

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Trends In Digital Integration Among International Students of Turkish Language

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Ethical Statement

I addressed ethical issues as in the following steps;

consent forms were distributed in the beginning of the online interview form, and the system arranged not to allow the student who does not fill out the consent form to participate in the research. Ethical board approval was granted (No: 06/50, Rectorate of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Ethics Committee of the Institute of Postgraduate Education, Scientific Research Ethics Committee).

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is present in the conduction or the reporting of this study

ABSTRACT

Traditional restrictions on smartphone use in classrooms, aimed at enhancing students' focus, have evolved. Teachers now integrate smartphone apps, digital tools, and educational technology to engage students and enhance teaching effectiveness. Recognizing the digital preferences of language learners is essential. Feedback from students is a valuable educational resource that offers insights into methods, approaches, and curricula. Such insights guide educators and curriculum designers, shaping the future of language education. Given the advancements of this era and evolving learner needs, language teaching approaches must adapt, incorporating technological shifts into syllabuses, schedules, and curriculums. However, determining the most effective digital tools from the learners' perspective and understanding why remains a question. This research delves into the perspectives and trends of international students learning Turkish in a university in Türkiye, aiming to uncover their inclinations towards technology-based resources and digital tools. The study's research questions explore the extent of digital tool usage among foreign language learners, the specific digital tools they utilize, the reasons behind their choices, and the skills they apply through these tools. Furthermore, this article addresses the importance of digital literacy for both students and educators.

Keywords: digital tendencies of international language learners, Turkish as a foreign language, digital literacy, foreign language learning and digitization.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology is now an essential aspect of our lives, making significant strides in education too. The traditional teaching methods of the past, combined with recent advancements in educational technology, are shaping the way we learn languages. Digital tools will play a prominent role in this evolving landscape. Today's experiences will become the foundation for future advancements. The rise of technology, propelled by the internet and e-learning, has revolutionized education. From online platforms to digital devices and content, technology has swiftly ushered us into a new era. Initially emerging as media technology and literacy, it has evolved into a vital component of digital technology and literacy due to technological progress. Present-day learners, known as digital natives, have grown up in this digital age. Designing learning environments that suit their evolving habits is crucial (Babacan and Bayrak Cömert, 2023). It's evident that these digital natives require technology-rich education for effective learning, digital natives represent the post-1980s generation. On the other hand, there are individuals from the pre-internet era, pre-1980s generation, often referred to as digital immigrants. They may not be as adept with digital tools, representing an older generation. Today, they are often parents, displaying patience and a different level of digital proficiency. Marc Prensky distinguished between these generations, highlighting the difference in internet and social media usage. In his view, digital natives use the internet and social media more than digital immigrants (Gül, 2016). This digital divide continues to influence education and how we adapt to this ever-changing digital landscape.

Digital resources have become crucial in education, emphasizing the need for digital literacy. Hampel and Stickler (2005) emphasized training language tutors to effectively teach online, focusing on pedagogical and technical skills for the virtual language classroom. Additionally, a study in Bosnia and Herzegovina explored the use of technology among high school students learning English as a foreign language, revealing highly positive outcomes. The researchers emphasized the importance of educators supporting and adapting the education system to leverage these technological advancements (Becirovic, Brdarevic-Celio, & Delic, 2021).

New educational technologies have emerged, capitalizing on the advantages offered by technology in the learning and training domains. Digitization, for instance, facilitates the conversion of written materials into electronic formats, making a wealth of information easily storable, accessible, and functional. Digital libraries, an example being the Delos DLMS analyzed by Ionnidis, Milano, Jörg Schek, and Schuldt (2008), offer diverse features and services. This digital technological product is continually updated, encompassing features like differentiation, visualization, intelligent navigation, media-specific indexing, multilingual support, and seamless integration of various functionalities. Besides education, this product finds applications in several scientific domains such as museology, history, and science.

Digital Tools in Foreign Language Education

In recent years, educators have increasingly explored the integration of digital tools and technologies to enrich the language learning experience, leading to a focus on the digital profiles of foreign language learners. These profiles encompass a wide array of technology-based digital tools, including websites, PowerPoint presentations, multi-modal stories, YouTube channels, apps, and video productions. The use of these digital tools in classrooms has been noted as a significant motivator within the digitally mediated world of students and their learning experiences (Hafner, 2015). Concurrently, digital technologies and digital content have become integral components of language teaching. A foundational article by Warschauer and Healey (1998) offers an extensive overview of the role of computers in language learning and the potential of digital tools to support language teaching. The authors present examples of

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) activities and deliberate on the advantages and challenges of technology integration in language teaching (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Levy's study (2009) delves into the diverse technologies employed in second language learning, encompassing computer-based activities, online resources, cyber-worlds, and social media. The research explores how these digital tools influence language learning outcomes and learner engagement (Levy, 2009). Additionally, Thomas (2011) examines the integration of digital tools within a task-based language teaching (TBLT) framework. This exploration sheds light on the design of language learning tasks using technology and emphasizes how digital tools can enhance student participation and language acquisition (Thomas, 2011).

In the realm of language learning contexts, the pedagogical potential of digital games is explored in depth by Reinders (2012). The research emphasizes how game-based activities can motivate learners, develop their language skills, and foster cultural understanding (Reinders, 2012). Further investigations, such as those by Kukulska-Hulme (2009) and Wang (2016), have delved into the impact of mobile learning on language acquisition. Kukulska-Hulme (2009) discusses how mobile devices and applications can effectively support language learning in both formal and informal settings, promoting continuous practice and interaction in the learning process.

