

Kakimbek A.,¹ Tautenbaeva A.²

^{1,2}Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University

¹2 year MA student

*²Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor
Almaty, Kazakhstan*

METHODS OF USING ONLINE EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Abstract

Every year the world never ceases to amaze with its new technologies. Now online educational platforms are an integral part of every teacher as well as students. This research article explores different methods of using online platforms for learning languages, including qualitative and quantitative analysis to gain essential data from educators and learners.

These findings discover that online platforms boost accessibility, flexibility, engagement and enhancement in learning, as well as some technological problems and individual's motivation persist. This study seeks to explore various approaches to employing online educational platforms in English language instruction, examining their effectiveness, challenges, and implications for both teachers and learners. The article outlines the main takeaways and concludes with practical advice and suggestions for educators and educational institutions to effectively integrate online platforms into English language teaching.

Key words: *Online Educational Platforms, English Language Teaching (ELT), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Blended Learning, Digital Tools, ESL, E-learning, Online Resources.*

Какимбек А. ¹, Таутенбаева А. ²

^{1,2} Абай атындағы ҚазҰПУ

¹ 2 курс магистранты

²Педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты, қауымдастырылған профессор.

АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДА ОНЛАЙН БІЛІМ БЕРУ ПЛАТФОРМАЛАРЫН ҚОЛДАНУ ӘДІСТЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Жыл сайын әлем өзінің жаңа технологияларымен таң қалдыруды тоқтатпайды. Қазіргі уақытта онлайн білім беру платформалары әрбір оқытушы мен оқушы қызметінің ажырамас бөлігі болып табылады. Бұл зерттеу мақаласы тілдерді үйрену үшін онлайн платформаларды пайдаланудың әртүрлі әдістерін, соның ішінде оқытушылар мен студенттерден қажетті деректерді алу үшін сапалық және сандық талдауды қарастырады.

Бұл нәтижелер онлайн платформалар оқытудың қолжетімділігін, икемділігін, қатысуын және тиімділігін арттыратынын және кейбір технологиялық мәселелер мен адамның мотивациясының сақталатынын көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты ағылшын тілін оқытуда онлайн білім беру платформаларын пайдаланудың әртүрлі тәсілдерін, олардың тиімділігін, мұғалімдер үшін де, оқушылар үшін де проблемалары мен салдарын зерттеу болып табылады. Мақалада онлайн-платформаларды ағылшын тілін оқытуға тиімді интеграциялау бойынша оқытушылар мен білім беру мекемелеріне арналған негізгі тұжырымдар мен практикалық кеңестер мен ұсыныстар баяндалады.

Кілт сөздер: сөйлеу дағдылары, тыңдалым дағдылары, онлайн құралдар, цифрлық білім беру, сабақтағы бақылау, шет тілін оқыту, коммуникативтік құзыреттілік.

Какимбек А.¹, Тауменбаева А.²

^{1 2} КазНПУ им.Абая

¹ Магистрант 2 курса

² Кандидат педагогических наук, доцент

МЕТОДЫ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ ОНЛАЙН ПЛАТФОРМ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Аннотация

С каждым годом мир не перестает удивлять своими новыми технологиями. В настоящее время образовательные онлайн-платформы являются неотъемлемой частью деятельности как каждого преподавателя, так и учащихся. В этой исследовательской статье рассматриваются различные методы использования онлайн-платформ для изучения языков, включая качественный и количественный анализ для получения необходимых данных от преподавателей и учащихся.

Эти результаты свидетельствуют о том, что онлайн-платформы повышают доступность, гибкость, вовлеченность и эффективность обучения, а также о том, что сохраняются некоторые технологические проблемы и мотивация человека. Целью данного исследования является изучение различных подходов к использованию онлайн-образовательных платформ при обучении английскому языку, их эффективности, проблем и последствий как для учителей, так и для учащихся. В статье излагаются основные выводы и завершаются практические советы и рекомендации для преподавателей и образовательных учреждений по эффективной интеграции онлайн-платформ в преподавание английского языка.

Ключевые слова: *Онлайн-образовательные платформы, Обучение английскому языку (ELT), Изучение второго языка (SLA), Смешанное обучение, Цифровые инструменты, ESL, Электронное обучение, Онлайн-ресурсы.*

Introduction

English occupies one of the leading positions among the most widely spoken languages in the world. In contemporary society, where the rapid advancement of information technology is transforming established practices, the demand of proficiency in English is increasing, particularly among the younger demographic of students. This is necessary so that young people can better meet current trends, meet the requirements of the labor market and significantly improve their quality of life and develop personal skills. The enhancement of technology in education has made denoting changes in methods of teaching and learning environments. Online educational platforms are strong tools for language learning, which offers different opportunities to fill the gaps where traditional classroom settings may encounter. There have made some transformations in teaching English language, and among these transformations, online educational platforms have more influence. Because, online platforms consist of ready sample plans, authentic materials, games to play, multiple instructional materials easy to use, video materials, quizzes and give several opportunities for real-time collaboration. As a result, English language teaching is becoming more accessible, easy to learn, flexible, versatile and learner centered.

