

ПЕДАГОГИКА ЖӘНЕ ОҚЫТУ ӘДІСТЕРІ

PEDAGOGY AND TEACHING METHODS

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EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS AS A TOOL TO RAISE THE EFL LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

Abstract. Technology has become increasingly integrated into the education environment in view of increasing students' motivation. The presented paper describes online platforms such as Webex, Google Hangouts used for video conferencing to help students in the learning process to gain knowledge. In particular, platforms such as Nearpod, Schoology, and Kahoot, these platforms help to increase classroom dynamics and improve overall students' learning experience. The article presents the aims of research that studied students' motivation during online education. The study used a questionnaire tool for university students and coding to get the results.

Keywords: educational platforms, information technology, motivation, higher education.

Аңдатпа. Студенттердің уәждемесінің артуына байланысты технологиялар білім беру ортасына ықпалдастырыла түсуде. Ұсынылған мақалада студенттерге оқу процесінде білім алуға көмектесу үшін бейнеконференция үшін қолданылатын Webex, Google Hangouts сияқты онлайн платформалар сипатталған. Атап айтқанда, Nearpod, Schoology және Kahoot сияқты платформаларда бұл платформалар сыныптағы оқу динамикасын арттыруға және студенттердің жалпы оқу тәжірибесін жақсартуға көмектеседі. Мақалада онлайн-оқыту процесінде студенттердің уәждемесін зерттеу мақсаттары көрсетілген. Зерттеу университет студенттеріне арналған сауалнаманы және нәтиже алу үшін кодтауды қолданды.

Түйін сөздер: білім беру платформалары, ақпараттық технологиялар, мотивация, жоғары білім.

Аннотация. Технологии становятся все более интегрированными в образовательную среду ввиду повышения мотивации студентов. В представленной статье описаны онлайн-платформы, такие как Webex, Google Hangouts, используемые для видеоконференцсвязи, чтобы помочь учащимся получить знания в процессе обучения. В частности, на таких платформах, как Nearpod, Schoology и Kahoot, эти платформы помогают повысить динамику обучения в классе и улучшить общий опыт обучения студентов. В статье представлены цели исследования мотивации студентов в процессе онлайн-обучения. В исследовании использовался опрос для студентов университета и кодирование для получения результатов.

Ключевые слова: образовательные платформы, информационные технологии, мотивация, высшее образование.

1. Introduction

Education plays an important role in human life, it may be a key to a successful and bright future. Nowadays, many academic articles, virtual learning environments, and other educational tools which are available on the internet for free can be accessed by ordinary people. Students to be more specific frequently used the internet or to be more particular social networking sites. (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza 2008). However, students' motivation during the educational and learning processes may affect students' achievement. This study focuses on discussing learners' motivation, matters relating to the motivation and its relationship with student achievement. In Kazakhstan and other countries, teachers and professors in schools and higher institutions of learning are using numerous virtual educational platforms such as Schoology, Moodle, Edmodo, Webex, Kahoot, Quizlet, Google tools, and other related sources. The popularity of the following virtual learning environments paved the way for numerous researches on the impact of using these platforms on students' academic achievement or learning motivation.

1.2 Participants

The participants are students of Suleyman Demirel University – Kaskelen. All of these students use different educational platforms to answer online quizzes, assignments, and discussions. 55% of the participants were males and 45% were females. The participants are first-year university students.

1.3. Aims of the Study

The aims of this paper are to understand the participants' perception about using educational platforms for learning; to know their perceptions regarding the advantages and disadvantages in using the said learning environment, and to reveal participants' motivation on using educational tools.

1.4 Research Questions

The main idea of this study was presented through the following research questions:

1. How do online education platforms influence students' learning motivation?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using educational tools for learning?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Motivation

Motivation has always played a vital role in any sphere of the occupation. Therefore, people pay attention to motivation first before any work. Motivation itself means the motive to act. It is an internal process; therefore, motivation is a condition inside us that wishes change in any sphere, self, or environment (Reeve, 2018).

Motivation is impacted by the satisfaction of desires and needs which are either necessary for life or needed for well-being growth. Society and the actual environment play a significant role in terms of extrinsic motivation (Reeve, 2018).

Motivation also involves behavior and engagement. The behavior of motivation can be seen by gestures and facial expressions. As for engagement, motivation is inferred by the level of engagement.

Motivation is a dynamic process and people's motives are changed with time. Increasing and falling depending on the circumstances; therefore, motives are leading to the continuing stream of behavior. It has the expression of *autotelic* activities, which is an interesting task. It is said, when it comes to interesting tasks, it usually takes long-term goals that work better, as they provide for greater flexibility.

