ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ ҒЫЛЫМ ЖӘНЕ ЖОҒАРЫ БІЛІМ МИНИСТРЛІГІ «Л.Н. ГУМИЛЕВ АТЫНДАҒЫ ЕУРАЗИЯ ҰЛТТЫҚ УНИВЕРСИТЕТІ» КЕАҚ

Студенттер мен жас ғалымдардың «ĠYLYM JÁNE BILIM - 2023» XVIII Халықаралық ғылыми конференциясының БАЯНДАМАЛАР ЖИНАҒЫ

СБОРНИК МАТЕРИАЛОВ XVIII Международной научной конференции студентов и молодых ученых «GYLYM JÁNE BILIM - 2023»

PROCEEDINGS
of the XVIII International Scientific Conference
for students and young scholars
«GYLYM JÁNE BILIM - 2023»

2023 Астана «ĠYLYM JÁNE BILIM – 2023» студенттер мен жас ғалымдардың XVIII Халықаралық ғылыми конференциясы = XVIII Международная научная конференция студентов и молодых ученых «ĠYLYM JÁNE BILIM – 2023» = The XVIII International Scientific Conference for students and young scholars «ĠYLYM JÁNE BILIM – 2023». – Астана: – 6865 б. - қазақша, орысша, ағылшынша.

ISBN 978-601-337-871-8

Жинаққа студенттердің, магистранттардың, докторанттардың және жас ғалымдардың жаратылыстану-техникалық және гуманитарлық ғылымдардың өзекті мәселелері бойынша баяндамалары енгізілген.

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УДК 001+37 ББК 72+74

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UDC 378.016

THE IMPACT OF USING TECHNOLOGY IN DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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According to the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association [1], the literacy demands of our society are expanding and are anticipated to further increase. Writing skills are essential for English language learners (ELLs) for a number of reasons. Firstly, writing is an important tool for communication, both personally and professionally. It allows ELLs to express their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively, and to communicate with a wider audience. Secondly, writing is a key component of language learning, as it allows learners to practice and reinforce their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Thirdly, writing skills are essential for academic success, as many courses and assessments require written assignments [2].

Technology can play an important role in improving the writing skills of English language learners (ELLs). There are various digital tools and resources that can assist ELLs in improving their writing skills. To effectively integrate technology into language learning, it is important to provide teachers with training and support in using technology, to establish clear learning objectives and assessment criteria, and to ensure that learners have access to reliable technology and technical support. The Representative Office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Kazakhstan has undertaken a concerted effort to provide digital inclusive education to a significant number of teachers in the region. This initiative has been executed in collaboration with Astana Hub, an international technopark of IT start-ups. Specifically, the program has entailed the education of over 12,000 teachers in 11 regions of Kazakhstan, with a focus on a blended learning format.

To achieve this objective, the UNICEF's Representative Office in Kazakhstan has partnered with the regional departments and educational departments of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Notably, the training program has facilitated the participation of teachers from both urban and rural schools. Presently, the initiative has resulted in the successful education of more than 10,000 teachers, thereby enabling them to implement digital inclusive education practices in their respective classrooms [3].

The significant changes have occurred in the relationship between technology and writing instruction in the last three decades. Technological advancements have progressed from early standalone word processors to contemporary software such as Microsoft Word and online tools like Google Docs. Additionally, input devices have advanced from traditional computer keyboards to touchscreens like the iPad. In English language learner (ELL) classrooms, commonly used technology tools include offline word processing programs, online tools and programs, and mobile devices.

Using mobile devices in language learning: writing

Students commonly use social media, which can be an effective tool for developing reading and writing skills in the target language. Social media allows students to engage in authentic

language use, improving their ability to use language in socially and culturally appropriate ways, including understanding genre conventions, language registers, and online community cultures [4]. Familiarity with shorthand texting language, for instance, is an essential skill for English language learners. Since many students likely already use mobile versions of social media platforms like Facebook, this offers an opportunity for classroom activities that can be expanded to homework assignments or used informally by students later.

Mahoney explains how she utilizes blogging as a means of enhancing students' writing skills and stimulating their interest in learning by personalizing the content they choose. Initially, she demonstrates a blog to the class and then instructs the students to examine and compare posts from three separate blogs using their devices. Afterwards, students are required to create their own blogs on five out of eight different subject areas of their choice. According to Mahoney, enabling students to pick their own material and articulate their distinct perspectives through their blogs has a strong motivational impact. Additionally, she ensures that students read each other's blog entries and leave comments as part of the assignment [5].

