Digital Language Learning in Higher Education: A Critical Literature Review on Teachers' and Students' Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is using DLL more. Both teachers and students are used to digital learning. We have several digital learning examples. Teacher and student struggles with digital learning, such as using it, persist. This study reviews five-year-old references on digital learning in higher education. The researchers reviewed the literature on digital learning issues in higher education to determine what lecturers and students encounter in teaching and learning. The results suggest that teachers and students encounter issues including readiness to use them. Teachers and students struggle with technology access in different places, thus they should be discussed.
INTRODUCTION

Online learning has made DLL popular in higher education. Thus, teachers and students must adapt to technology learning trends. Digital Language Learning (DLL) refers to any technology-based or embedded language learning platform or tool and the practice of learning using it. Due to its involvement with engineering, education, medicine, and other digitally-enabled higher education sectors, language learning is very interdisciplinary. This study seeks to uncover teachers' digital delivery issues. Teachers may utilize Google Classroom or LMS (Learning Management System) to deliver resources or set tasks. Higher education creates a learning app. However, digital learning lets students study anywhere. However, some higher education language learning challenges.

This research examines higher education teachers' and students' DLL difficulties. Improving online education to strengthen the E-learning system. Current information technology-integrated education challenges include planning digital learning activities and using technology tools flexibly (Lin et al., 2017). This study discusses digital learning difficulties for tertiary teachers and students. This problem occurs in higher level language acquisition. Thus, digital learning can boost an organization's digital transition by developing skills. Digital transformation will occur when organizations incorporate social learning into content design and delivery, including social elements embedded in digital content, informal problem-solving, knowledge sharing, communities of practice, and user-generated content (Warschauer, 2007).

Language learning in higher education is the author's case study to identify teacher and student digital use difficulties. DLL is used generally to reflect new advances through technology-based techniques. Several studies have examined the efficacy of mobile use in ELT for young to adult learners in diverse EFL contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital learning is complex and has many literary interpretations. Definition underpins this research. Digital learning is an unplanned, implicit, and unpredictable process that uses cellphones, tablets, computers, and others. It is obvious in workplaces daily (Warschauer, 2007). The definition of digital learning is followed by its benefits to language learners and instructors, methodologies, and theories. Comprehensively, Carrier, et al. (2017) describe digital learning as “the application of technology to the learning and teaching process” (pp. 1–2). Carrier, et al. (2017) list input technologies like interactive whiteboards, projectors, and virtual reality headsets, interactive technologies like online quizzes and videoconferencing, and portable technologies like tablets, voting devices, and head-mounted displays when examining technology's affordances.

Digital Learning has several tools to help teachers and students use digital learning approaches. Every subject has instructional films, explanatory texts, simulation movies, and practice questions. Since systems and technologies favored the development and expansion of educational opportunities (Zare, et al., 2016), many researchers became interested in E-
learning in higher education and students' perceptions of its usefulness. Several studies examined digital learning. This greatly affects how teachers construct teaching materials and digital learning platforms. Teachers and students encounter what digital learning challenges? Avoiding explicit instruction in favor of intuitive learning via intelligible input may hinder full language development in DLL.

Teachers gain from technology-based curricula that inspire students to study, curate, annotate, create, innovate, problem-solve, cooperate, campaign, reform, and think critically. Self-directed learners can study anywhere. Digital media allows people of all ages to learn outside of school by accessing online information, utilizing educational or edutainment software, joining online communities, or playing games (Warschauer, 2007).

Although there are some drawbacks, students perceive a number of advantages, such as distance learning, which improves education and goes beyond traditional teaching and learning methods, expanding learning opportunities (Yuyun, 2014). Additionally, universities aim to deploy an e-learning system to improve teaching-learning. Its cost, location, time, and learning speed adaptability makes this procedure more effective.

Add applications or dependable online resources to traditional teaching methods to engage pupils. Virtual lesson planning, grading tools, and internet tests save teachers time. DLL examples, Digital Language Learning examines the potential of mobile computing, virtual reality (from desktop 3D to augmented/mixed reality), and digital games to foster self-directed, exploratory, and autonomous learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on data obtained from library sources. Data sources are derived from databases including electronic journals, Elsevier, ERIC, and ProQuest. The library data sources are derived from the research conducted between 2020 and 2023. The criteria for article selection include literature reviews pertaining to digital learning in tertiary education. An online publication that presents research findings on obstacles faced by teachers and students in tertiary education while using digital learning methods. An analysis of past study findings highlights the difficulties faced by teachers and students in digital education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital media unquestionably offers increased opportunity for young people to learn independently. Elementary school children today, equipped with laptops and high-speed Internet, have more access to information and communication tools than any scholar 50 years ago. Digital technology in the English language classroom enables individualization in large courses, supports multimodal practice, fosters collaboration, and enhances the enjoyment for learners (Brown, 2001). His belief that teachers' inexperience could cancel out the advantages of digital learning tools is a common one in the literature. Furthermore, his worries about technical issues and the cost of computer
equipment align with the disadvantages outlined by Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider (2010) regarding insufficient technical assistance and insufficient funding for digital resources (Çelik & Aytın, 2014).

