

TEACHING ENGLISH USING SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This study investigates the effectiveness of using educational applications to enhance English language skills among high school students. With the rapid advancement of educational technology, the role of digital tools in language learning is increasingly significant. The research focuses on how applications such as Duolingo, Grammarly, Quizlet, Kahoot, Memrise and BBC Learning English support the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. These tools were integrated into classroom instruction based on structured lesson plans, and after each session, students' participation, comprehension levels, and assessment results were analyzed. The findings indicate that Duolingo was particularly effective in vocabulary acquisition and lexical exercises. Grammarly served as a valuable resource for checking written work, analyzing errors, and reinforcing grammar knowledge. BBC Learning English demonstrated high efficacy in listening comprehension activities. Besides, the use of these digital tools enhanced student engagement and fostered independent learning. The interactive and engaging nature of the applications allowed students to practice meaningfully and autonomously. The study also measured changes in students' motivation and performance before and after the implementation of these tools. Results suggest that integrating such technologies in English language classrooms not only increases motivation but also boosts students' confidence and interest in the subject. This research underscores the significance of modern teaching strategies in developing essential 21st-century communication skills.

Keywords: Educational Technology, Language Learning Applications, Gamification, Vocabulary Acquisition, Student Engagement.

Introduction

In today's educational landscape, the demand for integrating technology into language instruction is steadily increasing. The 21st-century classroom is no longer confined to traditional methods; incorporating software applications into English language learning has become a valuable approach for enhancing student engagement. At the middle school level, students begin to encounter more complex vocabulary and grammar. In addition to this, it is essential for them to improve their reading, speaking, and listening skills.

Traditional learning methods can sometimes become monotonous. Therefore, the use of interactive tools makes learning more enjoyable and effective. Educational software programs support learners by enhancing their grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills through various interactive activities such as games, exercises, and quizzes. Some of the most effective applications for English language learning include Duolingo, Quizlet, Kahoot, Memrise, Grammarly, and BBC Learning English. These applications support students in diverse ways some focus on vocabulary acquisition, others assist with writing skills, and some help improve pronunciation.

One of the most fruitful aspects of these applications is their flexibility; students can learn anytime and anywhere. They are able to practice at their own pace and review lessons whenever necessary, making the learning process more personalized and efficient.

This article discusses the most effective English language learning applications for middle school students and how these tools can make the learning process both enjoyable and beneficial. Increased use of technology in English classes helps students learn more efficiently while also increasing their motivation and enjoyment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have studied the use of technology in language education, and two important scholars in this field Mark Warschauer and Stephen Bax have contributed valuable insights.

Technology can give students more opportunities to communicate in the target language, get instant feedback, and learn at their own pace. Digital tools also help reduce the gap between learning in the classroom and using the language in real-life situations. Using educational programs increases motivation and provides a flexible environment for students with different learning styles. (Warschauer, 2000, p. 7).

It is discussed that technology should not be seen as something separate or special, but as a natural part of everyday teaching. “When technology is fully integrated into classroom practice, it can strongly support language learning by offering real, meaningful tasks and increasing student motivation.” Applications and digital tools should be used in a way that naturally fits different teaching styles and student needs. (Stephen Bax, 2003, p. 23).

Inspired by their work, I decided to explore this topic more deeply and focus on how software applications can help improve the language skills of secondary school students. My research looked at how effective these applications are in making the learning process more engaging and meaningful. I examined how apps like Duolingo, Quizlet, Kahoot, and BBC Learning English help students participate more actively during English lessons. These tools support grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing in a fun and interactive way.

METHODOLOGY

Gamified language learning applications such as Wordwall, Quizizz, and Kahoot were utilized to enhance the learning process. These platforms made the educational experience more engaging and interactive by allowing students to earn points, advance levels, and compete with others. They helped learners actively and enthusiastically practice grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills, thus making language learning more enjoyable and less monotonous.

Furthermore, vocabulary acquisition was supported through the use of applications like Quizlet and Baamboozle. These platforms enabled students to create flashcards, engage in quizzes, and reinforce long-term memory through spaced repetition. As a result, vocabulary learning became more interactive and effective. Moreover, these applications tracked learners’ progress and adapted to their learning pace, providing a more personalized learning experience.

Lesson Plan

Topic: Past Simple Tense

Duration: 40 minutes

Apps Used: Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot, Duolingo

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will understand the structure and usage of the Past Simple Tense.
- Students will practice the Past Simple tense through interactive tasks and digital tools.
- Students will identify and use regular and irregular verbs in the Past Simple tense correctly.

Lesson Stages:

1. Warm-up (5 minutes) – Wordwall & Duolingo

- Activity: “Spin the Wheel” (Wordwall)
- In this game, students will spin a wheel showing different verbs. They will have to give the Past Simple form of the verb they land on.
- Duolingo: After the Wordwall game, students will practice using Duolingo to match verbs with their correct Past Simple forms, reinforcing the vocabulary learned in the warm-up.

2. Presentation (10 minutes) – Quizizz & Duolingo

- Teacher Explanation: The teacher explains the structure of the Past Simple tense with examples (e.g., walked, went).
- Quizizz Live Quiz: Students will complete a Quizizz quiz where they must choose the correct form of the verb (regular or irregular) to complete sentences.
- Duolingo: After the Quizizz quiz, students will go back to Duolingo to practice forming sentences in the Past Simple tense with regular and irregular verbs in a more personalized setting.

