



Advantages And Disadvantages of Digital Technologies in Language Teaching

X.T.Turayeva,

A teacher of pedagogical institute of Bukhara state university, English languages department, Uzbekistan

M.A.Kholmurodova,

a student of pedagogical institute of Bukhara state university, Natural and humanitarian sciences faculty, Uzbekistan.

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the beginning of digital literacy programs in the education curriculums, especially as they are mostly having effects on language teaching. The main purpose of this research is to talk about the benefits and barriers of utilizing technologies as teaching methods. The article concludes with the suggestions for educational research that the need of digital literacies in academic purposes.

Keywords:

digital literacy, benefits, barriers, EFL classes, English language learner (ELL), education curriculums, virtual learning.

Introduction

In recent years, the incredible advances of media, consisting of many technologies such as computers, mobile phones, laptops, have an important role and a great influence in educational life. They have changed the way people communicate, interact and work, but that's not all. Digital literacy, which is also known as virtual learning or e-learning, has been used in foreign language learning in most EFL classes, as well. "Some people are under the misconception that digital literacy means the ability to use the computer and so by putting the computer technology in classrooms we will have digitally literate students", says Oktavian Mantiri in his research. Becoming digitally literate means that students develop technological skills, as they understand how to access online information and learn social responsibility while interacting on social networks. "The future success of students depends on them becoming digitally literate". Of course, if media continues to evolve in this way, future of people, especially, tomorrow of youth will depend on them. Even now many

youngsters can not imagine their life without it. Although it helps them succeed in many fields of science, if they concern the usage of tools with studying.

Thanks to technology, the internet made everything possible. Many students all over the world have the opportunity to join online courses without leaving their homes, as well as they can get knowledge from professional teachers and educators, even by standing in different locations. Besides this comfort of learning a language, there are a variety of advantages that technology allows students to learn languages in a more effective way, whereas it may have some disadvantages as well.

Advantages

Digital literacy prepares children and students for the skills they need to engage in technology both responsibly and safely. As far as I know, teaching language with the usage of technologies means understanding the current time-period, as well as working and improving the techniques of teaching for the requirement

of the present time. Though the use of media in learning foreign languages has brought certain benefits that technologies provide both for English language learner (ELL) and English language instructor.

"Advances in technology provide digital resources for educational curriculums which significantly contribute to digital literacy learning". As Bacton Loveless said: "Traditional classroom settings restrict the time of students' capabilities. When you offer technology tools, it opens the door to the whole universe". It gives you the opportunity to learn any kind of language anywhere, at any time and about anything.

1. Personalized learning

Every student has different needs, whether in school or institution. Virtual learning gives opportunities to the students that want to work at a speed which is comfortable for them. There are some pupils who are very slow, they couldn't prepare the task in a short period of time but they will complete it correctly, while others do the task faster than them and can get higher marks. Online learning allows such students to get higher marks by preparing the proper tasks correctly. No matter if they are slow or fast, the instructor will check the correctness of it. In addition, there are some students who need personalized teaching, while "in a traditional classroom it is easier for educators to talk about a specific topic only once to the whole class. It's really difficult to provide personalized learning in a large classroom with specific time limits" (A. Chafe, 1999). Today's digital literacy tools allow everyone for individual learning. This means that students can complete everything at their own pace.

2. Take learning everywhere

In this day and age, every student knows how to use digital literacy tools, so they can utilize it anywhere, at any time they want. All of the students have got several kinds of electronic devices, such as computers, phones, laptops, smart TVs and other devices. Students can use them for academic purposes outside the classroom, for getting knowledge, for learning other second languages. They start working independently, also it increases independence.

If their time is limited, then they can continue their research wherever they go.

3. Saves time and money

One of the most common advantages of virtual learning can be to save money and time. Learners can join some online courses which are completely free, or they can watch them via YouTube platforms, it doesn't matter, they can manage their schedule and at their most convenient times, it may be early in the morning or in the evening. Learning a language without going outside from home saves their money too, because on this occasion they don't have to pay for transportation or for eating.

4. Decreases behavior issues

Utilizing the digital media also helps learners with their behavior control. When students leave the classroom, they go home and they can chat with their friends, they can write texts, they can share photos and so on, they become connected with the digital world. "Since they are accustomed to constant personal connections, being in the classroom can cause boredom and frustrations. For many students, they find release by acting out" (B. Loveless).

5. Environmentally-friendly

Learning via technologies is also more environmentally-friendly, because "e-learning doesn't contribute to the pollution that brought about by paper production", says Matthew Lynch.

Disadvantages

Besides its benefits, it also carries some negative sides. At first, it can effect to people's physical appearance, while many diseases can be caused by inactivity of a person. Furthermore, working or learning via sitting down makes people lazy and they become passive for doing other activities. Here are the other barriers that can be affected by electronic gadgets.

1. Cheating is unavoidable

Online learning also includes midterm and final assessments as in a regular traditional classroom. The downside of this e-learning is there is no one, either teachers or proctors, to watch over students during the exams. It's easy for students to share the answers or if the exam is from speaking they may read the answers.

However, it has negative effects on their future and improving themselves.

2. Face to face communication is reduced

Virtual learning may be one of the causes of social isolation, because students can not communicate face to face with their teachers and classmates. However, social interactions are limited, it may cause boredom to students.

3. Inaccessible to others

Not every student lives in an area where the internet connection is fast and stable. Some people may have worse internet connections in the area where they live, they have limited access to the internet. "They have to go to the internet cafes or use public Wi-Fis which is very inconvenient" (M. Lynch, 2020), if they are accessible in their country. For instance, in our city there are no internet cafes and public Wi-Fis are accessible, mostly in villages even internet connection is so awful, therefore the students couldn't attend some lessons because of this issue.

4. Focuses on theory, not experiment

Mostly focusing on theory is also counted as a barrier of technologies. However, students spend most of their time watching videos, listening to ted talks, podcasts and audios. "There is no hand-on experience like conducting experiments" (M. Lynch, 2020). While in school they may pay attention to both theory and experiment, so they will not be bored during the education. Both of these aspects are really important for people to improve their skills.

5. Needs time management and self-motivation

Learning something is not as easy as everyone thinks. It demands so much patience from students. Indeed, there will be some times that the person wants to give up. On these occasions they need someone's support, motivation to study hard. Whereas in traditional schools teachers always motivate their pupils and show the easier way to complete the tasks. Unfortunately in e-learning students need more self-motivation and time management. If all their tasks are planned with a schedule they can achieve everything.

Conclusion

Digital literacy needs to be integrated to eliminate all the defects that are defined above. Such integration may help teachers to manage the use of digital literacy tools which might be both beneficial and not effective for students. For doing this, firstly support and motivation, that will be given by educators, instructors or parents, is highly needed.

In my point of view, utilizing digital technologies for academic purposes is the most modern way that requires only internet access and gadgets. However, not everyone can learn individually. Being aware about the advantages and disadvantages can help to decide whether you can learn by this way or not.

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