COMMUNICATION SKILLS
COMPETENȚELE DE COMUNICARE

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Abstract: Contemporary society is the environment into which young people will enter immediately after completing their studies. This transition is successful if these young individuals acquire communication skills during their high school years and, according to new standards, communication skills in a foreign language of European circulation. This article aims to highlight a study focused on developing communication skills in English through modern, up-to-date methods. These methods promote student-centered learning, ensuring that the knowledge gained by students through these methods is retained. The use of digital platforms is highly relevant, and high school students are drawn to them. They frequently use social media and are already proficient in utilizing technology.

Keywords: communication skills, digital platforms, modern teaching methods.

Introduction

In an ever-evolving world, communication skills also include the ability to communicate. The professional benefits of communication skills also contribute to the personal development of young people. The competencies of the future also include communication skills, which are developed starting from the early school years. By the time students choose to attend high school, they already possess a certain level of knowledge and an established vocabulary. These communication skills go beyond just oral or written communication and also involve the development of active listening skills. Without the ability to actively listen to a message, whether at school or with peers, these competencies cannot reach their optimal level of development, and the message is either misunderstood or never truly reaches the listener.

On the other hand, the insertion into the job market is becoming increasingly demanding, if we can say so. Therefore, young people are more and more often required

to possess communication skills in a foreign language, with English being the most commonly requested.

These skills should serve as a foundation for learning as part of lifelong education. The study I will present focuses on the integration of digital tools in teaching English to high school students.

Communication skills are essential for the professional and personal success of young people, and their development begins in the early years of school. By the time students reach high school, they already have a foundation of knowledge and a developed vocabulary, but communication skills need to be continued and strengthened as they grow.

Without this skill, messages can be misinterpreted or may not reach the listener at all, thus affecting the entire communication process. Therefore, the development of active listening is an essential part of communication skills, contributing to increased efficiency and clarity in communication, both in the school environment and in interpersonal relationships or in the future careers of young people.

Objectives

The aim of the study was to analyse to what extent technology can bring significant benefits in acquiring communication skills in English, including speaking, writing, listening, and vocabulary. Additionally, the study sought to examine how these platforms stimulate motivation and voluntary engagement in the learning process.

The objectives pursued were:
- Facilitating access to educational resources available on digital platforms
- Measuring the level of student engagement in interactive or collaborative activities
- Monitoring the impact of continuous assessment and personalized feedback
- Developing digital competencies among students and teaching staff.

Methodology

The English teacher studied the use of digital tools throughout a school year and demonstrated proficiency in using digital platforms. The subject was structured with the essential communication skills in mind: speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

Technology was used to support each of these areas, with platforms such as Duolingo, Flipgrid, Padlet, Quizlet, Google Docs, YouTube, and TED-Ed being utilized. All of these platforms were already familiar to the high school students, as they were users of them in various non-school contexts as well.

The high school students were encouraged to use Duolingo. It is an easy-to-use platform that can be accessed even during moments of relaxation, as it is designed in the form of interactive games. Progress was visible from the very first weeks, as the students used it even outside of class hours.

Flipgrid was used to create interactive discussions. The purpose of these discussions was to practice vocabulary by presenting a book that had been read or by expressing opinions on topics from various articles.

The digital board Padlet was used to introduce modern methods, including brainstorming. It is well known that this method, also called a 'brainstorming session,' allows students to practice vocabulary, writing, or active listening. They posted ideas, quotes, or relevant elements for their assignments or classroom discussions.

With the help of the Quizlet platform, students shared digital worksheets, posted ideas, quotes, or relevant elements for their assignments or classroom discussions. The quick quizzes were rewarded with immediate and personalized feedback.

Collaborative writing is a team activity. Google Docs facilitated this activity in group projects, with students writing stories and providing and receiving real-time feedback from their peers.

YouTube is a platform commonly used by young people. While they listen to music, they were also encouraged to access educational videos that provided knowledge on pronunciation, accent, or vocabulary. The activities carried out were analyzed and freely discussed in class.

As a result of this case study, the impact of these platforms on the development of communication skills in English among high school students was analyzed. Progress was noted in listening and speaking skills following the use of the Flipgrid and YouTube platforms.

Vocabulary showed significant improvement, both in writing and in pronunciation or the acquisition of new words. Platforms like Duolingo and Quizlet also contributed to these developments. Understanding grammatical structures and improving active vocabulary were some of the benefits of using these platforms.

Collaborative writing on Google Docs led to improvements in the writing process and in clear, accurate expression, with grammatical structures being correctly formulated and used. The involvement of high school students in teamwork increased their intrinsic motivation, allowing them to express themselves more creatively and personally. Dynamic learning was also promoted through the use of modern technology. Additionally, through these modern platforms, students learned to better manage their learning projects and to refine their essential digital skills.

The study highlighted some challenges and proposed solutions. One of the challenges is that not all young people have equal access to these platforms. Whether they lack devices or have no internet access, they cannot be on equal footing with those who do have these resources.

Therefore, the teacher provided access to the school's devices and personalized the assignments based on each student's capabilities. Another issue is the varying levels of digital skills. Not all high school students have developed these skills, so the teacher organized an introductory course for each student to acquire these skills. In other words, the learning was personalized. Time management was also a challenge.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can affirm that the digital platforms used led to significant progress in the development of English communication skills among the high school students involved in the study. The positive impact was demonstrated by the excellent results obtained after the study. However, some recommendations are worth mentioning, namely:

- Teachers should benefit from digital literacy programs and the integration of platforms into the teaching and learning process.

- It is very important for activities to be adapted according to the needs and capabilities of the students.
- Equal access to devices is essential for these activities to be truly successful.
- Technology can provide immediate feedback for each individual, thus improving students' self-esteem.

As a result of analyzing this study, we can affirm that the use of new technologies and modern digital platforms is the future because they ensure thorough, active learning, where each student is valued and appreciated in real-time.

The integration of digital platforms into English language teaching had a significant impact on the development of students' communication skills. These platforms were valuable tools for active and interactive learning, offering students not only knowledge but also essential digital skills for their professional success.

For technology to truly benefit education, it is necessary for teachers to have adequate knowledge and proper training, ensuring equitable access to existing resources for all students.

The evolution of technology proves to be both an effective teaching method and a tool for motivation and personalizing the learning process, preparing students for the challenges of future careers in a constantly changing world.

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