Research by Wang (2016) investigates the integration of iPod Touch devices in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in China, demonstrating how mobile technology can enhance language learning and improve proficiency. Guaqueta and Castro-Garces (2018), in a study from 2018, explored the use of language learning applications to teach lexical items in EFL classes, finding that technology effectively supported lexical learning. Castañeda (2013) revealed in a study on digital storytelling that it advances cognitive development, self-authoring, and identity construction among language learners, fostering technical skills and critical thinking. Masterson (2020) showcased the positive impact of digital storytelling on sharing personal stories, promoting critical thinking, and enhancing cultural understanding. Another study by Masterson (2020) focused on long-term digital technology-assisted cross-cultural communication, showing that digital technologies facilitated personalized student-led learning and acquisition of cultural knowledge. Additionally, digital-based foreign language teaching has been recognized for its effectiveness in improving speaking skills through the use of language-learning software, AI, chatbots, video conferencing, and speech recognition software. These tools offer learners opportunities to practice speaking in simulated real-life contexts, leading to improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023).

Technology significantly impacts language learning beyond the classroom, especially in self-directed digital learning of English (Nugroho, 2021). Learners engage in informal digital learning, utilizing digital technology for self-improvement, thus enhancing their language skills and fostering autonomous learning habits. Moreover, digital tools provide opportunities for language learning beyond formal settings. Students can engage in digital activities like using social bookmarking tools to enhance their digital literacy and online reading abilities. These activities complement classroom learning and provide authentic language learning opportunities. Students who independently utilize digital tools tend to achieve higher language proficiency (Dinçer, 2020). By using digital gadgets and autonomously selecting activities that suit their needs, learners can advance their language skills through informal digital learning outside the classroom.

The use of technology and digital tools in foreign language classrooms greatly enriches learning experiences, offering students a plethora of opportunities. These tools facilitate multimedia engagement, digital storytelling, cross-cultural communication, and personalized learning, all of which contribute to improved language skills, critical thinking,

cultural awareness, and self-directed learning. It's crucial to consider learner characteristics, including language proficiency and technology engagement, when designing digital profiles for language learners (Dinçer, 2020). Educators should also be mindful of potential challenges and anxieties learners might face in the online learning environment (Durmuş & Kızıltan, 2022).

Digital tools bring substantial benefits and opportunities for language learners, enhancing various language skills. Their integration into language classrooms and teacher education programs is gaining popularity. Moreover, digital tools facilitate out-of-class language learning, empowering learners to engage in personalized and independent language learning activities. However, successful integration necessitates addressing obstacles and providing adequate guidance and training to both students and educators.

METHOD

Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative case study research design, a methodology widely acknowledged for its ability to comprehensively explore a specific phenomenon within a particular context using a multitude of data sources. A qualitative case study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, unraveling its complexities and nuances by examining it through various perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Methodological framework and diversity of perspectives means understanding phenomena in context by uncovering multifaceted realities. A key strength of the qualitative case study lies in its capability to employ multiple lenses in investigating a single phenomenon. Researchers can utilize various perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and analytical techniques to unveil different facets of the phenomenon, thus enriching the understanding of the subject of study. By considering diverse viewpoints, researchers can construct a more comprehensive and holistic view of the phenomenon, shedding light on its multifaceted realities (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

In summary, the qualitative case study research design adopted in this study serves as a robust framework for investigating the chosen phenomenon within a specific context. By employing a variety of data sources and embracing multiple perspectives, this methodology enhances the depth and richness of the research findings, providing valuable insights into the intricacies of the subject under investigation.

Setting and Participants

The research focuses on international students undertaking Turkish language courses at the Turkish Language Teaching Centre (TÖMER) affiliated with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Türkiye. These international students are prospective students intending to pursue higher education within Türkiye. The study specifically involves students enrolled in B1, B2, and C1 level classes at TÖMER during the spring term. The investigation encompasses the academic year 2022-2023. The research cohort comprises a total of fifty students hailing from eighteen diverse countries, including Albania, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Ukraine, Kashmir (India), among others.

In light of the participants' engagement in distance education, face-to-face interviews were impractical, necessitating the use of a written interview form for data collection. Data for this research were sourced from international students at the Turkish Language Teaching Centre (TÖMER) within Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University during the spring term of the 2022-2023 academic year. The written interview form was administered via Teams to

students in B1, B2, and C1 level classes at TÖMER during May-June. The study encompassed a total of fifty student participants. The initial section of the interview form captured demographic information concerning the participating students, encompassing details such as gender, age, native language, spoken language, country of origin, and nationality. The subsequent section of the form comprised questions focused on the digital resources utilized by students while learning Turkish and the specific ways in which these resources were employed. This section featured six questions addressing demographic information and nine questions concerning the integration of digital resources by international learners in their Turkish language learning journey, intentionally designed for this purpose.

Instruments

As data collection instrument the researcher used a written interview form which is specifically tailored to align with the research objectives and informed by pertinent studies such as Takagaki (2022), Baz and Tekdal (2014), Kazazoğlu (2014), and Gündüz N. (2005), was developed. To ascertain its validity and reliability, two expert academicians in the field of Turkish Language Education and Educational Sciences meticulously evaluated the scientific data encompassed within the instrument.

The written interview form is structured into two distinct sections. The initial section encompasses demographic information concerning the participating students, incorporating variables such as gender, age, native language, spoken language, country of origin, and nationality. The succeeding section gathers insights into the utilization patterns and nuances of digital resources adopted by students during their Turkish language learning journey. This section encompasses a total of nine questions, while the first part includes six questions, resulting in a comprehensive set of fifteen questions.

