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VoScreen Online Foreign Language Learning Environment

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Article Info	Abstract
   Review Article	Foreign language education in our schools has not increased the foreign language level of the students. We can enhance the foreign language levels of the students by providing them with the tools for teaching foreign languages and using them outside of the school. In this study, VoScreen web and mobile application, which is applied in order to develop foreign language listening skill has been introduced. VoScreen provides a new approach to foreign language teaching for making foreign language teaching interesting. The VoScreen application, which consists of short videos, can help students to improve listening skills. VoScreen offers a ranking system based on score which constitutes a sense of competition among students. VoScreen can help students to develop their attitudes towards foreign language courses in a positive way and help students to reach foreign language levels to the intended/ aimed level. **Keywords**: VoScreen, foreign language education, web 2.0 technology, English teaching, video education

1. INTRODUCTION

In international community, one of the aims of European Union (EU) countries and the countries which are candidates for EU is to teach one foreign language to individuals at least (The Council of Higher Education, February 2007). For such a significant issue, it has been seen that students in our country do not have enough communication skills in English, even though they have to take English courses since primary school (Paker, 2012). Paker notes that this is because English language education in schools is composed of linguistic subjects and that speaking and listening activities are not carried out for developing communication in English. Speaking and listening exercises are done but not evaluated whereas grammar-oriented lessons decrease students' interest in English language teaching (Paker, 2012).

Another crucial problem in foreign language education in the schools is to giving language courses for the university or high school placement exams (Demirpolat, 2015). Since the aim of language education for exams is to be able to solve multiple choice questions, the significance of improving speaking and listening skills of the students is not seen as important as exams. In the study of Demirpolat (2015), the reasons behind the problematic points of English education in Turkey have been claimed that students have been destitute of individualized education due to the crowded classrooms, foreign language education is formed just for the exams, materials for foreign language education consist of only the course books.

If it is aimed to educate generations that can understand and speak foreign languages in our education system, we need to benefit from the technologies we use in every field of the life. It has been known that receiving computer aided education creates an individualized learning environment for students and motivates them (Lee, 2000).

Along with all these developments, examples of web applications have started to appear in foreign language education. One of them, VoScreen aims to improve the pronunciation and listening skills of the users by processing foreign language education with videos. It has been revealed that watching movies in foreign language education has many positive benefits such as increasing the motivation in language education and improving the vocabulary (İşcan, 2011). In Ömer Antalyalı's study which was carried out in 2015-2016 academic year of Süleyman Demirel University, it has been aimed to answer the question: "Does VoScreen accelerate learning in English learning?" (Antalyalı, 2016). It has been shown that the students who exceed the 2000 video question threshold, which is the target video question threshold, have had significant improvements (Antalya, 2016).

In this study, it has been aimed to introduce the results of the literature review in which VOScreen as a web application which can be used in foreign language education, basic features and how teachers utilize it, as well as positive effects the applications like VOSCREEN on foreign language education.

2. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

These studies have focused on a few applications, as long as we look at the studies on user-interactive applications in foreign language education. Duolingo as one of these applications, asks selected foreign words for their users in the form of text and audio. The users respond to these questions and gain scores and achievements. Busuu is another application that is subject to research. The Busuu application allows users to match and chat with speakers who can speak the language that they choose to learn.

Garcia, in a research study on Duolingo which is one of the mobile applications used in foreign language education, has introduced that interpretation may be an important contribution to the foreign language education (Garcia, 2013). In another study on Duolingo, Dualingo was applied on 386 people (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012). In this study, a preliminary evaluation was made with Dualingo before the foreign language education. Participants were given a final assessment after the training given by Dualingo and a positive effect of the Dualingo application on the foreign language education was determined with 91.4 points difference between the preliminary evaluation and the final evaluation. Participants pointed out that the application has developed foreign language education and made foreign language education more enjoyable.

In a study on Busuu, one of the interactive applications used in foreign language education, foreign language education was applied on 196 participants via Busuu. Participants were

assessed pre-implementation, at certain intervals during making practice and at the end of activity. Busuu application found that 84% of participants had an important contribution to improve foreign language education (Vesselinov & Grego, 2016). Busuu application has allowed 74% of participants to improve at least one level of their foreign language speaking skills. A 12-point increase in foreign language skills has been achieved. Participants pointed out that Busuu application at the end of the course has affected foreign language education positively and that the app has made education entertaining.

3. VoSCREEN

VoScreen is a web and mobile application utilized in foreign language education. VoScreen has been developed to make up the deficiency of listening and pronunciation elements in foreign language education. In "Reimagine Education 2016" competition which was organized by world-renowned Wharton Business School, UPENN (USA) there were more than 500 global initiative. In this competition, Voscreen developed in Turkey was chosen as the third in "Best Education Application" category. At worldwide, the number of users has exceeded 1.7 million and has been used in 74 countries. Students can sign in the app via their Facebook accounts on the system and create new users with their e-mail accounts (Figure 1).