The motivation which originates from internal needs is much stronger than extrinsic. There are a lot of items that can influence the level of motivation. If a person is suffering from hunger, thirst, or for example, lack of sleep; thus, this will lead to not well-being, avoidance, and procrastination.

Nowadays, with a huge amount of information people usually lack sleep or regular mode, irregular sleep, eating times, and other modern world factors which definitely have an influence on motivation. Students are suffering from a lack of motivation, the reason that they have an irregular mode. Therefore, modern education is developing in a fast rank, in order to engage students in the learning process.

2.1.1 Learning motivation

According to Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2003), motivation can be defined as "a combination of psychological reasons explaining a person's behavior, its beginning, orientation, and activity". Thus, emergence and sustainability of a certain type of behavior, its orientation, as well as the awareness and semantic integrity of each behavioral act - all this requires an explanation in terms of motivational processes. Thus, when teaching students of English or another foreign language, it is necessary to take into account that the quality of knowledge, skills, and abilities, the formation of which the whole

learning process is directed, depends, first of all, on motivation and needs the individual, i.e., his motivation. The main thing in the modern educational process is to help the personality of the student as an active person. According to S.L. Rubinstein, “so that the student is truly involved in the work, you need to do the set in the course of educational activity, the tasks are not only understandable but also internally accepted by him, i.e., so that they acquire significance. Thus, in the learning process, it is necessary to create conditions under which they are maintained and developed at a high level as external motivation on the part of the teacher (as a component of the pedagogical impact), as well as the internal motivation of the student. Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2003).

2.2 Online Education

Online education has equal and important opportunities for educational institutions. In recent years, the online education system is developing rapidly and increasing the possibility for people to get education easier ways. Thus, the development of the demand for distance education causes the replacement of people by robot technique. Consequently, there is a demand for having a variety of professionals in different spheres, so that people are trying to get different qualifications at the same time. Whereas online education is the best tool to get more information and knowledge in short terms. People have to develop themselves permanently (Goff, 2012).

As for now, online education is a new, progressive type of learning which has occurred in the third decade of the XX century due to new technological inventions and opportunities. Many countries have established the development of online education as a prior trend lately and provide a meaningful part of the budget. “According to the statistics, more than 300 universities offer online education in the USA. Based on the study of Dag Valentine, 57% of American instructors regard online education as inferior to traditional lessons”. (*Dag, Valentine, “Distant education: benefits, problems, and opportunities” p.101*)

Distance learning has a number of additional features. The educational process during distance learning was based on the focused and controlled intensive independent work of the student, who could study in a convenient place for himself, according to an individual schedule, having with him a set of special teaching aids and an agreed opportunity of contact with the teacher in the learning process. The outlooks of online education are explained by different advantages factors in front of other types of education. The most salutary factors are flexibility and accessibility (Halina Ostankowicz- Bazan, 2016).

2.3 Schoology Learning Management Platform (LMS)

The study applies a platform that helps teachers in transferring grades, quizzes, discussions and collaborations online among students during online and face-to-face teaching and learning processes. The platform was chosen based on the workshop about “Designing Teacher Education & Professional Development for the 21st Century” was conducted on how the Schoology, chosen platform, works by Denneille K. Luke. The presented platform counts as

the most suitable in use for students and teachers, taking into account their interests, preferences, and skills. The presented platform gives an opportunity not only to transfer grades but also to conduct quizzes, final examinations, writings, and discussions. There is a function to see each student's mistake, give feedback, and leave comments in writing or discussion parts. The students are able to see their quizzes' results as soon as they complete the quiz, and also they have an opportunity to download an application "Schooly" which ease the access at any place and time. The platform provides with convenient grading system, which minimizes teachers' work time and counts grades itself based on the initial setups that the teacher introduced. Originally designed for sharing notes, Schooly was released commercially in August 2009 (Conte, Henry S., 2011).

The Schooly platform was designed by Jeremy Friedman, Ryan Hwang and Tim Trinidad while still undergraduates at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Originally designed for sharing notes, Schooly was released commercially in August 2009 (Conte, Henry S., 2011).

Likewise, Schooly as a learning management tool open for providing teaching resources and materials, also to organize, evaluate and assess the learning process. In accordance with creators of the Schooly, they emphasize one of the most significant advantages, the platform provides an opportunity of knowing the individual needs of the students, in such a way that the teaching-learning process is more fitting to the student's needs. (Rahman, et.al.,, 2011).

