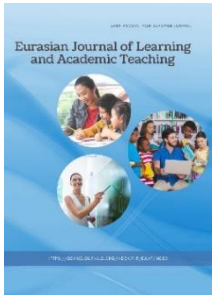

Didactic Potential Of Digital Platforms In Developing Reading Skill: The Magic School Case

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive study of the didactic potential of digital educational platforms in foreign language teaching, grounded in linguodidactic approach. The study primarily focuses on examining the linguodidactic foundations of adapting authentic texts to proficiency levels within the Magic School platform and its implementation in the instructional process.

Keywords: Linguodidactics, adaptive learning, digital platform, text adaptation, multimodality, interactive methods

Introduction

In contemporary education, foreign language learning has evolved from a purely communicative necessity into an integral component of professional competence. This shift has intensified the demand for innovative methodological approaches aimed at enhancing instructional effectiveness. In this regard, digital educational platforms have emerged as a response to these evolving needs, offering opportunities to individualize, differentiate, and enhance the interactivity of the learning process.

Unlike traditional educational settings, where instructional materials are typically designed for a general audience, digital platforms enable the consideration of learners' individual characteristics, including language proficiency level, cognitive capacity, and learning pace. Such personalization significantly increases the efficiency of language acquisition and supports learner-centered pedagogy.

The relevance of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of the adaptation of complex authentic texts to different proficiency levels for the development of reading skills, approached from both linguodidactic and psycholinguistic perspectives. Furthermore, the study provides a practical analysis of this process through the example of the Magic School platform, highlighting its potential for effective integration into the foreign language learning environment.

Literature review

Linguodidactics, as a discipline concerned with the theoretical foundations of foreign language teaching, places particular emphasis on the quality and functionality of instructional materials. Within this framework, the text is regarded as the primary source for the development of reading skills and performs multiple didactic functions. Among these, the semantic function occupies a central and fundamental position, as it facilitates the interpretation of linguistic units through contextualization.

In the process of language acquisition, lexical items and grammatical structures are more effectively internalized when presented within meaningful contexts rather than in isolation. According to Chapelle this is particularly significant in the case of polysemous lexical units, whose meanings are determined by

contextual and semantic relations. Within a text, such relations including synonyms and antonyms emerge naturally, enabling learners to infer meaning and develop deeper semantic awareness[1].

From a psycholinguistic perspective, the semantic function contributes to linking newly acquired vocabulary with existing cognitive schemas, thereby expanding semantic networks in the learner's mental lexicon. For instance, the verb "run" acquires different meanings depending on its contextual use (e.g., "run a company" vs. "run fast"), and it is precisely through textual exposure that these distinctions become cognitively accessible.

Therefore, in designing instructional texts, particular attention must be paid to contextual clarity, semantic transparency, and the avoidance of excessive cognitive load. These factors constitute essential didactic requirements for facilitating effective reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

The communicative function of a text reflects its capacity to model real-life situations. It emphasizes the transition from purely pedagogical exercises to authentic communicative tasks in the process of language learning. From a linguodidactic perspective, instructional texts should represent real communicative contexts, enabling learners to perform specific communicative functions through engagement with the text. Moreover, such texts should support the integration of all types of speech activity: reading, listening, speaking, and writing, within a unified learning framework.

According to D. Hymes' concept of communicative competence, effective language learning requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in context. This includes knowing when to speak, how to speak, and which linguistic resources are suitable for a particular communicative situation[2].

Paivio argues that from a psycholinguistic perspective, the communicative function stimulates active language processing and activates speech planning mechanisms[3]. Through interactive engagement, it contributes to the gradual automatization of language use. For example, dialogic texts recreate authentic communicative environments, prompting learners to respond, negotiate meaning, and develop communicative strategies. Consequently, in modern digital platforms, presenting texts in dialogic formats, problem-based scenarios, and interactive task structures is considered highly effective.

The pragmatic function, in turn, ensures the contextually appropriate, goal-oriented, and socially acceptable use of language. It conceptualizes language not merely as a system of grammatical rules but as a tool for social interaction. Pragmatic competence encompasses the correct use of speech acts (such as requesting, offering, refusing), awareness of politeness strategies, and sensitivity to cultural context. For instance, the sentences "Close the door!" and "Could you close the door, please?" are both grammatically correct; however, they differ significantly in their pragmatic implications.

According to Sweller from a psycholinguistic perspective, the pragmatic function involves processes such as context interpretation, inference of implicit meaning, and identification of the speaker's communicative intention[4]. These processes require a high level of cognitive engagement and play a crucial role in developing advanced communicative proficiency.