This part provides the analysis and elucidation of the data. Results are analyzed in relation to the study topics presented at the start of this publication. Initially, certain theoretical observations provided a severe criticism of network scientific approaches. Three primary tendencies were noted. Initially, students frequently uploaded data on the Internet without having to download data from others. Secondly, when they downloaded data, they frequently lacked the knowledge to analyze or interpret it effectively. Thirdly, students liked online communication with peers, primarily focusing on personal and social topics rather than science-related discussions. Network science projects were successful only in instances when there was considerable support.

Teachers were providing guidance and education to children inside the classroom. Online readings and instructions were found to be inefficient in training pupils independent scientific skills. Classrooms that depended exclusively on these internet resources offered minimal advantage. In schools where students are taught how to gather, analyze, evaluate, and discuss data before using the internet, online communication and resources provide additional benefits. Simply said, the key factor that allowed for the successful utilization of Internet-based resources and distance communication was a dedicated local teacher engaging closely with students in direct interactions. The source is from Warschauer's work published in 2007.

Carrier, et.al (2017) evaluated students' opinions towards utilizing digital tools including Moodle, PowerPoint, and LINE for applications and programs outside the EFL classroom. The findings indicate that flipped classrooms can enhance student engagement in the learning process by establishing a more adaptable language-learning setting. Another example is the extensive literature on digital-game-based language learning, which has primarily concentrated on students as game players rather than as future educators. This report presents findings from a study conducted with 154 teacher candidates at a Spanish higher-education institution on the integration of digital games in education. It examines the participants' understanding and opinions regarding digital games in the context of learning a foreign language. Data was collected using pre/post-tests, digital game presentations, and student blog posts, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative information. The study involved five stages related to critical thinking skills: definition, selection, demonstration, discussion, and reflection, together with a game-learning module. During the initial two phases, prospective teachers finished the module tasks and chose several games designed to instruct children in preschool and elementary school on learning English. They analyzed, debated, and assessed digital games in class using a rubric, and then reflected on their views in blog postings.
This four-week study utilized a mixed method approach and convenience sampling to collect quantitative and qualitative data through pre- and post-test surveys on student attitudes towards the integration of video games in the classroom, class discussions, and blog posts. The results indicated a notable change in two out of five dimensions regarding teacher candidates’ views on using games in education after the intervention.

Research showed that preservice instructors have favorable attitudes but limited practical understanding on the utilization of digital games in foreign-language education. In a more accessible language than that typically used in specific scientific articles. The resource offers abundant data and examples to demonstrate creative methods of utilizing ICTs in language learning, making it a highly beneficial aspect.

The three skills are technical, organizational, and conceptual. Educators must develop sufficient computer proficiency to effectively address any issues that may arise. The teacher must establish and maintain language communities, disbanding them once they have fulfilled their purpose. Teachers should consider replacing traditional instructional material, such as textbooks, with web-based tools that offer more flexibility and opportunities for students to excel. The source is Yuyun (2014).

Carrier, et al. (2017) found that a group of teacher educators restricted the use of interactive whiteboards (IWB) by examining the potential causes for these ineffective practices. The case study findings indicate that inadequate awareness of technology-enhanced tools, challenges related to the proper utilization of interactive whiteboards, and influence from peers and administrators are common factors contributing to the reluctance to employ digital tools in educational settings.

The issue of teachers lacking experience potentially canceling out the advantages of digital learning tools is a common one in the literature. Furthermore, the worries about technical issues and the cost of computer equipment align with the disadvantages highlighted by Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider (2010) regarding insufficient technical support and limited funding for digital resources.

(Çelik & Aytın, 2014) stated that instructors believed their school officials promoted technology use and were confident that technical support was readily available for equipment or connectivity issues. Most participants acknowledged the lack of training provided but did not consider it a significant issue, as they were able to develop the required skills via their own efforts.

The teachers were enthused about the role of digital technology in language instruction, believing that digital tools may encourage students, enrich their learning, and improve their long-term retention. The participants perceived the training for using computing resources as inadequate but did not consider it a significant issue, as they believed they could acquire the required skills independently. Lack of access to computers and the Internet was identified as a major obstacle. Participants mentioned that even when these resources were available, government restrictions on Internet resources limited their use as educational tools (Çelik & Aytın, 2014).
Students have many problems in digital learning, as noted by Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider in 2010. Identify several external barriers to implementing digital educational resources, including insufficient onsite technical and administrative support, inadequate supervision of students using technology, limited specialists to help students develop computer skills, lack of computer access, insufficient time to integrate technology effectively into the curriculum, and high equipment costs along with fast-paced technological advancements.

