CRITERIA FOR PLATFORM SELECTION IN EFL: ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

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ANNOTATSIYA:

This article analyzes the criteria for selecting EFL platforms in the general education and non-state language teaching market of Uzbekistan from a scientific and practical perspective. At a time when the rapid growth of digital technologies is transforming the education system, the process of choosing a platform is becoming a complex decision-making process related to teacher competence, student needs, technical infrastructure and pedagogical approaches. The results showed that pedagogical suitability, local technical capabilities, language level of students and digital readiness of teachers are decisive factors in choosing a platform.

Introduction

The demand for English in the Uzbek education system has increased significantly. At the same time, the need to digitize the teaching process has also increased. At the intersection of these requirements, the issue of choosing different digital platforms for EFL teachers has become a pressing issue. Since each platform has different functions, didactic approaches, and technical requirements, the question of "which platform serves the real purpose" is becoming more of a strategic decision for teachers and educational organizations.

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In recent years, Uzbekistan's general education institutions, private educational centers, and higher education systems have begun to use a variety of platforms. Each of them is characterized by different functional capabilities: some are focused on interactive tasks, some on adaptive assessment systems, and others on enhancing teacher-student communication. However, as the number of platforms has increased, the process of making the right choice has become more complicated.

For an EFL teacher, choosing a platform is, first of all, a continuation of his didactic approach. Does the platform provide convenient methodological tools for the teacher, does the tasks meet the CEFR criteria, does it meet the real needs of the student, is it technically stable - these questions are becoming crucial for every educational institution. The fact that digital divides persist in the local education market also complicates the selection process. While high-speed internet is available in some regions, stable connectivity itself is a problem in others. In these conditions, platforms that can work offline are proving to be much more effective. Also, since the level of digital literacy of teachers and students is different, the platform's interface should be simple and easy to master.

Globally, platforms tend to be more universal, but local realities show that context remains one of the most important indicators when choosing a platform for the EFL system of Uzbekistan. Teachers see effectiveness not only in the technical means, but also in how it fits into the teaching process. This process depends on the teacher's qualifications, the preparation of students, the clarity of pedagogical goals, and the compatibility of technical capabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to combine theoretical concepts with practical needs when evaluating platforms [3].

Methodology

The methodological basis of this study was aimed at studying the process of platform selection in the EFL educational environment of Uzbekistan in a realistic way. Therefore, in choosing a method, special attention was paid not only to studying theoretical sources, but also to collecting and analyzing practical experience. The direction of the study was based on descriptive qualitative analysis, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the conditions under which platforms are selected, in response to what needs. The methodology focused on the daily practice of local teachers in teaching English, observations of trainers in private training centers, and school leaders' views on digitalization. Through the opinions of these groups, factors influencing platform selection were more clearly formed. This helped the general conclusions reflect real situations.

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The theoretical part of the study was based on international scientific literature, major studies on EFL methodology, and concepts of digital pedagogy. These sources served as a scientific basis for determining the criteria for selecting platforms. At the same time, these theoretical principles were adapted to the specific conditions of Uzbekistan, since the local education system does not fully repeat global approaches. Technical capabilities in the regions, the practice of working with students in the classroom, the budget allocated for education, and the digital training of teachers differ significantly from global experience. Therefore, the methodology was based on the principle of integrating international sources with the local context [1].

In the process of evaluating the platforms, criteria such as pedagogical suitability, functional capabilities, contribution to the development of language skills, technical stability, pricing policy, and acceptance by students were selected as the axes of analysis. These criteria were evaluated simultaneously in comparison with theoretical principles and practical experience of teachers. The goal was not to recommend a single platform, but to develop a set of reasonable criteria that would allow teachers and educational institutions to make an informed choice. All the information obtained during the research process was summarized, and it became clear that the choice of a platform in the Uzbek EFL system is never just a technical issue, but a complex process that combines pedagogical and managerial decisions. This approach became the main foundation of the research methodology and strengthened the reliability of the results and conclusions presented in the article.

Results

The data collected during the study showed that the process of choosing EFL platforms for teachers is shaped by the intersection of several factors. Although the experiences of schools and private learning centers are close to each other, some differences were observed related to the technical capabilities of the educational institution, the preparation of students and the organizational model of the lesson process. According to teachers, the main indicator determining the effectiveness of the platform is the degree to which it is aligned with the objectives of the lesson. When the content of the platform meets the CEFR criteria, the gradation of tasks is clear, and the student is involved as an active participant, its impact on the learning process is significantly enhanced.

One of the most important factors observed across regions is the quality of the internet. Since some schools do not have a stable connection, platforms with the ability to work

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offline prevailed. In such conditions, teachers preferred platforms that work with minimal technical load, do not have heavy visual materials, and are easy to load. In private training centers, due to better internet quality, it was observed that efficiency increased when using platforms with more complex functions.