As for interface design, it is considered as completely attractive and simple in use. It was closely designed as a social networking platform in terms of discussion forums, participation, and feedback. Those advantages positively influence students' attitudes, motivation and interest in learning subjects. The Schooly also has provided users with the opportunity of controlling the time of the taken quiz and assignment, also it has the possibility to control activities with the help of statistics section through that teachers are able to check the last connection, attempt, the duration of the time they spend on completing the activity.

Kahoot

Presented platform is usually used as interactive activity for any classroom. It presents engaging design, background music and convenient functions for assessing students' knowledge. Kahoot is a game-based learning platform which is used in educational needs as multiple questions quizzes; therefore it can be used in browser and application. It was launched in March, 2013. (Sherlock A. Licorish, 2018). The use of educational games as learning tools (e.g. video games) is found to support the development of students' cognitive, motivational, emotional and social outlook (Sherlock A. Licorish, 2018).

Nearpod

Nearpod is one of the interactive platforms which is used in educational needs and includes creating presentations, multiple choice quizzes, games, 3D virtual reality, polls, matching games, and many other engaging options. It is a cross-platform device agnostic and easy way to engage students in the learning process using collaborations, discussions, game-quizzes. (Michelle van Gent,2020, Online lecture using Nearpod).

Google Hangouts

The platform is used for communication, video calls, meetings. The communication software is developed by Google. Recently Google Hangouts have been used as a platform for educational needs since distance education launched, educational institutions had to support lessons with students and there was lack of online platforms; Hangouts was chosen as one of the most suitable for online classes as it is easy in use and has quick connection. (REBEKAH CARTER, 2019).

Cisco Webex

Webex was developed by American company Cisco Webex in 2007. The aim of Webex is web-conferences and videoconferencing. The platform has become very convenient for university students in online classes.(Job Portraits,2015).

3. Methodology

Researchers used action research in gathering data on the paper. Action research – which is also known as Participatory Action Research (PAR), community-based study, co-operative inquiry, action science, and action learning – is an approach commonly used for improving conditions and practices in a range of healthcare environments (Lingard et al., 2008; Whitehead et al., 2003). The main goal of this approach is that during the process researchers will need to develop and use a range of skills to achieve their aims, such as careful planning, sharpened observation and listening, evaluation, and critical reflection. The survey questionnaire was used as the main research instrument of the research.

3.1 Study procedure

The action research is focused on “students’ Learning motivation”. Gauge theory shows that learning is influenced by three main components, namely external conditions, internal and learning outcomes (Mudjiono, 2009).While the factors that affect student achievement according to previous studies, including students 'motivation (Levpuscek & Zupancic, 2008), students' perception of the school environment (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014). Karim (2012) regarded learning motivation as the inherent belief to guide individual learning goals, induce learning behaviors to make continuous efforts, reinforce cognition history, and strengthen and improve the learning outcome. Gruzd (2012) argued that students would expect to receive incentives from

others for the behaviors; in this case, learning was purposive but could be transformed from extrinsic into intrinsic motivation.

To answer questions of this paper researcher conduct a questionnaire for students of Suleyman Demirel University. Almost 20 students participated. It was important to engage students that researchers teach. Most of the lessons were divided into two categories; the lessons were based on traditional methods of teaching and the lessons on which students were using various mobile technologies. Throughout the time, the students played various games online, on such sources as Kahoot, Quizlet, Digital Dialects, Knowword, etc. To wrote online quizzes through Moodle and Schoology applications. Passed and created their tasks in Google Classroom. They joined online lessons in Webex and Google Hangouts applications.

3.2 Study results

The idea of this study is to identify all different educational platforms that students use nowadays to learn English. Besides, what educational skills technological devices can exactly improve. Consequently, the study aims to find out the strengths and weaknesses of using technology for improving educational skills. To answer the main questions of this research work: “How do the online education platforms influence students' learning motivation?” and “What are advantages and disadvantages of using educational tools for learning?” researchers prepared a questionnaire which consists of 6 questions. The results show:

Question 1: What were / are your motivators to learn English language?

The results of this question showed that most of the students were motivated to learn English because it is the most popular and useful language today. They want to speak fluently, watch movies, and speak in English. Three answers have the same amount of voices. Students are motivated to learn English because most of their university lessons are in English; they want to go study abroad, and they want to travel and easily use this language. Four students answered that they think knowledge of the English language will be useful and help them to get and work on future jobs.

