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DIGITAL OR TRADITIONAL: A METHOD THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

DİJİTAL VEYA GELENEKSEL: EĞİTİMDE FARK YARATAN YÖNTEM

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of traditional curricula and digital applications in foreign language teaching at the high school level in Türkiye, based on student and teacher views. It addresses the limitations of traditional approaches—such as limited class hours and low motivation—alongside the increasing integration of digital tools. Digital applications support learner motivation and particularly vocabulary learning through portability, personalized feedback, and gamification. Using a mixed-method design, the study combines semi-structured interviews with four students and four teachers and data from the Mobile Learning Attitude Scale. Five themes emerged: "quality education," "digital tools," "challenges," "language skills," and "participation." Participants emphasized that digital tools improved vocabulary learning and engagement but remained limited in writing and speaking and raised issues of access and cost. Quantitative findings also showed generally positive attitudes toward mobile learning. Overall, digital tools serve as important complements but are not sufficient on their own. Effective integration requires curriculum alignment, adequate infrastructure, and teacher training. Blended learning models that combine traditional and digital approaches offer promising pathways for more inclusive language education.

Keywords: *Curriculum evaluation, educational technologies, language learning, digital tools, mixed-methods*

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de lise düzeyinde yabancı dil öğretiminde geleneksel müfredatlar ile dijital uygulamaların etkililiğini, öğrenci ve öğretmen görüşlerine dayalı olarak incelemektedir. Araştırma, sınıf saatlerinin kısıtlılığı ve düşük motivasyon gibi geleneksel yöntemlerin sınırlılıklarını, buna karşılık dijital araçların artan kullanımını ele almaktadır. Dijital uygulamalar taşınabilirlik, kişiselleştirilmiş geri bildirim ve oyunlaştırma sayesinde öğrenci motivasyonunu ve özellikle kelime öğrenimini desteklemektedir. Karma yöntemle yürütülen çalışmada, dört öğrenci ve dört öğretmenle yapılan görüşmeler ile mobil öğrenme tutum ölçeği verileri birleştirilmiş; "iyi eğitim", "dijital araçlar", "zorluklar", "dil becerileri" ve "katılım" olmak üzere beş tema belirlenmiştir. Katılımcılar dijital araçların kelime öğrenimi ve katılımı artırdığını, ancak yazma ve konuşmada sınırlı kaldığını; ayrıca erişim ve maliyet sorunlarını vurgulamıştır. Nicel bulgular da mobil öğrenmeye yönelik tutumların genel olarak olumlu olduğunu göstermiştir.Sonuç olarak dijital araçlar önemli bir tamamlayıcıdır; ancak etkili olabilmeleri için müfredat uyumu, altyapı ve öğretmen eğitimi gerekmektedir. Geleneksel ve dijital yaklaşımları birleştiren harmanlanmış modeller daha kapsayıcı bir dil eğitimi sunabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Müfredat değerlendirme, eğitim teknolojileri, dil öğrenimi, dijital araçlar, karma yöntem*

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INTRODUCTION

In high school education institutions in Türkiye, foreign language education is generally conducted with a curriculum-focused approach (Akçin & Tekin, 2023). This approach aims to develop students' reading, grammar, listening, writing, and speaking skills, while the teaching methods generally consist of traditional classroom interactions (Baltacı, 2022). Teachers plan and implement lessons in accordance with the curriculum, which leads to language teaching being conducted within a certain structure. However, this approach has certain limitations. For example, student motivation, the selection of inappropriate methods, the difficulty of the curriculum, and the limitations of the classroom environment can negatively affect the learning processes (Seydialioğlu, Öksüz Çağlar, Erdemir, Avcı & Göçer, 2023).

There are various methods that can be applied in schools, such as improvisation, project-based, inquiry-based, teamwork, nature, discussion, drama, narration, social learning, backward learning, technology-assisted learning, brainstorming, station, question and answer, practice, and exhibition (Hoyland & Acar, 2024). Choosing the most appropriate method among the various methods is not considered correct because factors such as classroom conditions, the situation of the students, the number of people in the classes, the duration of the lesson, and the availability of necessary tools can all affect the chosen method. The main point to pay attention to is that these methods should be diverse and determined in a way that maximizes student participation in the class. This is also related to the teacher's knowledge and how meticulous they are about this subject (Xiong, 2025).