ICT has had a substantial impact on education and learning. The goal is to develop a new model and perform confirmatory factor analysis to gain a deeper insight into how students use ICT in the classroom. The study aims to assess students' computer skills, media-related abilities, and adoption of digital learning technologies at Bisha University and King Faisal University based on their attitudes and ambitions towards using ICT for digital learning. The students' feedback was categorized into seven groups and examined to determine their perspectives and motivations for utilizing ICT in educational settings. The study effectively characterized students' attitudes and intentions about the utilization of ICT for digital learning (Sayaf et al., 2022).

Technical challenges remain the most challenging to resolve, primarily due to the limited capacity of universities' servers. Universities have endeavored to address these issues and enhance the functionality of E-learning platforms. However, students continue to face technological issues such as unreliable internet connections, signal interruptions, and insufficient digital devices, particularly those in rural areas or from low-income households. Universities could develop programs to address these needs and enhance the learning experience for students facing such circumstances.

In the 21st century, technological progress has changed the way people communicate, socialize, learn, acquire, and process information. The goal is to investigate how using digital game-based learning in Arabic classes at the postsecondary level impacts education, as technology continues to progress. This qualitative study gathered data through semi-structured interviews with 16 tertiary-level students who used a mobile digital game to learn the Arabic language. The kids were selected deliberately based on specific defining traits. The study showed that the mobile digital game had a notable impact on students' learning outcomes and improved their acquisition of Arabic language. Digital game-based learning fosters student-centered and interactive learning, producing an engaging environment that can boost student participation, sustain interest, and enhance motivation. This study investigated the potential for Arabic language instructors to utilize digital game-based learning to encourage student-centered learning, thereby increasing student engagement in language activities and creating an enjoyable, interactive learning environment (Ghani et al., 2022). Technological advancements impact educators and students in online education by generating classroom tasks. The hurdles for pupils lie in enhancing their skills for engaging in digital learning. Integrating digital technology in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is crucial for enhancing students' technological abilities, preparing them for their future careers, and ultimately improving their quality of life.
Examples of digital learning in various aspects of life include utilizing a smartphone, portable computer, text editor, learning platforms, presentations, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The most advanced digital technology activities included search engine navigation, sending messages or emails, academic work, and using social networks.

Technological progress over the past twenty years has broadened the opportunities for teaching and learning, especially in the context of the Arabic language. Mobile digital games have significant potential to aid digital natives in their learning, as stated by Ghani et al. (2022). Digital learning has transformed the landscape of English language education. Technology-driven language learning has garnered significant interest because of its advantages. Yet, the utilization of digital platforms for English language acquisition in the EFL setting has not been thoroughly examined. The study investigates the relationship between students' digital literacy skills, attitudes, and utilization of digital platforms for learning. The study employed a quantitative research approach, gathering data from 80 randomly selected English as a Foreign Language (EFL) participants through a survey questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 software. The findings indicated that students exhibited a high level of attitudes, a moderate degree of digital literacy skills, and a moderate level of utilizing digital platforms for learning.

The results indicated an insignificant negative correlation between students' utilization of digital platforms for learning English, digital literacy skills, and attitudes. Attitude and computer literacy are not predictive of the usage of digital platforms for learning English, according to the data. This study makes a substantial contribution to the scarce research on utilizing digital platforms for educational purposes. The findings suggest a need for more research to explore the factors that impede the utilization of digital platforms in EFL classrooms (Alakrash et al., 2022). The text suggests that a pedagogy focused on DLL that avoids direct instruction in favor of implicit learning through understandable information could impede the complete acquisition of a new language (Lantolf & Xi, 2023). DLL is an important factor for both teachers and students in digital learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Technological advancements impact digital learning processes. Presently, digital learning is gaining popularity in education. Teachers create diverse learning strategies through digital education. For instance, acquiring knowledge using platforms like Google Meet and Zoom, and submitting assignments via email or other software. Students must adjust to technological advancements, particularly by engaging in digital learning. Students have the flexibility to study at any location and at any time. Students have the ability to study autonomously. Nevertheless, teachers and students have difficulties while using digital learning in education. Educators must select engaging content to prevent students from becoming disinterested in the learning process. Studying digital technology should begin with hardware and progress
to software and applications to provide effective learning. Many students have a significant issue with a sluggish internet connection. Online learning necessitates a robust internet connection due to the use of platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and other programs for video conferencing. This study outlines the obstacles teachers face while using digital learning in language education, since it is advised for teachers to utilize several digital teaching platforms. It is recommended for future research to focus on in-depth studies of how digital learning impacts teachers and students. Students are advised to stay informed about technology advancements.

**FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic still needs to be carried out “Digital Language Learning in Higher Education: A Critical Literature Review on Teachers' and Students' Challenges.”

**REFERENCES**