Procedure

Objectives and Research Focus: the primary objective of this study is to investigate the digital tendencies and preferences exhibited by foreign students during their Turkish language learning endeavors. The research aims to comprehend the characteristics associated with the use of digital tools among international students, encompassing factors such as the types of digital tools employed, frequency of usage, and preferred times of usage throughout the day. An underlying expectation is that international language learners will actively engage with computer-assisted language learning, various digital tools, resources, and intelligent applications as integral components of their learning process.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the responses collected through Google Forms were initially categorized according to the questions posed. Descriptive analysis, a qualitative data analysis approach, was employed to examine the data obtained from the interviews. The comprehensive data analysis process is elucidated in the subsequent section of this study. The research endeavors to address the following key questions;

RQ1: Which methods and tools do you think are more effective in learning a foreign language?

RQ2: When learning a foreign language, do you prefer traditional methods or digital tools more?

Please explain your preference. What are the reasons for your preference?

RQ3: Have you ever utilized computer-assisted language learning tools, such as websites, YouTube channels, smartphone applications, or software, etc. while acquiring and learning a foreign language?

RQ4: How frequently do you utilize digital tools when learning and studying a foreign language?

RQ5: Which language skills do you use digital tools to improve most? Please select the language skills that you primarily use digital tools to improve -- listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, or vocabulary. You may select more than one option.

RQ6: When do you make the most use of these digital tools? (You may select more than one option: morning, evening, in the afternoon, at the weekend, in the course time, etc.)

RQ7: Which digital tools such as websites, YouTube channels, software or applications do you consider to be more useful and why? Please explain your reasoning.

RQ8: What digital tools do you have in use?

RQ9: Please indicate if there is anything else you would like to add.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the interview form in this research was divided into two clear sections. The first section included demographic information, crucial for providing research context. The second section encompassed findings derived from responses aligning directly with the research objectives.

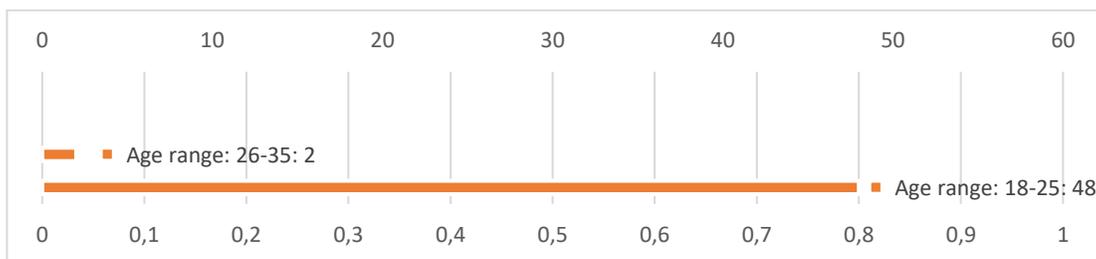
Interview Form: Section-I

Gender Distribution of Participants;

The gender question within the demographic information sought to ascertain the proportion of male and female participants in the survey. Analysis of the data revealed that out of the total participants, 27 (54%) were female, and 23 (46%) were male. These results indicate a relatively even distribution of participants between the two genders, suggesting that both male and female participants equally contributed to the study's outcomes.

Age Distribution of Participants;

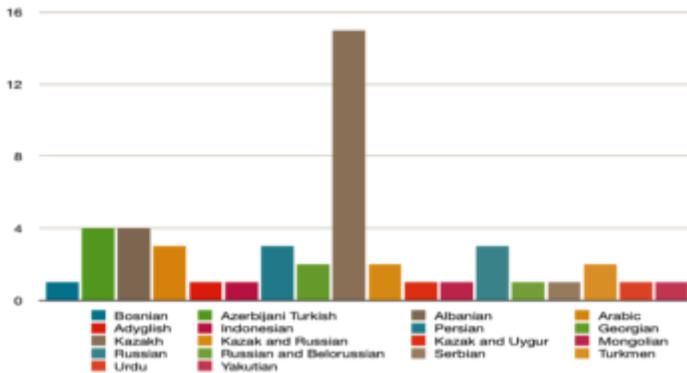
Of the fifty participants, forty-eight fall within the age range of 18-25, constituting the majority, whereas the remaining two participants belong to the 26-35 age range. It is noteworthy that all participants in the study can be categorized as young adults. Given that only two participants are from the second age group 26-35 age, it is improbable that any findings would substantially impact the study's results.

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Participants

In terms of digital integration trends, the prevalence of young adults in the study is noteworthy. Young adults generally exhibit a high level of comfort and familiarity with digital technologies, including various digital tools and online platforms. This familiarity is often a result of their exposure and interaction with digital resources throughout their education and daily lives. Thus, the preponderance of young adults in this study suggests a high likelihood of significant digital integration in their language learning process. Consequently, any findings related to digital integration are more likely to align with the behaviors and inclinations of this age group, providing insights into how young adult learners utilize digital resources in their Turkish language learning journey. Understanding these age-related dynamics is crucial for designing effective digital strategies and tools that cater to the specific preferences and behaviors of young adult learners, thereby enhancing their language learning experiences.

