

THE ROLE OF ICT IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: *Today, we cannot imagine our personal and professional lives without the use of computers and smart devices as they play a vital role in all spheres of modern life. The application of information technology in foreign language learning and teaching has already become an integral part of our language classroom. Consequently, a vast number of educational platforms and software programs have been created and become the perfect complement to reaching proficiency and fluency, and language courses integrated with technological support are the most effective and attractive for students who want to be successful in language learning. The use of ICT in language learning maximizes a lot of new possibilities for effective communication for both teachers and students not only to develop their language skills but also, they broaden their knowledge of using ICT successfully to make teaching and learning better. For this reason, we have decided to present the effective ways of using ICT in foreign language teaching and learning.*

Keywords: *foreign language, software programs, educational platforms, ICT.*

Introduction

The use of communication technologies in education has eliminated time and space constraints and has caused the 21st century in our knowledge to become the leading actor of radical transformations and changes in the knowledge-based social structure. The fact of education, which is one of the basic dynamics of social life, has been affected by the inclusion of communication technologies in this change and transformation process, and traditional education practices have started to be implemented through new tools and technological environments along with communication technologies. The change and transformation in education, which started with the process of integrating communication technologies into education, also paved the way for the emergence of alternative systems to traditional education practices and further strengthening existing systems such as distance education (Elitaş, 2017).

As a result of technological developments, communication has no longer been connected to a certain space and time, and its existing borders have caused education, which is a form of communication, to contain new patterns. The integration of communication technologies into education and the fact that information is at the forefront of the information society process we live in has revealed alternative education systems. Distance education is one of these alternative systems. Technological innovations, which constitute the basis and the starting point of the idea of distance education, paved the way for the training of individuals and collective structures at different times and spaces, and a new practice has emerged at anytime and anywhere, without the need for physical participation. The space-free feature of distance education has become more and more widespread and has become the basic design logic in today's educational processes.

“Distance education, which is carried out in environments where teachers and students are separated from each other in terms of time and space” [1; 10], while providing the opportunity for the individual to regain the opportunities he misses in the world of education, also aims to reduce the cost of education and increase the quality of education.

Nowadays, studies focusing on factors affecting student participation and strategies for providing student participation in online learning/distance education are increasing. For example, the number of articles on distance education (and types of distance education) in the Web of Science database increased from 33 in 2011 to 135 in 2016 [2;20]. There are different studies in the literature to determine the effect of distance education on student perception. Bolliger & Halupa (2018) shows that distance education has an impact on Student motivation. In their study, Adams and Timmis (2006) found that web-based training causes problems in communicating, discussing, and finding solutions for student-student and student-educator. In addition, students emphasized that the time required to come to school can be taken through web-based distance education. In the research conducted by Halter, Kleiner, and Hess (2006) on 45 students, the students who did not want to leave their employees and their families stated that they were happy to participate in web-based training.

According to Dudney and Hockly (2007), ICT is an interactive and collaborative medium that allows the creation of text and activities that can easily be shared in public which helps students discover the language they are learning and its use. There are several online courses, educational platforms, and software programs which assist in learning and teaching

foreign languages. In this regard, foreign language teachers of today should be ready to provide their students with the opportunity to learn using technology in the classroom. According to the implementation of ICT in education, UNESCO, Microsoft, and Intel created the "UNESCO ICT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS" in 2015, which is a guide for teachers on how to become more effective in ICT-based lessons. This competency framework explains to teachers a clear perspective on how to use ICT to communicate and collaborate with students "to use ICT to communicate with other students, for example for them to submit their project reports online", [3;78] and many others.

Today, it is almost impossible to imagine a distance education system without an online component. Online learning has also both opportunities and challenges to encourage participation [4;79]. In online learning, students need to manage themselves and participate in their learning, as students do not have enough reinforcements and requests from their instructors and other students [5;78]. Student participation and the effects of teachers' attitudes on participation are topics that attract researchers' attention.

It was determined that students' use of technology is seen as one of the weaknesses of distance education. This situation may have occurred for two reasons. The first is the insufficient financial situation encountered in reaching the technology, and the second is not being able to use the technology sufficiently although there is no financial difficulties in reaching the technology.

Yilmaz and Erdem (2018) achieved a similar result in foreign language education according to the results of the research they aimed to determine the views of the lecturers who are teaching in distance education programs. According to the results of this research, they stated that there were some difficulties in foreign language teaching, even in face-to-face education, and this situation increased in the distance education system, and that this was due to the fact that they could not hear the students at all and did not correct the incorrect pronunciation. Of course, it has different features due to the nature of art education. The aspect similar to that of foreign language education is that distance education is an indicator that every course cannot meet every need.

In the information age we are in, it is inevitable to use technology, which is an integral part of every field, in art and design education. The acquisition of technology by the individual who makes artistic designs, the

opportunity to do a lot of work in a short time, and to create original designs and compositions, and as a result of this, the artist is directed towards collaborative and collective work from individuality. Therefore, it may be possible to eliminate the behaviors that have difficulties in fooling the student during the distance education process, even with a piece of technology. Therefore, as in face-to-face education, different applications of technology should be used in art activities during the distance education process.

As some of the studies in art education will only be carried out in a workshop environment, it has been observed that the application dimensions of the courses are the biggest problem encountered in the distance education process in both fields. It is thought that art and design lessons cannot be taught completely in distance education because they are application-oriented. In arts education, the fact that the lecturer has a direct intervention in student work is not really desired. This can often reduce the creativity and self-confidence of the student, so since the task of the art educator in the process is guiding, it can be argued that it will be sufficient to process this process with a small number of students in a practical way. Therefore, more course hours may be needed than other courses. It is emphasized in the studies that students have an unstable attitude towards distance education because they do not have sufficient knowledge and experience about distance education applications and when the necessary arrangements are made in distance education programs, perceptions about distance education will change positively. Therefore, some of the students who presented negative opinions in this research may be more positive after this experience and after the necessary infrastructure arrangements of universities. In addition, some studies have shown that factors such as voice, image, communication problems, low interaction, body language used by teachers and duration of lessons in distance education applications affect participants' perceptions of distance education; and in particular, it shows that simultaneous distance education practices are insufficient to meet the expectations of the participants. The perceptions of the participants, whose expectations cannot be met, are also negative. Thus, this affects the quality of education and training and causes the activity to fail. Therefore, first of all, people should have a positive perception towards distance education.

As a result of the research, it is also seen that undergraduate students think that distance education is very necessary. They stated that it enables all students to access education equally, advances in technology make it necessary to be used in education, digital resources reduce the cost of education, increase their responsibilities, and bring equality to education because it enables students of different levels to access information whenever they want. They also stated that their anxiety during the pandemic process reduced their art and design work during the distance education process. In the research, students have remarkable views on the different applications that can be applied in the courses of art and design. In addition, some students stated that the system is good, but various additions should be developed. There are students who state that the system is sufficient against this. The main reason for the negative views about distance education, which is mandatory in the pandemic process, maybe that they experience a very rapid transition period without being informed before.

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