This article sets the goal to pinpoint the most effective methods of utilizing online educational platforms in English language teaching, focusing on all the associated challenges, advantages and disadvantages and optimal implementation methods. Finally, it ensures to get insights into how these online platforms can strengthen students' involvement in learning English and proficiency.

The research is accompanied by the following questions:

1. What are the most effective methods of using online educational platforms in teaching ESL?

2. What are the obstacles that teachers and learners may face?
3. How can these difficulties be overcome to advance learner outcomes?

Literature review

Online educational platforms are like the roots of e-learning, as every big tree needs a base to grow. Online educational platforms are services that act as a guide between a student and a teacher in distance learning via the Internet. The term “e-learning” was first coined by Elliott Masie in 1999. He characterized the “e” in e-learning as the experience dimension of learning that incorporates engagement, curiosity, simulation, and practice. The authors of the study "E-learning in Higher Education: What is the Current Status?" E-learning can be defined as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and support learning within higher education. This encompasses a range of systems, such as students using email and accessing the course content online while enrolled in on-campus classes, as well as completely online programs. [1] Let's dive into another term “blended learning”, which can be defined as “lessons which are conducted and in offline, and in online form, as mixed styles of learning in a classroom setting”. As specified by D. Randy Garrison, Norman D. Vaughan “Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines” :“Blended learning is the intentional integration of in-person and digital learning experiences.” Furthermore, implementing blended learning entails substituting face-to-face instruction with suitable educational options, such as labs, simulations, tutorials, and assessment. The concept of blended learning encompasses a fresh approach that incorporates both traditional classroom and online activities in line with the objectives of particular courses or programs. [2] Educators can integrate online and traditional forms of education, using platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom to provide additional materials, assignments and tests. This method provides flexibility in the learning process and expands access to educational resources.

S. Krashen distinguishes between skills acquired in a second language by differentiating between acquisition and learning. (Abukhattala, 2013). The acquisition-learning hypothesis is a component of Krashen's model of SLA (Abukhattala, 2013). [3] Utilizing an individual's conscious mind for language learning and structure is essential for successful learning, as pointed by Bahrani (2011) [4]. This phenomenon, known as acquisition, takes place through subconscious processes that embed the language within the person's mind, allowing them to use it instinctively as a medium. Second language acquisition (SLA) is highly dependent on these platforms, which offer audio-visual materials, interactive quizzes, games, and instant feedback. Furthermore, Coursera, edX, and Khan Academy have partnered with universities to offer structured English courses that can educate students in both general and academic English.

Similarly, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory has been utilized to enhance understanding of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) owing to its prevalent application in educational contexts. Vygotsky primarily concentrated on exploring the relationship between educational practices and the cognitive development of children (Vygotsky, 2011). As noted by Daneshfar & Moharami (2018), the sociocultural theory (SCT) asserts that social interactions, facilitated by psychological instruments such as language, are essential in influencing an individual's cognitive growth.

Methods

This study consists of two research approaches, specifically a mixed-method approaches, a qualitative and quantitative to explore and find all the challenges and more suitable methods. Data was collected through interviews from teachers and surveys from students. The study sets the goal to capture the personal opinions of both teachers and students. The study involves 8 English language teachers and 20 students from the educational center “StudyON” in Abaya 165\3, Almaly district, Almaty. The research was conducted using different platforms, more precisely “Edu.StudyON”, “ESL brains” and “Google Classroom”. The participants were selected based on their active participation and engagement during the lessons with online English language courses, taking into account their willingness to provide feedback on the teaching methods. First of all, teachers showed their interest according to teaching methods as they always use online platforms in every lesson. The survey focused on teachers' perspective for the online educational platforms

and are there any challenges with them. On the other hand, interviews were taken from students, there were questions such as what they think about e-learning in general, do they like blended learning method, where they can have lessons with digital tools and etc. Responses of survey from 20 students were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics to discover students' satisfaction, engagement during lessons, therefore preferences to identify how many students think negatively or positively regarding e-learning. Interviews with the 8 teachers were conducted in positive environment without any feeling of pressure. Key points were mentioned to understand their thoughts about online platforms and how they affect to the English lessons. Last but not the least, the study identified several challenges.