The size of the screen is an important consideration when using mobile devices for reading and writing, as it can limit the functionality of both. Mobile users are typically more accustomed to shorter text formats rather than longer ones, which may affect their writing style. A recent study comparing student writing on mobile devices to writing on computers or by hand found that mobile writing tended to be less reflective and more superficial. This is why many projects focused on second language writing on mobile devices have primarily utilized text messaging platforms such as SMS, WhatsApp, or tweets on Twitter.

According to Cakir's research on the uses of SMS for language learning, using mobile SMS for learning English has been found to encourage classroom interactions, motivate students to learn English, promote vocabulary acquisition, and test their progress [6]. Pollard used *text messaging* to have students exchange both photos and short texts, while Reinders suggests *circular writing* through messaging where students contribute one text message at a time, and experimenting with different writing genres and styles such as narratives, news reports, and instructions [7].

Norton suggests that Twitter can also be used for language learning activities. For instance, students can report on their daily activities or language encounters on Twitter, especially idioms encountered in reading. Three specific activities include: *summarizing a text* in 140 characters or less with a *hashtag* provided for the whole class to discuss; asking students to tweet photos of their weekend with a hashtag provided for all the tweets, which can be used as material for Monday morning discussion; and having students describe someone they are following on Twitter in English, such as reasons for following them, whether they read their tweets daily, whether they follow them on other social media channels, and anything in particular they admire about them[8].

According to Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, and Donohue, a good practice is to ask a question at the end of the class, which students can respond to by tweeting or messaging from home. Using a hashtag helps teachers and students track the conversation effectively. Another suggestion is to have students work in groups and summarize a reading using a tweet or to create their own short stories or flash fiction [9].

Training for Language Learners and Teachers

The use of *mobile devices* in language classrooms can elicit different opinions from language teachers. *Smartphones* are now an indispensable part of people's lives. Thus, English teachers should either prohibit their use or learn how to integrate them into classroom activities. Ignoring mobile devices in class is not a viable option, especially for language teachers who want to promote English communication among their students [10].

The utilization of mobile phones in the classroom is viewed differently by some teachers and school administrators, who perceive it as detrimental to the learning process. Such individuals argue that the use of mobile phones causes distractions for the student using the device, as well as potentially for those seated in close proximity. The primary concern is that students may use their phones for non-educational purposes, such as texting friends and accessing social media platforms, instead of focusing on classroom activities. This concern is widespread, as evidenced by a survey

conducted by O'Bannon and Thomas, which found that while older teachers were more likely to oppose classroom phone use, the majority of teachers across all age groups did not support the notion of allowing students to use mobile devices during class [11].

Carrier and Nye suggest that the initial step towards addressing the issue of mobile phone use in the classroom is to engage in discussions with all relevant parties, including teachers, students, administrators, and families [12]. Research has indicated that students are cognizant of the potential distractions caused by mobile phones and are willing to collaborate in establishing a practical set of guidelines [13].

One potential solution is to designate a specific time for phone usage, as proposed by Kuznekoff, Munz, and Titsworth [14]. This could be during a natural break period or when students have completed their assigned tasks while working in groups.

Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, and Donohue propose a practical solution that involves students switching their phones to 'flight' mode during class. Additionally, there are 'do not disturb' settings that allow emergency contact by designated family members or friends [9]. Another option is to install classroom management software, such as Netop or the Cambridge ClassServer, which restricts access to particular functions or applications, such as Facebook or email [12]. Conversely, unfiltered internet access has the advantage of helping students to cope with digital distractions and regulate compulsive behavior. However, it should be noted that this approach may also have disadvantages.

It is recommended to establish a clearly defined policy regarding the use of mobile phones in the classroom. Allowing students to have their phones on and accessible during the entire lesson is probably not ideal. As outlined earlier, the recommended best practices for mobile use in language learning suggest that phones should be used for short periods of time, followed by activities that incorporate the information obtained through mobile use but do not require continuous mobile access.

A suggested approach for teachers is to prompt students to take out their phones during writing activities and then remind them to put them away afterwards. It is crucial to educate students on the advantages of using mobile devices for language learning, as well as the potential drawbacks, such as the addictive desire to frequently check social media. Our objective is not only to encourage positive habits for language learning but also to cultivate beneficial behaviors that can be applied in other settings, such as the workplace.

