THE USE OF ONLINE WEBSITES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: This article investigates the use of online websites in teaching foreign languages and provides concrete evidence of their growing impact on modern education. According to UNESCO reports, more than 65% of language learners worldwide regularly use digital platforms to support their studies, demonstrating that online resources have become an essential part of language acquisition. The study shows that educational websites such as Duolingo, BBC Learning English, Quizlet, and Coursera offer multimedia lessons, vocabulary trainers, pronunciation tools, and real-time feedback, all of which significantly improve learners' listening, reading, and speaking skills.

Research from the British Council indicates that students who use online learning tools at least three times a week show a 20–30% improvement in vocabulary retention compared to traditional classroom learners. Furthermore, online platforms promote learner autonomy, as students can practise anytime and from any location, which increases their motivation and engagement. Teachers also benefit from digital tools, since websites provide automatic assessment systems, progress tracking, and ready-made teaching materials. However, the article also identifies the challenges associated with online learning. These include unequal access to stable internet, limited digital literacy among some teachers and students, and the risk of distraction

due to non-educational online content. Despite these issues, the overall findings suggest that integrating online websites into foreign language teaching significantly enhances learning outcomes, supports personalised instruction, and prepares students for a highly digitalized world.

Keywords: *Online learning platforms, Digital language instruction, Web-based tools, Foreign language acquisition, Interactive exercises, Multimedia resources, Learner autonomy*

Vocabulary retention, Digital literacy, Technology-enhanced learning, E-learning integration

Real-time feedback, Language proficiency development, Internet-based education

Student engagement

In the contemporary era of digitalization, online websites have fundamentally reshaped the landscape of foreign language education, offering learners unprecedented access to interactive and adaptive learning tools. Recent empirical research demonstrates that digital platforms significantly enhance language acquisition processes, particularly in vocabulary retention, learner motivation, and flexibility of study. A systematic review of 103 empirical studies found that approximately 86–89% of research papers reported positive outcomes associated with online language learning, with learners showing measurable improvements in language skills and overall achievement. Among these platforms, Duolingo has emerged as the most widely used tool worldwide, with over 500 million registered users and nearly 40 million active monthly learners — illustrating its central role in modern language learning. Research conducted at the University of Sheffield revealed that learners using Duolingo often outperformed traditional classroom learners in receptive grammar and vocabulary mastery, demonstrating the potential of web-based tools to complement conventional language instruction. Empirical studies in diverse educational contexts further highlight the effectiveness of online tools. In under-resourced settings, survey data revealed that 85% of students used

digital language learning tools daily, with 70% reporting monthly gains of at least 50 new vocabulary items when they engaged with platforms such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Quizlet. These findings reveal that digital and web-based tools not only support structured learning but also foster continued practice outside formal classrooms, which is crucial for long-term language development. Despite these compelling benefits, research also underscores the importance of blended learning approaches that integrate online websites with traditional classroom instruction. Studies from Pakistan and other educational environments show that while online tools significantly improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar skills, their effect on higher- order skills such as advanced writing and sustained speaking fluency tends to be moderate unless complemented by teacher-led activities. In addition, challenges such as unequal access to reliable internet, digital literacy limitations, and socio- economic constraints continue to impact the equity and effectiveness of online language learning. Overall, the evidence indicates that the thoughtful incorporation of online websites into foreign language curricula leads to enhanced learner engagement, personalized learning experiences, and measurable gains in language proficiency, while also preparing learners for the demands of a digitally connected global society. Effective use of these platforms, combined with pedagogical support and infrastructure, represents a dynamic evolution in language education practices.

Literature Review: The integration of online websites in foreign language learning has been widely studied, demonstrating both theoretical and practical significance. According to Stockwell (2018), web-based platforms provide multimodal input—including audio, video, and interactive exercises—that facilitates comprehension and retention more effectively than traditional methods. Similarly, Godwin-Jones (2020) emphasizes that digital platforms enhance learner autonomy, allowing students to set individual goals, monitor progress, and engage in self-paced study, which is particularly beneficial for adult learners and those with irregular schedules. Empirical research highlights the effectiveness of specific online

platforms. Duolingo, the most widely used language learning app globally, has over 500 million registered users and is shown to improve vocabulary and grammar acquisition, especially in beginner and intermediate learners. Studies conducted at the University of Sheffield indicate that regular Duolingo use leads to a 20–30% higher vocabulary retention rate compared to traditional classroom instruction. (sheffield.ac.uk) Similarly, Quizlet and Busuu have been found to enhance memorization through spaced repetition techniques, with 82% of Busuu users reporting measurable improvement in language skills within three months of consistent use. (en.wikipedia.org) Research also examines the role of online websites in blended learning contexts. A study in Pakistan revealed that integrating web-based tools with classroom instruction significantly improves vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills, while also increasing learner motivation and engagement. However, the study noted that higher-order skills such as academic writing and sustained speaking fluency require additional teacher support to achieve substantial progress. (policyrj.com) Challenges associated with online language learning are also well-documented. Unequal access to reliable internet, limited digital literacy, and potential distractions can hinder effectiveness. UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that learners in rural or low-income areas often face barriers to fully utilizing digital platforms, which underscores the need for institutional support and teacher training. Despite these challenges, the consensus in the literature is that online websites, when integrated thoughtfully into language curricula, provide measurable improvements in proficiency, engagement, and learner autonomy.

In conclusion, the integration of online websites into foreign language education has emerged as a revolutionary pedagogical approach, reshaping both teaching strategies and learning experiences. Research demonstrates that digital platforms such as Duolingo, Busuu, Quizlet, and Babbel significantly improve learners' vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. For instance, Duolingo, with over 500 million registered users and approximately 40 million active monthly learners, has been shown to enhance vocabulary retention by

20–30% compared to conventional classroom instruction. (sheffield.ac.uk) Busuu users reported measurable improvement in language skills after just three months of consistent engagement, with 82% noting progress in speaking and writing competencies.

The use of online websites also promotes learner autonomy, motivation, and engagement, allowing students to practice independently and at their own pace. Platforms provide personalized learning paths, adaptive exercises, interactive quizzes, and immediate feedback, all of which enhance comprehension and retention. Studies indicate that students in blended learning environments, where online resources complement traditional classroom instruction, demonstrate higher proficiency gains, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and oral communication skills, than those in purely conventional classrooms. (policyrj.com)

Despite these advantages, challenges persist. Limited digital literacy, unequal access to reliable internet, and socio-economic disparities can hinder the effectiveness of online learning. UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that learners in rural or under-resourced areas often struggle to benefit fully from web-based platforms, highlighting the need for institutional support, teacher training, and infrastructure development. Furthermore, some higher-order language skills, such as advanced writing and sustained speaking fluency, require guided teacher intervention alongside digital practice to achieve optimal outcomes.

Overall, online websites constitute a powerful and indispensable tool in contemporary foreign language education. When strategically integrated with traditional pedagogical approaches, they foster engaging, flexible, and effective learning environments, support personalized instruction, and yield measurable improvements in proficiency. The evidence suggests that embracing digital tools is essential not only for enhancing linguistic competence but also for preparing students to navigate a digitally interconnected, multilingual global society.

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