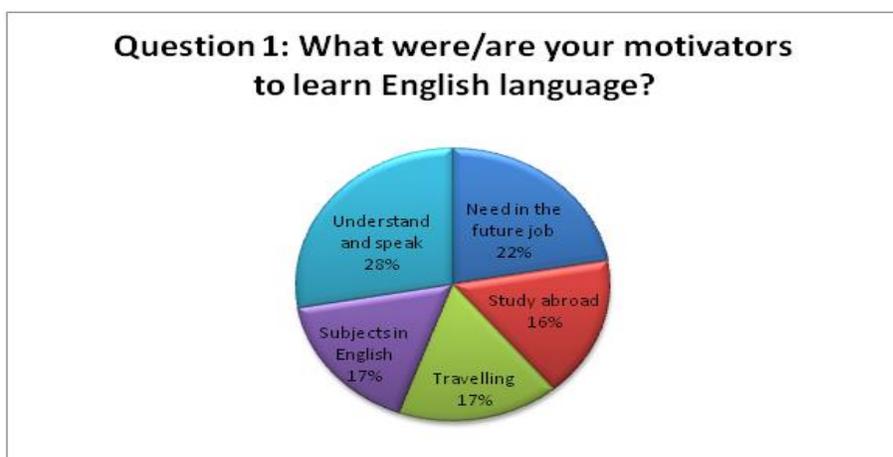


Figure 1. Motivators to learn English language

Question 2: Do you think that using educational platforms enhances the efficacy of the learning process?

Absolutely all participants agreed that educational platforms enhance the efficacy of the learning process. Students wrote in their answers that educational platforms “help us improve our level of education,” “now there are many different educational platforms and online platforms. These platforms make learning more effective,” “it makes our lessons more interesting and enjoyable”.

Question 3: Which technological tools used in class did/do you like most and why? (Schoology, Kahoot, Nearpod, Google Hangouts, Webex etc.)

Students voted for different technological tools that they mostly prefer. Results showed that the most popular tools are Google Hangouts, Schoology, and Kahoot.

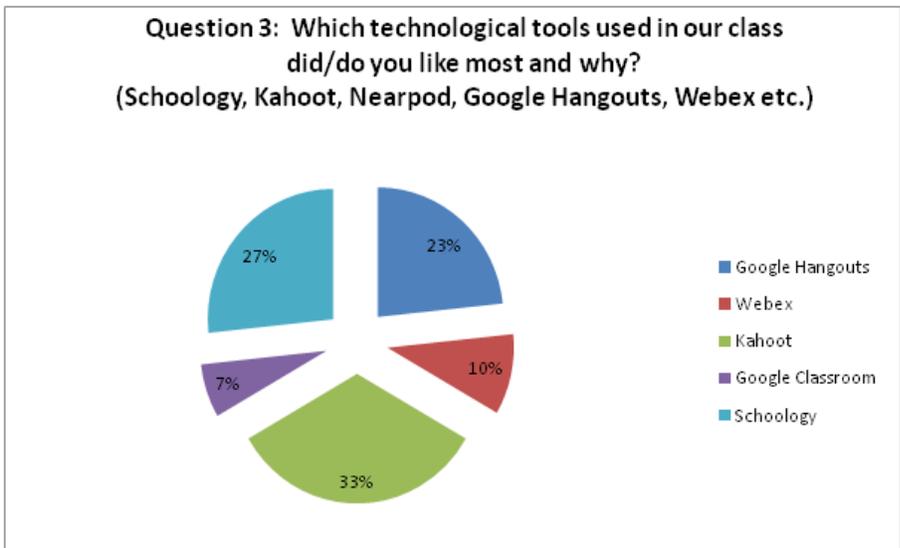


Figure 2. Technological tools used in class

Question 4: Which of the four skills were improved more via technology? (Writing; Reading; Listening; Speaking)

The most popular answer was “writing skill”. The reason is the fact that students did a lot of tasks with the help of educational tools, they also wrote essays every week in a Schoology application. The next popular answer is “listening skill”. A lot of educational platforms can give opportunities to improve such skills. Then goes “reading skill” and the last one “speaking skill”. These results helped researchers to answer for Question 5 “Which skills were improved less? Could you please give an order from one to four with an explanation?”. Questions 4 and 5 are correlated according to their meaning. Results are in the chart:

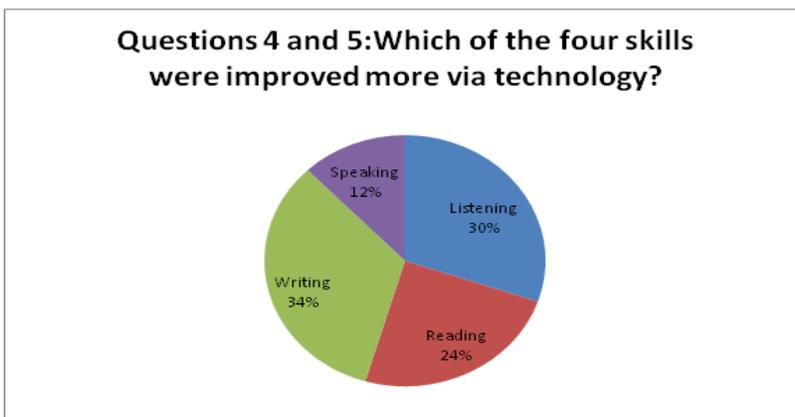


Figure 3. Four skills that were improved by technology

Question 6: Do educational platforms improve your motivation to learn English and how?