From a linguodidactic perspective, it is essential that instructional texts reflect a wide range of social contexts. In this regard, learners should acquire not only the ability how to speak, but also when and in what form to speak, depending on the communicative situation. This aspect is particularly significant for developing context-

[1] Chapelle, C. A. (2001). Computer applications in second language acquisition. Cambridge University Press.

[2] Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), Sociolinguistics. Penguin.

[3] Paivio, A. (1991). Dual coding theory: Retrospect and current status. Canadian Journal of Psychology, 45(3), 255–287.

[4] Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. Cognitive Science, 12(2), 257–285

sensitive language use and fostering pragmatic awareness.

In digital learning environments, this function is effectively implemented through role-playing activities, situational tasks, and simulations of real-life communicative scenarios. Such interactive formats allow learners to engage in contextually grounded language use, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Thus, the semantic, communicative, and pragmatic functions of texts are inherently interconnected. Together, they ensure not only a deep and systematic acquisition of language, but also contribute to the comprehensive development of learners' communicative competence. Within this framework, the text evolves from a mere instructional resource into a multifunctional didactic tool.

Discussion

One of the prominent examples of such platforms is the Magic School, digital learning environment, developed in 2023 by the American specialist Adeel Khan as an AI-powered educational platform primarily designed for teachers. The platform offers a wide range of adaptive and interactive teaching opportunities, which constitute its key didactic advantages. Among these are its adaptive learning system, multimodal content delivery, and tools for generating interactive tasks, all of which contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the instructional process.

A particularly significant feature of the Magic School platform is its automatic text level adjustment function. This tool enables the adaptation of texts to different proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced, based on learners' linguistic competence. In this process, complex sentence structures are simplified, unfamiliar lexical items are replaced with more accessible synonyms, and the overall length and density of the text are optimized.

For instance, the original sentence "The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed communication patterns" can be adapted to a beginner level as "Technology is growing fast. It has changed how people communicate." This example clearly illustrates how higher-level vocabulary is substituted with A2-level equivalents and how a complex sentence is transformed into simpler syntactic structures. Such adaptations reduce cognitive load while preserving the core semantic content, thereby facilitating comprehension and supporting gradual language development.

In addition, the platform incorporates a lexical simplification function, which enables the replacement of complex lexical items with more accessible alternatives, the selection of appropriate synonyms from lexical sets, and the clarification of academic terminology. This process can be interpreted as a form of lexical-semantic adaptation, aimed at aligning textual input with learners' proficiency levels while preserving meaning.

Equally significant are the platform's syntactic transformation capabilities. Through this function, complex sentence structures are reduced, passive constructions are converted into active forms, and compound or complex sentences are segmented into simpler units. As a result, the cognitive load imposed on learners is reduced, which facilitates faster and more efficient comprehension of textual content.

The summarization feature of the Magic School platform further enhances text accessibility by condensing content while preserving its core meaning. In this process, secondary details are eliminated, and priority is given to the macrostructural level of the text. This approach aligns with van Dijk's theory of discourse processing, which emphasizes the importance of global meaning and thematic structure in text comprehension[5].

Moreover, the platform supports the creation of differentiated tasks, including comprehension questions, tests, and discussion prompts, thereby reinforcing the principles of the communicative approach. These features allow teachers to design instruction that is both learner-centered and interaction-oriented.

When integrating simplified texts generated by the platform into classroom practice, teachers

[5] Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), The handbook of discourse analysis (pp. 352–371). Oxford: Blackwell.

may employ several effective methodological strategies:

- ✓ scaffolded reading, which involves step-by-step guidance to support comprehension;
- ✓ parallel text analysis, enabling comparison between original and adapted versions;
- ✓ lexical exercises, focused on reinforcing vocabulary acquisition and contextual usage.

Despite its considerable advantages, the Magic School platform also presents certain limitations. In some cases, semantic nuances may be diminished, and cultural context may not be fully preserved during the adaptation process. Therefore, sustained pedagogical oversight by the teacher remains essential, as the platform cannot fully substitute the human factor in language instruction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, linguodidactic principles play a crucial role in ensuring high efficiency in foreign language teaching. Text adaptation, in particular, represents a central component of this process. The Magic School platform serves as an effective digital tool for aligning texts with learners' proficiency levels, automating linguistic adaptation, optimizing instructional procedures, and supporting individualized learning trajectories.

Used literature

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