Another important aspect of the results is that how the platform is perceived by teachers also directly affects its effectiveness. Teachers with high digital literacy actively used interactive tasks, an automatic assessment system, and progress monitoring functions. On the contrary, teachers with little experience in digital tools could not fully utilize even the basic functions of the platform. This shows that the issue of competence is very important when choosing a platform. Students' attitude towards the platform was also noted as one of the factors determining effectiveness. On platforms with a high level of interactivity and gamification elements, student motivation increased significantly. Platforms that focus on the gradual development of language skills and work with real-life texts have also had a positive impact on students' practical use of the language [2].

Based on the observations made during the study, several general trends were identified when choosing platforms: technical capabilities, pedagogical suitability, economic convenience, and teacher and student acceptance of the platform. These factors are interrelated, and if any of them is neglected, the overall effectiveness of the platform may decrease. The main value of the results is that they reflect local realities and serve as a reliable source for making practical decisions in the process of choosing a platform.

Table. Key factors influencing platform selection

Factor	Description based on local observations	Impact on the educational process
Pedagogical suitability	Platform compliance with CEFR requirements and lesson objectives, clarity of task sequence	Learning materials are organized, student growth is systematized
Technical infrastructure	Higher need for offline functionality in schools with poor internet quality	The lesson process is uninterrupted, the teacher works smoothly
Teacher digital literacy	Experienced teachers have access to more features, while beginners have limited access	The real capabilities of the platform are fully revealed or, conversely, remain limited
Student	Higher engagement when	The student actively participates

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motivation	gamification, progress ratings, and interactivity are available	in the lesson, the duration increases
Cost and economic opportunities	Premium packages for some platforms can be expensive for local schools	The educational institution narrows the choice of options
Practical value of content	Real-life texts, listening comprehension materials, adaptive tasks	Language skills develop naturally and steadily

Discussion

The results of the study showed that the process of platform selection in the Uzbek EFL system is complex and multifaceted. The platform is not just a technical tool, but also a strategic element that combines the pedagogical vision of the teacher, the needs of students and the level of infrastructure of the educational institution. Therefore, when evaluating platforms, their didactic value, technical flexibility and real contribution to learning should be considered on the basis of a holistic approach.

One of the most frequently repeated aspects in the opinions of teachers is the natural integration of the platform into the lesson process. If the platform does not match the age, language level and learning objectives of the student, the student will not accept it or will complete the tasks simply for the sake of completing them. This does not sufficiently serve the development of communicative skills, which is the main goal of the teacher. It was observed that the student's motivation increased when working with materials that were close to his real-life language needs. Therefore, didactic suitability remains the primary criterion in the process of platform selection.

Another important aspect has repeatedly been demonstrated in the research process - the digital literacy of teachers. No matter how advanced the platform is, if the teacher has not fully mastered its capabilities, the real effectiveness of the platform will decrease. This situation indicates the need for a systematic approach to improving the skills of teachers. With rational use of the platform's functions, it enhances the teaching process, saves time, and allows for accurate monitoring of student progress. Otherwise, the platform will only become a digitalization tool in appearance.

The process of comparing platforms showed that the budget of the educational institution also has a significant impact on the choice. Premium features often provide high-quality tasks, a refined assessment system and expanded learning statistics. However, these

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opportunities are not economically feasible for all institutions. Therefore, many teachers prefer free versions or platforms that do not require additional costs for the student. This situation further strengthens the position of economic factors as either facilitating or, conversely, creating a constraint on the effectiveness of the platform.

The above-mentioned factors are closely related to each other, and the results were observed when the process of choosing a platform was carried out in a way that combined all of them. The study concluded that the choice of a platform should be formed as a pedagogical decision, and technical capabilities should serve as a basis supporting this decision. Otherwise, the platform will become an episodic tool, not a central element of the teaching process. Decision-making taking into account local realities will ensure the long-term effectiveness of the platform and facilitate the work of the teacher.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that the process of choosing a platform in the EFL educational environment of Uzbekistan is not only a matter of choosing a technical tool, but also a whole set of pedagogical, organizational and practical decisions. The impact of platforms on the teaching process depends more on the teacher's approach, the needs of students and the capabilities of the existing infrastructure than on their functional capabilities. Therefore, the effectiveness of platform selection is determined by the degree to which it is aligned with the goals, objectives and real conditions of the teaching process.

The factors identified during the study confirmed that the effectiveness of any platform is primarily related to how the teacher can integrate it and how the student perceives it. Well-designed tasks, CEFR-compliant content, interactivity and adaptive mechanisms provide a qualitative impetus to learning activities. However, these opportunities will be effective only if the teacher can consciously choose this tool and logically integrate it into the teaching process. In other words, the platform can be a factor that enhances a teacher's methodological skills, but it cannot replace them.

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