YouTube, podcasts, and other media sources offer authentic language input and varied accents for listening practice.

For Virtual Classrooms and Online Learning Environments: Learning Management Systems (LMS), Video Conferencing Tools (Zoom and Microsoft Teams enable virtual classrooms).

3.4. Global Trends in Digital Tools for Language Learning:

The integration of technological tools has introduced novel dimensions to the teaching and learning of languages. Al-Mutairi [12] have noted that the combination of online resources and digital devices with various pedagogical approaches can serve as effective instruments that positively impact the instruction and acquisition of English.

Digital tools and resources are frequently employed to enhance traditional teaching methods. However, they have developed in a manner that fosters students' learning by linking it to their real-life experiences. For instance, platforms like social media, including blogs and YouTube, provide students with opportunities to write and share their work, thereby increasing their motivation throughout the learning process [13]. The primary aim of integrating digital tools into teaching is to engage students, encouraging them to take an active role in their education.

Continuously, the swift advancement of technology is transforming conventional methods of language instruction. Among these innovations, AI has emerged as a formidable resource with profound implications for English language teaching [14]. These capabilities facilitate a more customized and responsive language learning experience, addressing the unique needs and learning pace of each student. The incorporation of AI into English Language Teaching represents a significant shift in educational practices, paving the way for new opportunities for innovation and rendering education more personalized, efficient, and impactful.

3.5. Benefits of using digital tools in language learning and teaching and related studies

The process of language acquisition is an intricate process which encompasses the enhancement of multiple skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Over the past decade, the digitization of education has progressed significantly, particularly due to the advent of tablet computers and the widespread availability of high-speed internet. These advancements have enabled every student to possess a digital device and gain access to a variety of digital resources.

Traditionally, language instruction was predominantly based on conventional methods such as textbooks, chalkboards, and oral exercises. Nevertheless, the emergence of digital technology has revolutionized the educational landscape. Digital resources provide a vibrant and engaging approach to language teaching, addressing the varied requirements of learners in the 21st century.

Student attitude

Liu [15] discovered that students who held a favorable perception of ChatGPT's utility were more inclined to utilize it, a trend that was significantly associated with their actual English learning experiences beyond the classroom. Furthermore, their study revealed that even English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who initially perceived ChatGPT as difficult could progressively cultivate a positive attitude and interest in the technology as they acknowledged its advantages. Xiao [9] similarly found that the students participating in their research exhibited a favorable attitude towards the utilization of ChatGPT, largely endorsing its implementation in universities rather than advocating for its restriction. The students' recognition of the considerable advantages offered by ChatGPT appeared to alleviate apprehensions regarding its possible disadvantages, indicating a positive perspective on its incorporation.

Learning engagement

Using digital tools can enhance encouragement and motivation in teaching and learning English. According to Harsha Vardhini [16], the incorporation of digital tools into the teaching of the English language has led to significant transformations, affecting both teachers and students in a variety of ways. The influence of these tools is apparent in multiple fields of language learning and education. Digital tools frequently utilize interactive and gamified methods, enhancing student engagement in the learning process. Elements such as quizzes, games, and multimedia resources effectively draw students' interest, encouraging them to take an active role in their lessons. Furthermore, both Çelik and Aytin [17] and Mudra [18] highlighted that the teachers involved recognized digital tools as advantageous teaching resources. They observed that their students

exhibited greater motivation when engaging with digital tools compared to traditional, non-digital materials. Additionally, the extensive variety of online teaching resources further supported teachers in perceiving digital tools as valuable assets in their instructional practices [17].

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Learning experience

Additionally, various kinds of online resources can enable convenient access to a variety of authentic materials, such as videos, articles, and interactive exercises. This availability enhances the learning experience by offering students exposure to different accents, cultural contexts, and practical applications of the language. Nushi [19] showed that in the vast array of language learning resources, HiNative offers a user-friendly learning platform that incorporates media elements and facilitates genuine interactions with native speakers. Additionally, learners can have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture of the language's native speakers, thereby enhancing their comprehension of the factors that influence authentic language usage in specific countries or regions. Teachers can use these online resources to support and facilitate their teaching.

Learner autonomy

With the integration of digital tools, the learning of students is not limited to the time duration of the class, promoting learner autonomy. The use of digital technologies encourages an interactive and engaging learning environment. Murray [20] states that advanced technology fosters a natural environment to develop autonomy and their identities, explore innovative linguistic applications, and inspires them to create new forms of collaboration and interaction with their teachers. Furthermore, the use of technological tools enables language learners to tailor their educational experiences to align with their individual strengths and weaknesses, thereby optimizing their outcomes. The abundance of online resources offers students significant opportunities for self-directed learning [21].

Language learning

Using digital tools can enhance language learning. In the research [22], Yip and Kwan examined the impact of vocabulary acquisition through digital means versus activity-based lessons. Their findings indicated that digital vocabulary learning was more advantageous, as it was regarded as more engaging and motivating, leading to improved outcomes. Shaikh et al. [8] highlighted the ways in which ChatGPT has broadened vocabulary, refined grammatical and syntactical structures, and improved both written and conversational abilities. In a similar vein, Bin-Hady et al. [7] identified five distinct subcategories of language skill enhancement facilitated by ChatGPT, which encompass the improvement of EFL conversation practice, reading and writing proficiency, grammar mastery, vocabulary expansion, and pronunciation. Fryer and Carpenter [23] contended that artificial intelligence tools enhance grammar development by delivering immediate and clear feedback on grammatical mistakes.

