

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS TEACHING

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Abstract

Integration of technology in the teaching/learning process has caused many changes in education in recent years. In addition, due to the pandemic that surrounded the world at the beginning of 2020, schools had to switch from face-to-face to distance education; therefore, the need for technology use and expansion of online applications became inevitable. As a result of this massive change in education and the emergence of online applications as language learning tools, this evaluation study investigates Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, Padlet, and Quizlet that are created as educational applications used in English language classes. The paper starts with the hegemony of technology in education and then continues with the evaluation of these online applications. Lastly how to use these applications effectively in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms is discussed. It can be reported that EDpuzzle can mostly be used for authentic video sessions; Flipgrid is effective on online speaking skills; Padlet is helpful with students' writing skills, and lastly, Quizlet is beneficial for vocabulary teaching. It can be concluded that online applications are likely to result in effective assistance of learning and practicing both for language teachers/students and learning/teaching processes.

INTRODUCTION

The use of technology has become an inseparable part of language classes with the ongoing advancements. Moreover, technology integration has increased in the whole education community as face-to-face education, which has been implemented for years, has evolved into distance education after the pandemic, and online education has become compulsory in many educational institutions (Mahyoob, 2020; Ariyanti, 2021). Evisen et al. (2020) described this incident as a painful process that schools and institutions all over the world needed to shift to distance education. The shift has been

so fast and sudden, but schools tried to cope with the difficulties of the new paradigm. Although schools experienced instant and painful shift, many positive feedbacks from the schools have been given. For instance, Cakrawati, (2017) states that online education is beneficial for teachers and students in many ways such as saving time, acquiring new language items in different ways and having higher motivation. Alsied and Pathan (2013) assert that it is undeniable that integration of technology brings a lot of advantages for language learning as teaching and learning English has turned into a more practical and entertaining phenomena by means of technological developments. Although many benefits are listed in the literature, Mese and Sevilen (2021) point out that English language teaching (ELT) through distance education has several disadvantages such as lack of social interaction, mismatch between expectations and content and organizational problems. With the advent of technology, expansion of distance education and increasing mobile applications for language learning, EFL teaching has undergone a transformation in terms of teaching sources. Apart from computers, mobile phones and their apps have also been benefited in EFL classes lately. A new concept, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has been introduced and it is a relatively new method in EFL teaching. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the aspect of mobile assisted language learning (eg., Norbrook & Scott, 2003; Chinnery, 2006; Chang & Hsu, 2011; Kim, Ruecker & Kim 2019; Al-Shehab, 2020; Gharehblagh & Nasri, 2020; Viberg, Wasson & Kukulska-Hulme, 2020; and Hoi & Mu, 2021). Teachers integrate online applications into their classes to help with teaching of language skills and these applications have become a widespread source for teaching or practicing language skills inside or outside the class. Bringing these tools and the EFL learners who are digital natives together help increase the learners' motivation and turns classrooms into a dynamic environment (Colpitts et al., 2020). In the last years, more and more websites and applications that have flexible features have been developed for both learning and teaching English, thus, turning the language learning experience into lifelong one. Kern & Warschauer (2000) stated that with the expansion of internet worldwide and in education that computers and networks

are linked to each other, programmed applications has been used widely. These innovations enabled human-to human and human to applications communications. For such communications, Arslan (2008) listed learning activities as follows:

1. Lexical quizzes, games and other vocabulary learning specific activities (e.g. lexical maps, concordances use, class dictionary building).
2. Grammar tutorials, exercises, simulations and games.
3. Listening and pronunciation virtual lab activities
4. Reading and writing web tasks: treasure hunts, WebQuests,

METHOD

This research is designed as qualitative research in order to evaluate four online educational tools used in EFL classes. Three evaluation tools are used holistically for data collection and data analysis. Ellis (1997) distinguished materials evaluation into two: the predictive evaluation in which the evaluation is made before the materials are used in classrooms and without actual testing, and the retrospective evaluation that is the examination of materials that were tested by the teachers or empirical research has been conducted. In this study, a retrospective evaluation has been conducted that is the researchers tested these applications with the help of Uzun's (2009) checklist and Fuentes and Martines' (2018) evaluation tool.

Data Collection

In this study, the data is collected through Ellis' (1997) retrospective evaluation method. In this method there are seven steps. These are choosing the material, describing the material, planning the evaluation, collecting the information, analysis, reaching a conclusion, and writing the report. Adhering to these stages, four online applications to be evaluated were determined and then implemented these stages.

Data Analysis

Uzun (2009) developed a materials evaluation checklist which was first designed to investigate the effectiveness of a vocabulary teaching application. The key components of this checklist are intended users, language learning scope, practicality, and device requirement. However, it is a convenient checklist to be adapted into different instructional materials. On the other hand, Fuentes and Martines' (2018), in their evaluation tool, proposed nine evaluation areas for educational websites, such as 'general site information, language skills and components, educational material, multimedia use, interactivity, communication, aid tools and linguistic resources, website ergonomics and content quality' (p.33). By integrating these two evaluation tools, we evaluated these four educational online applications holistically.

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