Distribution of Participants Based on Their Mother Tongues

The information regarding the participants' native languages serves to illuminate the diversity within the student population and shed light on the various digital tendencies within this diverse context. The distribution of languages among the participants showcases a rich variety of linguistic backgrounds, encompassing languages such as Adyghish, Arabic, Albanian, Azerbaijani Turkish, Bosnian, Indonesian, Persian, Georgian, Kazakh, Russian, Uyghur, Mongolian, Belarusian, Serbian, Turkmen, Urdu, and Yakutian. The dominance of Kazakh speakers is particularly notable, with fifteen participants speaking Kazakh, indicating a considerable representation from this linguistic group. The data regarding the participants' native languages offers valuable insights into the linguistic diversity present within the student population. This linguistic diversity can significantly impact how these individuals approach and integrate digital tools into their Turkish language learning process.

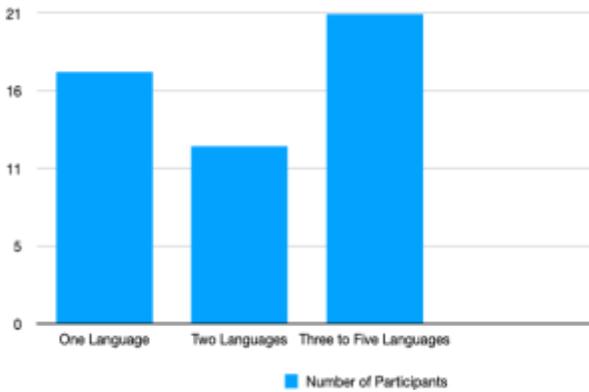
Figure 2. Distribution of Participants Based on Their Mother Tongues

Understanding the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the participants is vital in the context of digital integration trends. Different languages may have distinct digital resources, applications, or platforms that are commonly utilized for learning purposes. For example, Arabic speakers might frequently use certain language learning applications tailored to Arabic speakers. Similarly, Russian speakers may have specific digital tools that cater to their linguistic needs. The linguistic diversity observed among the participants implies a need for a flexible and adaptable approach to digital integration in language learning. Educators and developers of language learning platforms should consider tailoring digital resources to accommodate this diversity, ensuring that learners from various linguistic backgrounds can effectively utilize digital tools to enhance their Turkish language learning experience.

The Number of Languages Spoken by the Participants

The participants in this study exhibit a varied linguistic profile, ranging from monolingual to multilingual proficiency. Specifically, the analysis of language proficiency reveals that a significant portion of the participants, comprising seventeen individuals, communicate effectively in a single language. Moreover, a notable group of twelve participants display bilingual proficiency, indicating the ability to communicate proficiently in two languages. Additionally, a substantial cohort of twenty-one participants exhibit an even higher level of linguistic diversity, being proficient in three to five languages.

Figure 3. The Number of Languages Spoken by the Participants



This pattern of multilingualism suggests a diverse participant pool with extensive language exposure and competence. The ability to communicate in multiple languages may indicate a broader linguistic and cultural background, which in turn could imply exposure to various language learning techniques and digital tools. Given the diverse linguistic capabilities of the participants, it is plausible that they have had some exposure to digital tools in their language learning experiences, potentially leveraging these tools across their linguistic repertoire. Further exploration of their language learning practices and digital tool usage could provide valuable insights into the intersection of multilingualism and digital language learning strategies.

Countries of the Participants

Fifty participants originating from sixteen different countries around the world enrolled in Turkish language learning programs in Çanakkale in 2022-2023 academic year. This geographical diversity offers a valuable lens to examine how digital resources are utilized among the participants. It is plausible that participants from diverse countries may exhibit preferences for particular digital tools, potentially influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Figure 4. Regions, Countries and the Numbers of the Participants



The participants represented various regions, including North Africa (2), the Balkans (6), Caucasasia-Eurasia (31), Middle

East (4), and Asia (7). These regions encompassed countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Albania, Serbia, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Indonesia, and Turkmenistan. The diverse geographical origins signify a global interest in learning the Turkish language and engaging with Turkish culture. The diversity in geographical origin suggests potential variations in language learning approaches, cultural perspectives, and, importantly, preferences for digital resources. The understanding of participants' diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds provides insight into potential variations in digital resource preferences. This information is crucial for developing effective language learning resources that cater to a wide range of learners. Moreover, it can shed light on whether certain digital tools possess a universal appeal or if preferences are influenced by geographic and cultural factors. An in-depth exploration of these aspects could uncover valuable insights necessary for optimizing digital language learning strategies for a diverse, international audience.

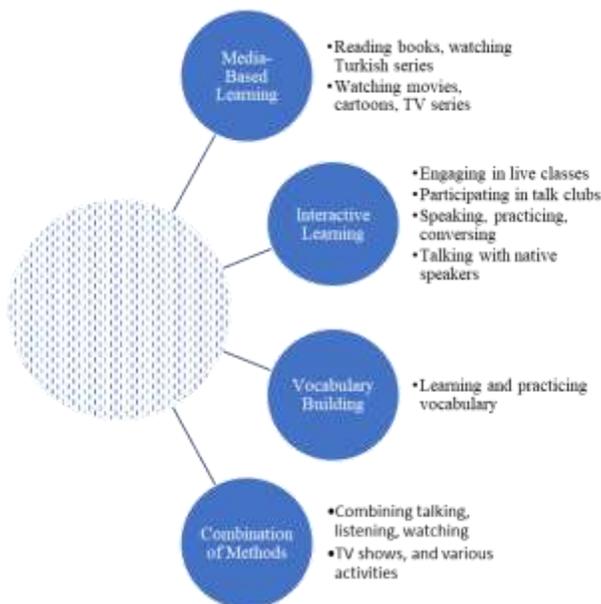
Interview Form: Section-II

In this section, there are nine RQs, and each one analyzed in detail and some data analysis presented in tables and graphics too, as following;

RQ1 Analysis: Which methods and tools do you think are more effective in learning a foreign language?