3. Practice (10 minutes) – Kahoot & Wordwall

- Kahoot Game: Students will answer questions about the Past Simple tense, where they will select the correct form of the verb (regular or irregular) for given sentences.
- Wordwall: Students will then use Wordwall again, but this time they will match the correct verb to a sentence in the Past Simple tense. For example, they’ll match “I _____ (eat)” with “ate.”

4. Production (10 minutes) – Kahoot & Quizizz

- Activity: “Sentence Creation”
- Students will work individually or in pairs to create sentences using Past Simple from a given list of verbs (both regular and irregular).
- Kahoot: In this round of Kahoot, students will choose the correct verb tense from multiple choices based on the sentences they have created in the previous activity.
- Quizizz: A quick follow-up on Quizizz with a few questions about sentence structure and identifying the correct tense.

5. Wrap-up (5 minutes) – Kahoot & Duolingo

- Kahoot: Students will take a quick, 5-question quiz on Kahoot to review the Past Simple tense.
- Homework: Assign homework where students must use Duolingo to practice for 10 minutes, focusing on Past Simple tense sentences.

RESULTS

1. Wordwall and Duolingo

Wordwall was highlighted by students as an effective tool due to its interactive and visual nature, which made learning engaging. The “Spin the Wheel” activity, in particular, quickly captured students’ attention and proved to be highly effective. The application was easy to navigate, and students clearly understood the task of spinning the wheel and conjugating verbs in the Past Simple tense. On the other hand, Duolingo worked well for students who required more structured practice. The app’s use of repetition and visual cues helped reinforce their understanding of verb conjugation. However, some students found the pace of the app slightly fast, especially when focusing on irregular verbs. While Duolingo was excellent for vocabulary reinforcement, it was comparatively slower in explaining grammatical rules clearly. Therefore, it served better as a supplementary tool.

2. Quizizz and Duolingo

Quizizz was found to be highly effective because it transformed learning into a competitive and enjoyable activity, which increased students’ engagement and motivation. Instant feedback after each question helped learners immediately recognize and correct their mistakes. The app was user-friendly and free of

technical issues, allowing students to quickly grasp the format. This also made it easier for the teacher to explain the correct answers. While Duolingo provided deeper practice with verb forms, it did not actively encourage discussion or deeper engagement with grammatical rules. Though useful for reinforcing individual verb forms, it was less effective in helping students understand the Past Simple in context. Thus, teacher-led grammar explanations were essential before using the app for practice.

3. Kahoot and Wordwall

Kahoot emerged as one of the most successful tools in this lesson. The quiz format allowed students to test their knowledge in a competitive manner, maintaining their engagement and participation. The fast-paced nature of the game kept students focused. It was easy to use, and students quickly became familiar with the interface. They enjoyed receiving immediate results. Wordwall was effective for sentence-building exercises. Although the interface was simple, some students felt the sentences were too easy. To promote greater progress, more complex sentence structures could be incorporated.

4. Kahoot and Quizizz

Kahoot continued to be effective, particularly as students enjoyed answering questions related to sentence formation and the use of the Past Simple tense. The competitive aspect of the game enhanced the learning experience. The app was easy to manage, and students appreciated the immediate feedback and visual display of their achievements. Quizizz was valuable for reviewing and identifying confusion after the lesson. Students found it easy to use, and the multiple-choice format proved effective. However, some learners could benefit from open-ended questions that allow them to practice writing complete sentences.

5. Kahoot and Duolingo (as a Final Activity)

Kahoot was ideal for concluding the lesson. Its quiz format helped consolidate everything students had learned, and its engaging elements made the review activity enjoyable. In contrast, Duolingo was less effective as a final activity, as it did not provide real-time feedback in a group setting. Although suitable for individual practice, students found it less engaging and somewhat tedious during final review.

DISCUSSIONS

The use of software applications during English language lessons has proven highly effective in enhancing students' language skills. These tools offered easy, engaging, and interactive methods for practicing various aspects of language, ranging from vocabulary and grammar to sentence construction and pronunciation. The integration of technology in the classroom not only motivated students but also facilitated personalized learning experiences.

Throughout the lessons, software applications helped maintain students' interest and participation, an area where traditional educational settings often face challenges. The interactive nature of these tools made learning more dynamic and enjoyable, boosting student engagement. In addition to this, the immediate feedback provided by many applications allowed students to quickly identify and correct mistakes, which is crucial for reinforcing learning and improving retention.

Besides, the use of these applications supported various learning styles and provided students with the opportunity to practice at their own pace. For instance, some tools offered repetitive exercises that were particularly beneficial for reinforcing vocabulary and verb conjugation, while others created opportunities for competitive learning, which served as a significant motivator for students.

Despite the numerous advantages, certain challenges were observed during the lessons. While these tools were effective for practicing specific language skills, they did not always offer sufficient opportunities for deeper engagement with more complex skills, such as grammar rules, speaking, and writing. Teacher-led instruction remained essential to ensure students understood the context and application of grammatical structures, particularly when studying more complex topics like verb tenses.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the use of educational applications in teaching English to students in general education schools has been shown to significantly enhance their language proficiency. Tools such as Kahoot, Duolingo, Quizlet, Wordwall, and Quizizz provide interactive and engaging experiences that support students in practicing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Moreover, these applications cater to a variety of learning styles, making it easier for educators to address individual needs and preferences. When selected appropriately and used

in a balanced manner, these technologies not only boost students' confidence and motivation in learning English but also contribute to improving their overall language competence.

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