Effective teacher training should be tailored to the specific context in which teachers operate. The most effective way to utilize mobile devices in the classroom depends on the instructional objectives, students' language proficiency levels, and their ages. Teachers may have limited flexibility in their local context due to curricular requirements or specific classroom guidelines that may pose challenges to mobile device use. A crucial first step is to ensure that teachers and students are aware of institutional policies, if any, regarding mobile device use in the classroom. A clearly defined, widely understood, and consistently implemented policy on mobile device use can help students anticipate and adhere to expectations in each of their classes, reducing the likelihood of conflicts over phone use and benefiting both students and teachers.

To effectively learn about the use of mobile devices in developing writing, teachers should be provided with training opportunities through professional networks, local workshops, and online resources. It is important for teachers to have hands-on training by using mobile devices themselves. The training should focus on understanding the available technology and how it can be used to support student learning. Teachers need to be prepared for a shift in classroom dynamics, as digital learning gives students some degree of control over the learning process. Effective technology integration requires teachers to be thoughtful and critical about how digital tools and services can support their instructional goals. As Pegrum argues, teachers may increasingly need to blend their pedagogical and technological knowledge to become designers of digital learning tasks, activities, and software [15].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literacy demands of our society are expanding, and writing skills are essential for English language learners for effective communication, language learning, and academic success. Technology plays a significant role in improving the writing skills of ELLs, and mobile devices have become an increasingly popular tool in language learning. Mobile versions of social media platforms can be used for classroom activities, homework assignments, or informal learning. However, the size of the screen on mobile devices may limit the functionality of both reading and writing. Projects focused on second language writing on mobile devices have primarily utilized text messaging platforms such as SMS, WhatsApp, or tweets on Twitter. Various activities have been suggested, including summarizing texts, exchanging photos and short texts, circular writing, reporting on daily activities, and creating short stories or flash fiction. Overall, the use of social media in language learning can motivate students, encourage classroom interactions, promote vocabulary acquisition, and test their progress. However, ignoring mobile devices in the classroom is not a viable option, as smartphones have become an indispensable part of people's lives. Teachers should consider either prohibiting their use or learning how to integrate them into classroom activities to promote English communication among their students. To address the issue of mobile phone use in the classroom, it is recommended to engage in discussions with all relevant parties, establish a clearly defined policy, and educate students on the advantages of using mobile devices for language learning. Teachers should also be provided with training opportunities through professional networks, local workshops, and online resources to effectively integrate technology into their teaching and become designers of digital learning tasks and activities.

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УДК 372.881.111.1

TEACHING READING IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Introduction

The point of coverage of this research is constant of the reading in the elementary school. This research features and explores the ways of building an effective reading classroom activities aimed at successful development of reading skills in the process of teaching foreign language in elementary school.

Reading is the process of creating meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill which requires the coordination of inter-related knowledge. Writing is defined as a complex action consisting of cognitive components.

Reading skills seriously affect the education life of individuals. In addition, problems with reading and writing can negatively affect students not only academically but also socially

Main part

Young learners aged 6-12 are developing their thinking skills, their first language systems, discovering rules for interacting with others, understanding their own reactions to others and to events, and learning to develop hand-eye coordination and other motor skills. Smith (1995) summarizes by describing young learners as 'products in process'. The breadth, volume and speed of this early development also mean that there are significant differences in the abilities, interests and characteristics of children within the 6-12 age range. There can, for example, be significant learner variables between say, children aged 8-9, and children aged 10-11 [1].

Though there may not necessarily be immediate linguistic benefits in teaching English to young learners, there are good attitudinal, intercultural, personal and academic reasons for doing so. Most crucially, positive early experiences of learning a foreign language may help young learners to develop self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning English. This will equip them to study English with greater confidence when they are older and can bring more developed learning and cognitive skills to the more formal and abstract learning they may experience in secondary school. Intercultural benefits may derive from the realisation that other countries have a language with sounds and rules which are different from their own. As they realise that there are similarities as well as differences between English-speaking people and them, they may also be able to learn values of tolerance, empathy and curiosity. These values will be useful in their later life and for the society in which they live. They may gain academic benefits from learning English, too: generic concepts such as time, number and changes in the season can be consolidated through learning English, as can learning skills such as planning, organising and checking work. For more on the benefits of early start English, see Read [2].