The responses to the first research question were diverse, comprising forty-three different answers. Students identified a range of methods and tools they find effective in learning a foreign language:

Figure 5. The Most Effective Methods and Tools in Foreign Language Learning According To Participants (RQ1)



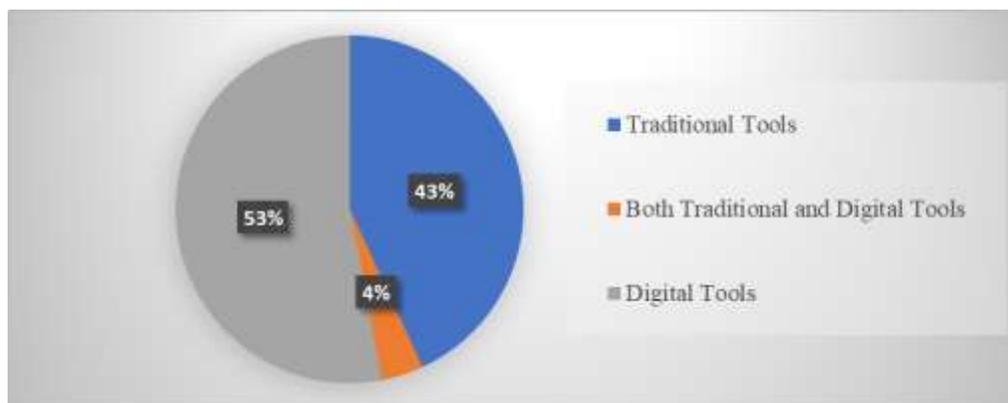
This table provides an overview of the diverse methods and tools that students find effective in learning a foreign

language, categorized into media-based learning, interactive learning, vocabulary building, and a combination of methods. It highlights specific examples and the students associated with each category. A total of twenty-two students highlighted the effectiveness of media-based learning, emphasizing series, movies, films, and YouTube videos. Conversely, twenty students emphasized interactive activities like speaking and regular language practice as highly effective. The responses indicate that a combination of interactive and media-based approaches, along with a focus on vocabulary, is viewed as beneficial for foreign language acquisition. This diversity in responses underlines the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and the importance of tailoring approaches to individual learning preferences. Educators can draw from these insights to design language learning programs that integrate a range of engaging multimedia resources alongside interactive practice opportunities, aligning with the preferences and perceived effectiveness expressed by the students.

(RQ2) Analysis: Preference for Learning Foreign Languages - Traditional Methods vs. Digital Tools:

The question is pivotal in comprehending the students' attitudes and beliefs towards language learning approaches, providing insights into their perception of traditional versus technology-driven learning methods. Analyzing the question and data in context of the responses provided can be categorized under several headings. Regarding the second question, twenty-two students chose traditional methods such as printed books, course books, notebooks, and exercise books, and two students preferred both. The remaining twenty-seven students preferred digital tools such as smart apps, websites, YouTube channels, podcasts, so and so fort, as follows;

Figure 6. Preference for Learning Foreign Languages – Traditional Methods vs Digital Tools (RQ2)



The question is pivotal in comprehending the students' attitudes and beliefs towards language learning approaches, providing insights into their perception of traditional versus technology-driven learning methods. Analyzing the question and data in context of the responses provided can be categorized under several headings. The second research question explores the participants' preferences in language learning methods whether they favor traditional approaches or digital tools. Additionally, the question delves into the reasons underlying their respective preferences. In response to the question, the participants presented a spectrum of preferences regarding language learning methods. Reasons for preferences; effectiveness and variety, ease and speed and error correction are the answers why participants prefer digital, traditional or both methods as follows;

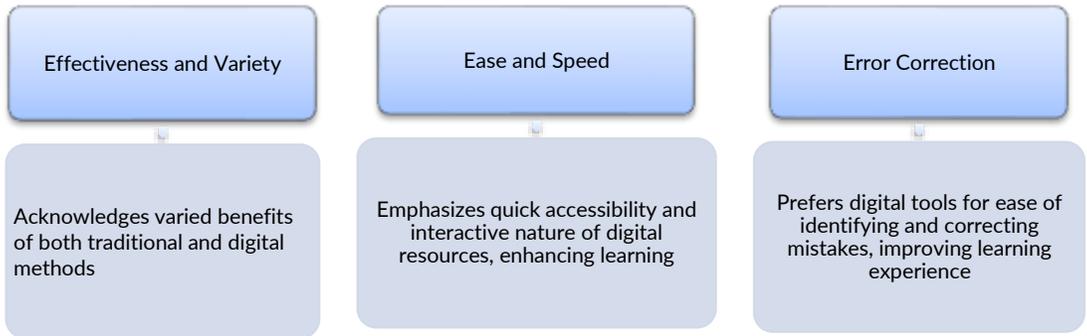
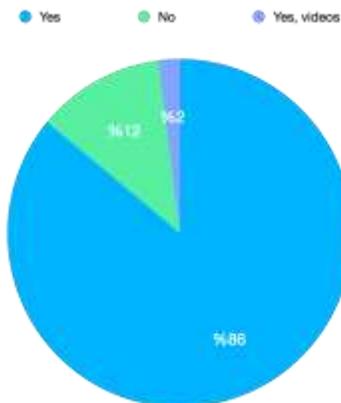
Figure 7. Reasons for Preferences and Their Descriptions (RQ2)

Figure 7, summarizes the reasons for preferences mentioned in RQ2 by the participant students and provides a brief explanation for each reason. The responses underline a growing inclination towards digital tools in language learning, emphasizing attributes such as convenience, speed, and interactivity. However, a notable subset still values traditional methods, emphasizing their effectiveness and perhaps a more familiar or tangible learning experience. This data reflects the evolving landscape of language education, showcasing the importance of catering to diverse learning preferences and effectively integrating both traditional and digital methods to enhance language learning outcomes.