Figure 1. VoScreen Registration Screen

The language education that begins with the videos of a category which is selected by the students consists of question about the videos (Figure 2). The videos are up to 15 seconds long and are composed of contents such as various series, movies and advertisements. At the final part of the videos, the dialogue in English has been asked for finding out by choosing the correct one among the wrong answers. Every correct answer has been graded. Every wrong answer drops the total score. To answer the questions, the duration has been given according to the length of the videos. The correct answer of the unanswered questions has been displayed on the screen and the question has been incorrectly answered has been recorded as wrong answer in the system. Thanks to the scored points, it creates a sense of competition in

practice by ranking the people who use the application all over the world. The users can see in detail what questions they answer, how many days they have practice, how many questions are correct and how many are wrong, and in which categories the questions are.
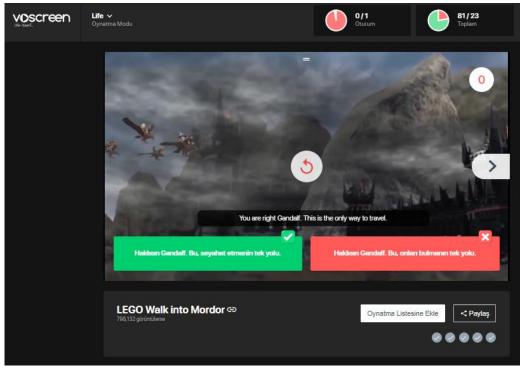

Figure 2. VoScreen Home Screen

Questions about videos on VoScreen are grouped in categories (Figure 3). From these categories, VoScreen Life consists of questions about dialogues of videos about daily life. The voKido category consists of videos which are prepared for the children. This category has three color categories as Red (Red), Yellow (Yellow) and Green (Green). In the main category, VoStep; there are videos which are made with considering the levels determined in foreign language courses. Under the VoStep main category, there are sub categories such as Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate, Upper and Advanced. In each subcategory, there are appropriate questions about the videos at that level. Under one of the main categories, voRhytm, there are subcategories which have been prepared with regarding the age groups. There are 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13+ categories in voRhytm and there are appropriate questions about videos for each age group. In vOStructure, there are appropriate question about videos for grammar of English language. In VoStructure, subcategories have been formed with consisting of grammar subjects such as Am-Is-Are, Can, Will etc. and there are appropriate questions about videos for each subject in each grammar category.

Figure 3. Categories

VoScreen for Trainers

Trainers can create classes by their own accounts. After creating the class, the system allows the trainer to take an address for registration. After the trainer shares this address with the students, the students can register to the class by their own accounts. Trainers can create more than one class (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Viewed Groups

Students can see points that each of them scored in the class and grading list by looking at the classes they were enrolled in the system (Figure 5). They can follow up with detailed statistics on which days, which categories, how many students gave correct answer and how many of them are wrong (Figure 6). Competition environment has been emerged among the students.

Figure 5. Statistics Screen of a Group Viewed

Figure 6. Statistics Screen of a Viewed Individual

Since VoScreen consists of short video segments, it is a potentially interesting application to appeal the students. It has been aimed to create an interesting atmosphere for the students when they see a section from a movie they have watched before. It has been trying to draw attention to what spoken text is, how it is pronounced and what it means. In this regard, foreign language education can provide an environment in which students are far away from monotony and more active.

Trainers can apply this practice to measure and evaluate the attention of the students as well as drawing their attention to the course. They can learn by means of feedbacks with asking the number of questions they have answered and whether a topic has been understood or not according to their true-false rates. The level of the students can be followed regularly, and the efficiency of the courses can be measured.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the basic features of VoScreen and explanations which clarify how teachers can use it have been mentioned. Watching movies and videos in English can improve listening

and pronunciation skills in foreign language education as these activities clearly show us the usage of that language in everyday life. Moreover, such resources on the internet, which enrich the teaching environments in foreign language education, improve the quality of education by increasing the interest in foreign language education (Karal & Berigel, 2006).

In the classrooms, teachers write vocabulary texts and give theoretically course, and after asking questions about video related to the course subject via VoScreen, thus students can both enhance their listening skills and do the course subject over. Since videos can catch the attention of student, they may be more interested in the course and willing to learn. VoScreen creates a competition environment among the students; it can also increase the enthusiasm of them for the courses. VoScreen can be applied both in the classroom and outside of the school for bolstering foreign language courses. Utilizing internet-based learning environments in foreign language education will positively affect both students' attitudes towards foreign language education and their success in foreign language education (Karal & Berigel, 2006).

When all these advantages of VoScreen are considered, various recommendations have been introduced below:

     • It has been recommended that foreign language teachers apply VoScreen in their lessons.

     • It has been recommended that VoScreen be applied as an evaluation tool at the end of the courses of the school's curriculum.

VoScreen Çevrimiçi Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Ortamı

Özet

Okullarımızda verilen yabancı dil eğitimi öğrencilerin yabancı dil seviyesini istenen düzeye ulaştıramamaktadır. Yabancı dil eğitimine yardımcı araçları derslerde ve okul dışında kullanılmasını sağlayarak öğrencilerin yabancı dil seviyelerini yukarıya taşıyabiliriz. Bu çalışmada yabancı dil dinleme becerisinin geliştirilmesi için kullanılan VoScreen web ve mobil uygulaması tanıtılmıştır. VoScreen yabancı dil eğitimine yeni bir yaklaşım getirerek yabancı dil eğitiminin ilgi çekici olmasını sağlamaktadır. Kısa videolardan oluşan VoScreen uygulaması öğrencilerin dinleme becerilerini geliştirmede yardımcı olabilir. VoScreen puana dayalı bir sıralama sistemi oluşturarak öğrencilerde yarışma hissi oluşturmaktadır. VoScreen öğrencilerin yabancı dil derslerine olan tutumlarını olumlu yönde geliştirmelerini sağlayabilir ve öğrencilerin yabancı dil seviyelerini istenen düzeye ulaştırmakta yardımcı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Voscreen, yabancı dil eğitimi, web 2.0 teknolojisi, İngilizce öğretimi, video eğitim

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