INTEGRATING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR PRESCHOOLERS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is a pivotal part of our learning process for the whole life journey. Today's thesis examines the challenges and opportunities of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) via Innovative and technological approaches for preschoolers. By exploring this research's theoretical structure, practical approaches can also demonstrate how this method can improve language process, shorten the time, and increase the quality. This paper also discusses challenges and could advise teachers for preschool surroundings.

Keywords: Innovative technology, preschool education, foreign language learning, digital tools, early childhood education, interactive learning.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, technology is changing how we teach and learn. Teaching foreign languages to preschoolers is no exception. Innovative technologies, such as educational apps, interactive whiteboards, and digital storytelling, make language learning more effective and fun. However, there are also challenges in using technology with young children. This article explores the opportunities and difficulties of integrating technology into the preschool foreign language education system.

Technology integration in preschool language education is supported by several learning theories, including constructivist theory (Piaget, 1952). This theory suggests that children learn by actively engaging with their environment. Socio-cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) – According to this theory, social interaction plays a critical role in learning. Multisensory Learning Theory (Fleming, 2001) – This theory emphasizes the importance of using multiple senses in learning. Behaviorist Theory (Skinner, 1957). This theory explains how children learn through repetition and reinforcement.

Technology provides many advantages for young learners. Children enjoy using digital devices. Educational apps and games make learning fun and interactive. Studies show that children learn better when they are interested and motivated (Jones & Smith, 2020). Apps like Duolingo Kids and Lingokids help preschoolers learn new words through play. Young children learn best through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experiences. Digital tools like interactive whiteboards and augmented reality (AR) combine images, sounds, and actions to enhance learning. For example, AR books allow children to see and hear words in different languages, making the learning process

more immersive (Brown & Lee, 2019). Technology can adapt to various learning speeds and styles. AI-powered platforms adjust difficulty levels based on a child's progress. This helps teachers provide personalized instruction for each student (Williams, 2021). In addition, the internet allows children to connect with native speakers through video calls and virtual exchanges. Programs like PenPal Schools and "Little Bridge" introduce children to different cultures while practicing language skills (Garcia, 2022). Furthermore, many apps include features that allow parents to track their child's progress. This helps parents support their child's learning at home. Studies suggest parental involvement improves children's language skills (Miller & Johnson, 2021).

Despite the benefits, there are several challenges that teachers and parents must consider. First are screen time concerns. Experts recommend that young children should not have too much screen time. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2020) suggests a maximum of one hour per day for preschoolers. Excessive screen time has been associated with negative cognitive outcomes for children between 0 and 4 years old. High screen time can contribute to sedentary behavior linked to health issues such as obesity. Teachers must balance digital activities with traditional play-based learning. Second, preschoolers have short attention spans. If digital content is too complex or long, they may lose interest. Educators should design short, interactive activities that match young children's cognitive abilities (Clark, 2021). A preschooler's attention span is roughly 2–5 minutes per day. Incorporating hands-on activities and movement breaks enhances attention and retention. However, not all schools have access to advanced technology. Tablets, smartboards, and AR tools can be expensive. Some schools also lack the internet infrastructure for online learning (Harrison, 2020). Some schools lack stable electricity or internet connectivity, making digital learning unreliable. Even when technology is available, teachers may not have the skills to integrate it effectively into lessons. Finally, some digital content may encourage passive learning, where children watch videos instead of actively engaging. Teachers must ensure that technology supports active participation through interactive activities (Wilson & Taylor, 2022). Studies show that active learning (e.g., responding, creating, interacting) improves memory and comprehension more than passive watching. Watching videos alone does not provide the social interaction necessary for effective language learning. Preschoolers may focus on animations and sounds rather than processing new vocabulary or sentence structures.

To overcome these challenges, educators and teachers can follow these best practices: using technology as a tool, not a replacement. Digital tools should support traditional learning methods, not replace them. Preschoolers learn best through play, exploration, and social interaction, so digital tools should integrate with activities (storytelling, songs, and role-playing). Educators should use technology to facilitate discussions, reinforce concepts, and encourage participation rather than relying on screens for direct instruction. Combining physical materials (flashcards, books, manipulatives) with digital resources (apps, interactive whiteboards) creates a richer learning experience. Then, choose apps and activities designed specifically for preschoolers. Not all apps are for young learners and can harm their mental health. Preschoolers need easy navigation, large icons, and minimal text to ensure independent use. Apps should encourage active participation through touch, voice, or movement,

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rather than passive watching. The best tools allow guided play with parents or teachers rather than isolating children. Apps should focus on vocabulary building, pronunciation, sentence structure, and cultural awareness. Using interactive games, storytelling, and creative tasks instead of passive video watching. These approaches enhance critical thinking and can widen horizons but need appropriate teaching and guiding. Educators should receive proper training on how to integrate technology effectively. Teachers must understand how to embody technology without over-reliance, ensuring a mix of digital and traditional learning. Teachers need strategies to make technology interactive rather than passive (e.g., guiding discussions around digital activities). Proper training ensures teachers can handle technical challenges and adapt digital tools to diverse classroom needs. The last step is encouraging parents to use language-learning apps at home in moderation. Children retain new words better when they practice consistently at home. Parents can make language learning an enjoyable bonding activity through games, songs, and storytelling. Regular use of apps allows children to hear and interact with the new language beyond school hours. Instead of passive content, apps provide an educational and interactive way to engage with technology. Combine app-based learning with books, songs, and real-life conversations in the target language.

CONCLUSION

Innovative technologies offer many opportunities for improving preschool foreign language education. They make learning more engaging, interactive, and personalized. However, challenges such as screen time, technical barriers, and teacher training must be addressed. By following best practices, educators can use technology to enhance language learning while ensuring a balanced and effective approach.

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