RQ3 Analysis: Utilization of Digital Tools in Language Learning So Far

In general, the responses to RQ3 emphasize the extensive use of digital tools among language learners, highlighting their significant contribution to enriching language learning experiences. The students' propensity to utilize digital resources for enhancing various language skills underscores the criticality of integrating technology effectively into language education. This analysis underscores the students' keen interest in employing digital tools for language learning, reinforcing the necessity for educators and curriculum designers to thoughtfully incorporate technology into language education. Such integration can substantially elevate learning outcomes and cater to the evolving needs of students.

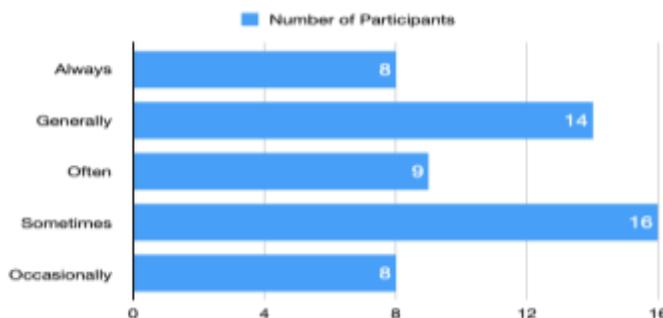
Figure 8. Utilization of Digital Tools in Language Learning So Far (RQ3)

The investigation into the utilization of computer-assisted language learning tools (RQ3) revealed that a significant majority of participant students (90%) acknowledged using various digital tools and resources in their language learning endeavors. This substantial percentage underscores the prevalent familiarity and inclination among students to incorporate digital resources into their language acquisition process. The fact that only ten percent of participants responded with "No, I haven't used any" suggests that the overwhelming majority of students are well-acquainted with and comfortable utilizing digital tools in their language learning journey. This observation aligns with the contemporary educational landscape, where digital tools have become an indispensable component of education, especially in language learning, owing to their accessibility, versatility, and effectiveness. Furthermore, insights regarding the frequency of employing digital tools are encouraging, with only a small fraction of participants (four out of fifty students) indicating rare or no use of digital tools. The majority of respondents expressed using digital tools either 'always,' 'generally,' 'often,' or 'sometimes.' This indicates a strong proclivity and established practice among students to regularly harness digital tools, underscoring their pivotal role in language learning.

RQ4 Analysis: How frequently do you utilise digital tools when learning and studying a foreign language?

In response to RQ4, participants were asked about the frequency of utilizing digital tools when learning a foreign language, providing options ranging from 'always' to 'never' and data statistically analyzed in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Frequency of Utilizing Digital Tools in Foreign Language Learning (RQ4)



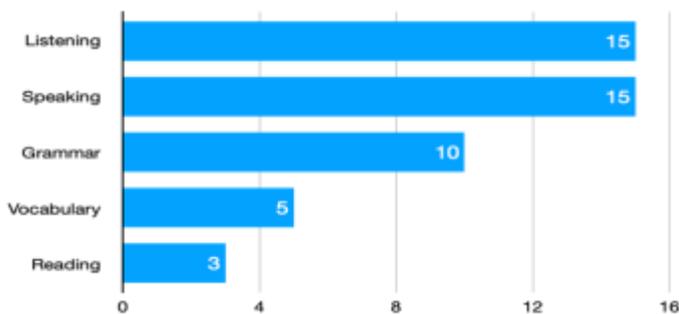
The majority of participants reported a regular integration of digital tools into their language learning experiences. The highest number of participants indicated using digital tools 'sometimes' (n = 16), suggesting a balanced and periodic engagement with these resources. A significant portion reported using digital tools 'generally' (n = 14), indicating a consistent reliance on digital resources during their language learning journey. Moreover, a notable number of participants responded 'often' (n = 9), highlighting a frequent utilization of digital tools in their language learning endeavors. Similarly, a substantial proportion mentioned 'occasionally' (n = 8), denoting an intermittent use of digital resources alongside other methods. Interestingly, a smaller group reported using digital tools 'always' (n = 8), indicating a high level of dependence on these tools throughout their language learning process. Overall, the data illustrates a diverse range of digital tool utilization among the participants, emphasizing the varied approaches adopted by students to enhance their language learning through digital means.

RQ5 Analysis: Language Skills Primarily Improved Using Digital Tools

In response to RQ5, participants were asked to select the language skills they primarily use digital tools to improve:

listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing.