Feedbacks

ChatGPT has been acknowledged as an effective instrument for facilitating learning, particularly in providing feedback to students, as noted by Bin-Hady et al. [7]. Similarly, Shaikh et al. [8] contended that ChatGPT serves as a valuable resource for practicing a foreign language.

ChatGPT generally delivered feedback at a faster pace and in greater volume, while educators required additional time to assess student essays and offer their evaluations. Furthermore, the type of feedback varied significantly. ChatGPT predominantly provided more prescriptive feedback, in contrast to teachers who usually utilized informative and question-driven feedback, particularly when evaluating the content and language elements of student essays.

Teaching aids

Besides, teaching process can be assisted with the help of digital tools. The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) integration technology tools, including Clickup, Lessonplans.ai, OpenAI ChatGPT, Gradescope, Chatbots, and Botsify, into classroom settings by educators has significantly streamlined the execution of academic responsibilities. These tools assist in various tasks such as creating lesson plans, grading assignments, delivering customized tests, and developing PowerPoint presentations, thereby enhancing both the ease and efficiency of teaching. ChatGPT has shown the ability to significantly aid teachers in automating routine tasks, such as grading and assessing assignments based on criteria including grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, and syntactical correctness, thus conserving both time and effort [24]. Additionally, ChatGPT has served as a collaborative partner to teachers in facilitating language acquisition [7]. Research has indicated that ChatGPT can improve the effectiveness of EFL instructors by supplementing conventional teaching approaches, which in turn enhances students' language skills and overall success [25]. Moreover, Xiao and Zhi [9] highlighted the necessity for educators to adopt this AI tool and offer suitable guidance to students, stressing the importance of adapting and seamlessly integrating ChatGPT into the educational process.

Lesson planning

Baskara and Mukarto [26] carried out a study that demonstrated the effectiveness of ChatGPT in alleviating the workload of educators. The authors emphasized the value of ChatGPT in assisting teachers with various tasks, including the development of lesson plans, the creation of educational materials, and the enhancement of classroom activities.

Banu et al. [27] investigated the assessment of AI-powered lesson plans by pre-service EFL teachers, offering valuable insights into both the strengths and areas for improvement in integrating artificial intelligence into language education. It is essential to recognize the critical role that teachers play in delivering effective and successful lessons through the implementation of lesson plans. Participants in the study acknowledge that artificial intelligence serves as a valuable resource, providing support to educators by offering beneficial components and ideas for lesson planning. For educators, the identified strengths of AI-powered lesson plans highlight the potential for enhancing student engagement, language acquisition, and collaborative learning experiences.

Professional development

Kohnke et al. [28] identified specific digital competencies that educators must cultivate to facilitate the effective utilization of ChatGPT. The possible uses of ChatGPT encompass: a) functioning as a virtual tutor to respond to student questions; b) aiding in the development of educational resources; c) offering expert advice for addressing complex tasks; d) serving as a virtual learning partner; e) promoting reflective learning; f) encouraging critical thinking. As noted by Atlas [29], educators can leverage ChatGPT in various ways to enhance their professional development: identify innovative applications of the model; explore its potential in underutilized areas; share knowledge and experiences through publications; improve the model and its functionalities through refinement; and consider mentoring or developing educational resources to assist others in understanding and utilizing ChatGPT.

4. Conclusion

Digital tools often employ interactive and gamified approaches, which significantly boost student engagement in the educational experience. Features like quizzes, games, and multimedia resources successfully capture students' attention, motivating them to participate actively in their learning activities.

Digital tools facilitate immediate feedback, providing students with real-time insights into their performance. Through mechanisms such as automated quizzes, writing assessment applications, and pronunciation software, this prompt feedback fosters ongoing enhancement and strengthens educational results. Furthermore, the utilization of digital resources extends language

practice beyond the classroom environment. Students can have the opportunity to utilize language learning applications, engage in online forums, and interact with English materials outside of scheduled class times, thereby encouraging continuous language advancement.

Digital tools support a range of language skills, encompassing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These resources, which include interactive reading platforms and language exchange applications, provide a comprehensive approach to language acquisition by addressing various dimensions of learning. By utilizing digital tools, students can engage with English speakers and learners from around the globe. This interaction enhances cultural awareness, promotes a deeper understanding of diverse global viewpoints, and cultivates effective communication in varied contexts. Learning management systems and digital platforms also simplify administrative responsibilities, such as assigning and grading tasks, monitoring progress, and facilitating communication. This increased efficiency enables educators to concentrate more on teaching methodologies. The integration of digital tools equips students with the necessary skills for thriving in the digital era. As communication and collaboration increasingly transition to online environments, students acquire digital literacy skills that are crucial for their academic and professional achievements.

Digital tools present novel approaches to assessment, such as multimedia projects, interactive quizzes, and online portfolios. These evaluation methods not only measure language proficiency but also evaluate digital literacy and creativity. Furthermore, digital tools afford flexibility regarding the timing, location, and manner in which students engage with their learning. Whether utilizing online courses, language learning applications, or virtual classrooms, learners have the opportunity to select the learning mode that aligns best with their individual preferences and schedules.

Digital tools help teachers a lot in lesson planning, collecting educational materials, and the enhancement of classroom activities. Besides, they help teachers in professional development to enhance knowledge and experience in teaching.

In short, the review of these related studies pointed out the significance of investigating the perceptions of teachers and students towards the use of digital tools in their practical language teaching and learning. In addition, the results from previous studies can be a valuable source of references for teachers to base their digital tool decisions on into their teaching practice and more investigation into the actual practice of a specific context should be conducted to improve the teaching and learning situation. Besides, further research should focus on the effectiveness of AI tools in different educational contexts and their impacts on students' learning outcomes.

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