Results

The results of survey from 20 students were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The primary goal of this survey was assessing student's satisfaction, preferences regarding the usage of online platforms for their English lessons. The framework for the survey will be developed based on the book "Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure, and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research" by Ian Brace [7]. The survey will be a structured questionnaire featuring a set of predetermined questions with fixed response choices. Usually, the questions are closed-ended, which means participants select from a list of pre-established response options. Structured surveys are frequently utilized in quantitative research to gather standardized data that can be easily analyzed and compared among respondents.

According to results 70% of the students stated that they were mostly satisfied with the online educational platform such as "Edu.StudyON", which is the author's platform with a license to conduct English language courses in educational centers "StudyON". Second platform "ESL brains" was less popular, it was a paid online platform with lessons plans, worksheets for each lesson. And the last platform was less satisfied, "Google Classroom" is the most well-known platform to get information about lessons, but without creative designing. (Table 1 presents the percentage of student satisfaction with three different platforms used in this study)

Table 1.

RESULTS TABLE		
Student satisfaction with online platforms		
Platform	Satisfaction (%)	Comments
Edu.StudyON	70%	Most popular, interactive
ESL Brains	55% (approx.)	Useful but less accessible (paid)
Google Classroom	40% (approx.)	Functional, but less creative

Student engagement part showed 85% positive feedback about online platforms for their interactive features, more precisely quizzes, games, videos, music and authentic materials which are connected with real-world applications.

75% of the participants preferred the blended learning method, which combines traditional face-to-face interaction with additional helpers such as digital tools. Almost all students mentioned flexibility of e-learning with education platforms.

According to Robert S. Weiss, who extensively explored structured interviewing in his book "Learning from Strangers: he emphasized that interviewing should be comfortable and simple process, fostering a positive environment.[8].

All 8 teachers expressed the high level of satisfaction with using online platforms, as well as they help to conduct engaging, active, effective, successful English language lessons and provide valuable materials for supplementing lessons. Authentic platforms "Edu.StudyON" and "ESL brains" were especially highlighted by teachers for its managing PDF or printed assignments and providing real-time feedback.

Benefits for language teaching part demonstrated that teachers used materials from "ESL brains" to intensify lessons with videos, podcasts and reading comprehension texts according to students` level and interests. Into the bargain, teachers took into consideration introverted students, who were generally shy in traditional classroom settings participated more actively and showed significantly high progress in learning English language.

Over and above that, the tutors also mentioned some challenges of online platforms, by way of illustration-technical issues, such as poor internet connection and technical glitches disrupted lessons for both educators and learners. In addition, teachers highlighted students` addiction on digital tools, as they sometimes did not want to learn English language with the help of books, which can show dependence on online resources rather than printed resources.

Discussion

Evidence from this study confirms the growing body of literature on the effectiveness of online educational platforms in teaching English. The introduction of platforms like Edu.StudyON, and ESL Brains has revolutionized the teaching of English by providing students with a more flexible, interactive, and student-centered learning experience. Nevertheless, it seems these results are also displaying that online platforms do set up some challenges. As an illustration, the absence of real-time feedback and technical challenges in some online courses were identified as potential barriers to effective discovering by students. Into the bargain, some technical obstacles can cause disruptions during the lessons. Such obstructions point to the need to 'integrate these online tools into face-to-face teaching' as both teachers and students benefit from such an integrated, structured learning environment. The study`s findings demonstrated the second language acquisition theories how it was mentioned before, because SLA theories emphasize on implication of real-life context and interactive learning. In this case, online educational platforms help students to engage with authentic materials, such as podcasts, video materials, listening recordings and activities, which boost their language advancement. As everyone knows, the key figure in the lessons is teacher, person who gives knowledge. The results of research suggest that when teachers integrate online resources into the classroom, students become more interested, involved and sure motivated to know more. Furthermore, teachers should also take into consideration creating a friendly environment in which learners can feel not pressured, in contrast, to feel more comfortable asking questions and seek help. A limitation of this study is research was tailored among only a few students and teachers, which can not demonstrate one hundred percent right information. Because, the small sample size of people can not fully intercept the full range of experiences of all educators and learners. Future research could capture more people to get more accurate information.

Conclusion

Online educational platforms provide a lot of different wide range of opportunities for both teachers and students. Online platforms support more flexible, engaging, interactive and learner-centered approach, which can intensify the level of language acquisition. On the other hand, the successful implementation of online educational platforms depends on how they are going to be integrated into the classroom setting. Consequently, blended learning, which merges personalized interaction with the use of various online tools appears to be the most effective and sufficient method for expanding student engagement and improving learning outcomes of the English language lesson.

To fully capture the capacity of online platforms in English language teaching, teachers should continue to use various digital tools to find out the most appropriate one. If teachers combine both

traditional and online methods, they can create a new positive, never ending dynamic environment for learners.

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