Figure 10. Language Skills Primarily Improved Using Digital Tools (RQ5)

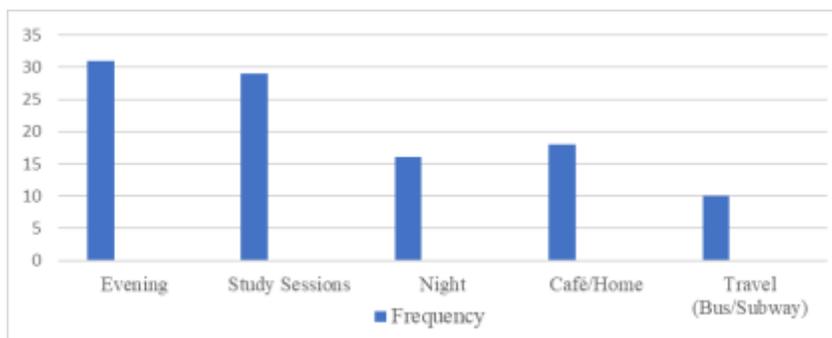


The analysis of their responses indicates the following trends: Listening and Speaking; the majority of participants primarily use digital tools to enhance their listening and speaking skills, highlighting the efficacy and preference for digital resources in improving oral communication. Grammar; digital tools for learning grammar come in second place, emphasizing the significance of technology in aiding participants' understanding and practice of grammatical rules and structures. Vocabulary, Reading, and Writing; participants tend to utilize digital tools for vocabulary improvement, reading comprehension, and writing skills. These three language skills are perceived to be equally important, demonstrating a balanced utilization of digital tools for enhancing diverse language competencies. One participant expressed a comprehensive approach, stating that they use digital tools to improve all language skills, underscoring the versatility and adaptability of digital resources in supporting various facets of language learning. As a result, the data for RQ5 reveals a strong inclination towards employing digital tools to enhance listening and speaking skills, emphasizing the essential role of technology in promoting oral language proficiency. Additionally, the significant use of digital tools for grammar learning indicates their valuable contribution to mastering language structures.

RQ6 Analysis: Utilization Time of Digital Tools for Language Learning

Participants were asked about the times they predominantly use digital tools for language learning: morning, evening, in the afternoon, at the weekend, during class time, etc. Participants can indicate more than one choice. The data analysis reveals the following patterns:

Figure 11. Utilization Time of Digital Tools for Language Learning (RQ6)



Examples of utilization disclose the data that language learning during the evening hours and incorporating digital tools during study sessions are the most preferable choices. Engaging with digital tools for language learning during the night, language learning utilizing digital tools in a café or at home, Utilizing digital tools for language learning while traveling. This flexibility in usage indicates the adaptability of digital tools to different contexts and locations, facilitating continuous language learning beyond traditional study settings. The findings highlight the importance of considering the preferred times for digital tool usage in exercise and homework planning, as well as in-class activities. The data analysis emphasizes the necessity for targeted digital products aligned with leisure time activities, advocating for the integration of digital resources that enhance both language learning and leisure pursuits.

RQ7 Analysis: Most Useful Digital Tools for Language Learning and Their Features

Participants were asked to identify the digital tools they find most useful for language learning and explain their reasoning.

Figure 12. Utilization Time of Digital Tools for Language Learning (RQ6)



The analysis of the responses indicates the following trends: YouTube Channels; the majority of participants, 38 out of 50, consider. They highlight the tool's diversity, helpful videos, audiobooks, ease of use, and extensive content as its key features. The findings underscore the dominant role of YouTube channels in language learning, providing diverse and comprehensive content. Additionally, the acknowledgment of other digital tools highlights the importance of varied resources and supplementary platforms in supporting language acquisition. This information is valuable for educators, enabling them to recommend diverse electronic materials and tailor instruction through channels that align with students' interests, enhancing language learning progression.

RQ8 Analysis: What digital tools do you have in use?

Students were asked to list the names of digital resources they used for the RQ8. The responses to the question are listed below.

Figure 13. Digital Tools in Use (RQ8)

Digital Tools Mentioned	Insights	Participant Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youtube, Google, various internet sites, artificial intelligence applications, Yandex Translator, Glosbe Dictionary, various books. • Youtube channels, electronic fairy tales, Instagram, Twitter, Duolingo, Telegram, Memrise, Podcasts, TikTok, Busuu, Hep Türkçe (Turkish all the time). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students utilize a wide array of digital tools for language learning, including popular platforms like Youtube and Google, various apps for translation, vocabulary, and learning (e.g., Duolingo, Memrise), as well as social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter). • They also use specific language learning apps like Busuu, Podcasts, and TikTok, showcasing a diverse digital toolset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youtube, Google, various internet sites, artificial intelligence applications, Yandex Translator, Glosbe Dictionary, various books, • Youtube channels, electronic fairy tales, Instagram, Twitter, Duolingo, Telegram, Memrise, Podcasts, TikTok, Busuu, Hep Türkçe

The participants' responses to the question about digital tools for language learning demonstrate a rich and diverse selection of resources they utilize. The most frequently mentioned tools include widely-used platforms like Youtube and Google, reflecting the significance of multimedia and search engines in their language learning journey. This indicates a preference for visual and interactive content, as well as the need for easily accessible information. Moreover, the mention of various internet sites and artificial intelligence applications underscores the role of technology and advanced language processing tools in aiding language acquisition. This suggests a desire for efficient and automated assistance in their language learning efforts. Furthermore, the participants mention specific language-related tools such as Yandex Translator and Glosbe Dictionary, illustrating their inclination towards specialized language tools to aid in translation and vocabulary enhancement. This showcases a recognition of the need for accurate language resources.