Only four students answered that educational platforms do not improve their motivation to learn English. Most of the students think that it does, here are some of their answers: “with the help of these platforms we feel comfortable and it’s easy for us to perceive new information,” “it improves my motivation because I like the activities in the educational platforms,” “I don’t even doubt it, because we were given great opportunities to improve our education skills with Coursera,” “the educational platforms help me improve my English and increase my passion for knowledge.”

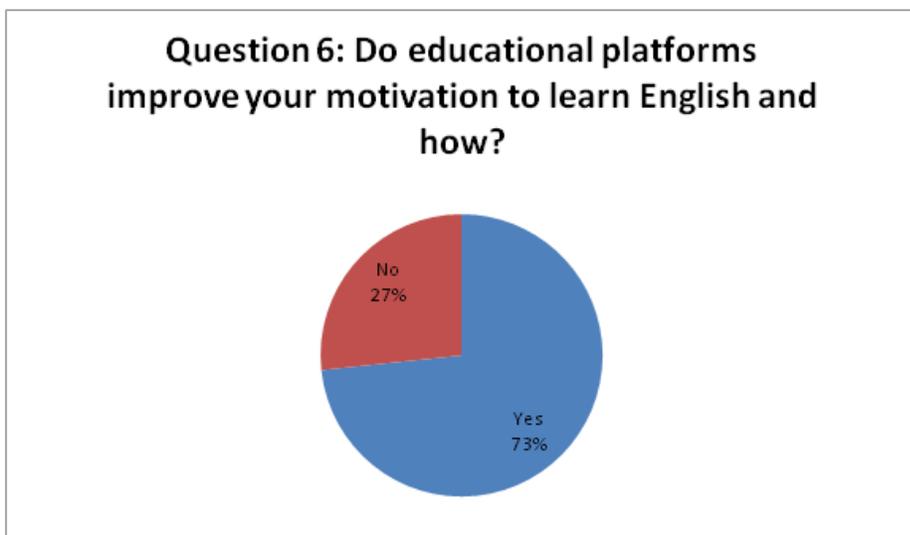


Figure 4. Motivation of using educational platforms

Conclusion

The investigation reveals that students agree with the assistance of digital learning in subject learning. Particularly, the increasing learning time for students with digital learning relatively enhances learning performance.

The emersion of new easy access to the Internet technologies has paved the way for a new era of learning and education in general (Burston, 2013). Language learning disciplines are one of those most affected by emerging technologies. In this paper, we have suggested the engagement of learning with educational platforms as an effective alternative for English educators. Due to the rapid development of modern smart technology and running situations in the English language teaching sphere, it is highly recommended to apply educational platforms.

Educational platforms bring new dimensions to the learning of English. Besides the benefits of the teacher’s work, they also provide the students with

multiple new ways of doing exercises. The changes in the classroom work can be seen as both a positive and a negative thing since students' levels of skills in using new devices differ a lot. Some can feel completely puzzled with technology, while others are comfortable with it. Even the students who had weaker language skills had a chance to show their expertise if they were confident in using platforms. Also, the more proficient ones could help other students, who were not familiar with the use of educational platforms.

Thereby study results show that using educational platforms improves students' motivation in learning. It helps students to create a more enjoyable and productive atmosphere for study. In addition to the promotion of personal professionalism, teachers could perceive that students realize teachers' efforts and passion for teaching.

Appendix

Questionnaire for SDU students:

Hello, thank you for agreeing to answer for this questionnaire. We appreciate it very much.

We try to research students' motivation development by the use of Educational Platforms.

We would like to ask several questions that are related to our research. Please, be honest and feel free to answer, because we guarantee that all information will be kept strictly confidential.

1. What were/ are your motivators to learn English language?
2. Do you think that using educational platforms enhances the efficacy of the learning process?
3. Which technological tools used in our class did/do you like most and why? (Schoology, Kahoot, Nearpod, Google Hangouts, Webex etc.)
4. Which of the four skills were improved more via technology? (Writing; Reading; Listening; Speaking)
5. Which skills were improved less? Could you please give an order from one to four with an explanation?
6. Do educational platforms improve your motivation to learn English and how?

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