Interestingly, the participants' usage of social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter for language learning highlights the integration of social interaction and real-life language use into their learning routines. It signifies an understanding of the importance of immersive language learning experiences. The use of dedicated language learning apps like Duolingo, Memrise, Podcasts, TikTok, Busuu, and Hep Türkçe suggests a proactive approach to language learning, where learners seek out specialized applications tailored for language acquisition. This indicates an understanding of the benefits of structured language learning platforms. At the end, the insights gathered from the participants' responses reveal a multifaceted approach to language learning, incorporating a wide array of digital tools to enhance their language skills and knowledge.

RQ9 Analysis: Please indicate if there is anything else you would like to add?

Contribution to Discussion on Language Learning Effective language learning approaches in terms of some international students point of view, watching films, series, audiobooks, and utilizing digital tools highly beneficial, especially when paired with attentive listening. Immersion in the country where the language is spoken is considered highly effective by most students. Emphasizing grammar, speaking, and vocabulary acquisition is viewed as important. Consistent practice is considered crucial for comprehension and proficiency development and students value the

guidance provided by instructors in the language learning process.

Regarding the last question, some students chose not to contribute to the discussion on language learning. Several students expressed their views on the most efficient approaches for acquiring language skills. Most of them concurred that studying the language in its country of origin is one of the most effective and rapid ways of achieving proficiency; for example, one student observed that "I was able to obtain important insights while studying Turkish in Türkiye." Studying in the country where the language is spoken is highly recommended for anyone looking to master a foreign language expeditiously. For instance, one student stated that "the best way to learn a language is to go to a country where the language is spoken". One student remarked that "In my view, we ought to concentrate on grammar, speaking, and acquiring new vocabulary. Nonetheless, as usual, practice is crucial, as the more frequently we speak, the more our comprehension and proficiency develop". Another student remarked that "any approach is beneficial when learning a language". Some students mentioned that watching films, series, audiobooks, and Turkish videos is highly advantageous; they also emphasised "the significance of listening attentively and utilizing digital tools". One student stated that "instructors endeavour to provide the best possible guidance to learners", while another noted that "any technique that a student selects would be beneficial if they are genuinely committed to learning the language".

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers comprehensive insights into the electronic resources employed by language learners from different countries, along with their respective usage patterns and characteristics. Modifications in digital technologies directly influence students' preferences and conduct. These statistics are accurate and valid only for today. With our current age of accelerated change, it is unlikely to remain the same for next and future periods. Therefore, it is crucial to keep update the content of education and training. Indeed, it is especially important to establish special decision-making bodies for keeping programs and plans up to date. However, it is crucial for teachers to be aware of their students' preferences and to be literate in digital content as well. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when access to traditional learning resources was limited, digital tools have become increasingly popular among language learners. Due to their accessibility and user-friendly nature, free online resources, including websites and apps, have been extensively utilized by learners as valuable tools for learning English, particularly in areas such as reading, conversation, and vocabulary (Krishnan et al., 2020). Learners view these online resources as useful for enhancing free learning practices and promoting a stimulating learning environment. In addition, they improve the analytical and critical thinking skills of learners, while promoting social interaction among teachers, peers, and other participants (Krishnan et al., 2020).

Activities such as creating websites, PowerPoint presentations, audio essays, multimodal stories, and video productions can better prepare learners for their future in a digitally mediated world. These activities also provide opportunities for learners to express their voices and engage in creative and meaningful language use (Hafner, 2015). Digital storytelling has been explored as a valuable tool in language education, including English as a foreign language (EFL). Digital stories have been found to advance cognitive development, self-authoring, and identity construction. They also instruct in technical skills, involve students, enhance critical thinking, and broaden the audience to whom students present their work (Castañeda, 2013). Like Hafner and Castañeda, many of the researchers display the positive impacts of digital tools in education.

In addition to this, web 2.0 technology has been incorporated into foreign language learning websites, providing opportunities for learners to interact with learning materials and practice their language skills (Stevenson & Liu, 2010). These websites offer a variety of texts and audio-visual materials to nurture learners' target language and develop their language competence. Integrating learning materials with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enables learners to succeed in language learning. (Shen, Yuan, & Ewing, 2015). There has also been recognition of the potential

that mobile applications have for language teaching and learning. They provide opportunities to enhance learners' understanding of the target language and its cultural context, as well as to teach, practice and improve language learning skills. (Rosell-Aguilar, 2017). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has been shown to support sustainable self-directed learning experiences outside the classroom. Mobile applications provide accessibility, manageable interfaces, and multifunctional components that can foster learner motivation and make language learning more sustainable and entertaining (Jeong, 2022).

Therefore, digital tools, such as free online resources, multimodal composition activities, digital storytelling, foreign language learning websites, and mobile applications, have proven to be valuable assets for language learners. These tools offer various benefits, including accessibility, user-friendliness, the promotion of free learning norms, the enhancement of critical thinking skills, and the facilitation of self-directed and sustainable learning experiences. Incorporating digital tools into language education can better prepare learners for the digital world and provide engaging and meaningful language learning opportunities.

As a conclusion, the transfer and processing of information has been accelerated by the development and application of technology in education. There has been a significant evolution in education and training through artificial intelligence programs, a variety of interactive learning opportunities, technological software, resources and tools that can be used via the Internet. Currently, there is a need to establish the technological inclinations of the students and provide guidance to the education and training programs. Undoubtedly, using technology in lessons has become indispensable in this era of intense technology and ought to be replaced by digital technology for the Turkish language course content and program for international students. Additionally, teachers who teach Turkish to international students need to improve their skill on digital literacy. The teachers have to develop themselves to keep up with the digital age.

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