According to Şahin and Ulucan (2023), the most commonly used teaching methods in high school education institutions in Türkiye are the Lecture and Question-Answer methods. The Lecture Method is the direct and verbal presentation of information by the teacher to the students during the teaching and learning process (Evans & Matthew, 2012). This method involves the teacher conveying information, especially by using words, examples, and sometimes visual materials to explain the topic or lesson. The lecture method usually occurs through classroom discussions, presentations, lesson explanations, and debates. The question-and-answer method, on the other hand, is a teaching method that reinforces learning by facilitating communication between the teacher and students. In this method, the teacher asks questions to the students, and the students try to understand the lesson's content by answering these questions. Additionally, students contribute to the learning process by asking the teacher questions. According to Özer and Korkmaz (2016),

teaching a foreign language solely through this frequently used lecture method is not healthy. However, factors such as the overcrowding of classes in public schools, the heaviness of the curriculum for 4 hours a week, and the anxiety of keeping up with the topics that come with it cause teachers to find these two methods more suitable and prevent them from using teaching methods such as practice, exhibition, project-based, and application (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Why Should Language Learning Move Outside the Classroom?

The transfer of language learning outside the classroom is critically important for language acquisition, especially in situations where the time for language practice within the classroom is limited (Kennedy & Levy, 2009). The main reason for this situation is the necessity of practical applications such as listening and speaking for the effective realization of language learning (Benson, 2011). According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), there are four skills that need to be developed while learning a language. These are speaking, listening, writing, and language and vocabulary skills, and developing all of these skills while learning a language is quite important for healthy language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Compared to the curriculum and weekly lesson hours in Türkiye, the education policy falls short of providing a proper and healthy language learning experience (Akçin & Tekin, 2023). A high school student in Türkiye attends school for approximately 36 weeks and can take four hours of foreign language classes per week in public schools (Baltacı, 2022). This means a total of 144 class hours per year. However, it is not very possible to give each student enough individual attention in the classroom setting (Evans & Matthew, 2012; Hoyland & Acar, 2024). For example, when there are 30 students in a class, each student gets approximately five class hours. If these five class hours are allocated solely for practical lessons, which is unrealistic considering the limited time in the classroom, it still falls short in terms of the language learning process. For healthy language learning, it is necessary to develop skills beyond grammar and vocabulary (Brown, 2007). However, as previously emphasized, a four-hour weekly language course does not provide sufficient time to develop such skills. Moreover, the selection of incorrect or inadequate teaching methods during this limited time frame can further complicate language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). In this context, supporting language learning with extracurricular activities has become an unavoidable necessity (Oxford, 2017).

The Advantages of Applications

The language learning applications provide students with broad and rich access thanks to mobile technology, offering significant advantages such as portability and accessibility everywhere. These features allow students to access educational materials without any spatial or temporal limitations. Additionally, the designs of the applications are generally prepared to be engaging and interactive without overwhelming the user, thus they can cater to different learning styles (El-Sabagh, 2021). Such applications have the capacity to appeal to a large number of users by using various learning methods together.

Mobile applications allow users to access information and learn new skills in any environment where there is an internet connection. Additionally, thanks to motivationally enhancing designs, users are encouraged to continue their learning process. This flexibility strengthens users' commitment to the learning process because it makes learning more enjoyable, easier, and more effective. Research has shown that these advantages significantly motivate users and increase their participation in the learning process (Rezaei, Mai, & Pesaranghader, 2014). Additionally, language learning applications provide instant feedback, allowing users to quickly notice their mistakes and encouraging them to take corrective actions accordingly (Li, 2023). This feature, which encourages independent study, also helps users develop their responsibility skills.

In schools, although there may be instances where insufficient importance is given to the development of language skills, applications can generally compensate for this deficiency by offering exercises focused on listening and speaking skills (Mingyan, M., Noordin, N. & Razali, 2025). This situation demonstrates that applications are a versatile and comprehensive learning tool. Due to the advancement of technology and people's search for different methods to learn languages, such applications are both increasing in number and improving (Li, 2023). This also paves the way for learning English and offers opportunities for everyone from seven to seventy, including adults who are too old to go to school or who only had the chance to study for a few years and could not continue their education. In addition, the existence of applications like Duolingo, which do not charge fees, can be an important support for people who want to learn a language independently and at minimal cost.

Challenges Related to the Language Learning Process

The process of learning a language is challenging and involves the concurrent use of social, affective, and cognitive abilities (Karalık & Merç, 2025). Lack of motivation to learn a

language slows down the process and makes sustaining it more challenging. Similarly, learners who experience "foreign language anxiety" may refrain from communicating because they are afraid of making mistakes when learning a foreign language.

Teaching strategies and the learning environment are examples of external factors. Inadequate or inappropriate teaching methods can negatively impact students' development by restricting opportunities for active language use. Conversely, those lacking sufficient familiarity with the target language struggle to acquire balanced speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The language learning process is further complicated by the lack of natural communication opportunities, particularly in the classroom (Akbar, Asif, & Ahmad, 2022). In conclusion, the challenges associated with the language learning process are multidimensional and have a significant impact on an individual's language development. Therefore, considering both individual differences and the nature of the learning environment in language learning will contribute to a more effective and efficient process. (El-Sabagh, 2021)

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing integration of digital applications in education, there is still limited understanding of how these tools compare to traditional curricula in terms of their pedagogical effectiveness in foreign language teaching at the secondary school level. While digital technologies are widely promoted for their potential to enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and access to authentic language resources, concerns remain regarding their alignment with curricular goals, instructional quality, and equitable access. Moreover, the perceptions of both teachers and students—who are directly involved in the teaching and learning process—have not been sufficiently explored in a comparative framework. This gap underscores the need to evaluate the relative effectiveness of traditional and digital approaches from multiple stakeholder perspectives in order to inform more balanced and evidence-based educational practices.

The Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to evaluate the differences in effectiveness between traditional curricula and digital applications in foreign language teaching at the high school level based on the opinions of teachers and students. The sub-objectives of this mixed-methods research are as follows: (1) to identify high school students' opinions on the effectiveness of traditional foreign language teaching curricula, (2) to explore their experiences and

perceptions regarding digital applications, and (3) to examine foreign language teachers' evaluations of traditional curricula.

METHOD

Mixed methods research is an approach that involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, the integration of these two types of data, and the use of different designs that may include philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2017). Quantitative research examines the extent to which known phenomena occur, whereas qualitative research explores phenomena that are not yet well understood (Ladner, 2019). The purpose of the mixed method, in many cases, is not to confirm or support an idea, but to broaden the individual's understanding of the event (Onwuegbuize & Leech, 2004). As Guetterman (2015) states, mixed methods research is the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data and its integration, drawing on the strengths of both approaches. The use of quantitative and qualitative techniques within the same framework in mixed-methods research strengthens the advantageous aspects of both techniques. Moreover, researchers using mixed methods have a greater chance of selecting methods and approaches related to their defined research questions. Mixed-methods research seeks to use multiple approaches when answering research questions, rather than restricting the researcher's options. Since the researcher is not limited to a single method, they can answer research questions in a broader and more comprehensive manner or provide strong evidence for the results by examining the convergence and accuracy of the findings (Baki & Gökçek, 2012).

This study employed a mixed-methods design to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of traditional curricula and digital applications in foreign language teaching from both student and teacher perspectives. The qualitative component of the study involved semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with four high school students and four foreign language teachers. The interview protocol was developed in consultation with two experts in the field of educational sciences. Following the initial draft, three pilot interviews were conducted. Based on the feedback and observations from the pilot phase, overlapping questions were merged, and new items were added to enrich the depth and scope of the instrument. The revised version of the interview form was then reviewed again by the experts and finalized. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the research purpose and scope. As suggested by Creswell (2014), interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants to ensure their comfort and familiarity with the

research process. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed no later than the following day. To protect participants' anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned. The participants were anonymized using the names of Duolingo characters. A table summarizing participants' demographic information is presented below.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Participants (Teachers)

Teacher's names	Age	Gender	Subject
Lin	51	female	English
Vikram	52	female	English
Oscar	43	female	English
Bea	51	female	English

Table 1 contains the personal information of the students interviewed. Due to privacy policies, the names of Duolingo characters are used instead of the individuals' real names.

Table 2.

Demographic Information of the Participants (Students)

Students' names	Age	Level	Gender
Eddy	15	preparatory	female
Lucy	16	preparatory	male
Zari	15	preparatory	female
Falsatff	15	preparatory	female

Table 2 contains the personal information of the teachers interviewed. Due to privacy policies, the names of Duolingo characters are used instead of the individuals' real names. For the quantitative component, data were collected using the *English Mobile Learning Attitude Scale*, developed by Önal et al. (2019). Necessary permissions to use the scale were obtained from the original authors. The scale was adapted into a Google Form format and distributed online to facilitate easy and widespread access. The scale measures students' attitudes toward mobile learning in English language education and served as a key instrument in assessing the comparative effectiveness of digital tools.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the qualitative study—which aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional foreign language curricula and digital applications in secondary education based on interviews with students and teachers—along with the quantitative data analysis that examined the strengths and weaknesses of both instructional methods in theoretical and institutional contexts. Using an inductive content analysis approach, themes, subthemes, and codes were derived from the raw interview data. The findings reflect participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the nature of quality education, the role of digital tools, encountered challenges, language skills development, and classroom participation.

As a result of the data analysis, five main themes were identified. The first theme, *Understanding Good Education*, includes participants' views on how they define quality education. The second theme, *Digital Tools*, encompasses participants' evaluations of the contributions of digital applications to their learning. The third theme, *Challenges*, includes the difficulties participants reported experiencing while using digital tools. The fourth theme, *Language Skills*, addresses which language skills users found digital tools beneficial for and in which areas they fell short. The fifth theme, *Participation*, includes teachers' views on the conditions under which students demonstrate more active classroom engagement.

Participants indicated that digital applications were more advantageous in terms of student motivation, willingness to learn, learning ease, and long-term retention. However, they also emphasized the inadequacy of current curricula and the conditions of secondary education institutions in Türkiye. These themes, derived from all data, are presented together in this study.

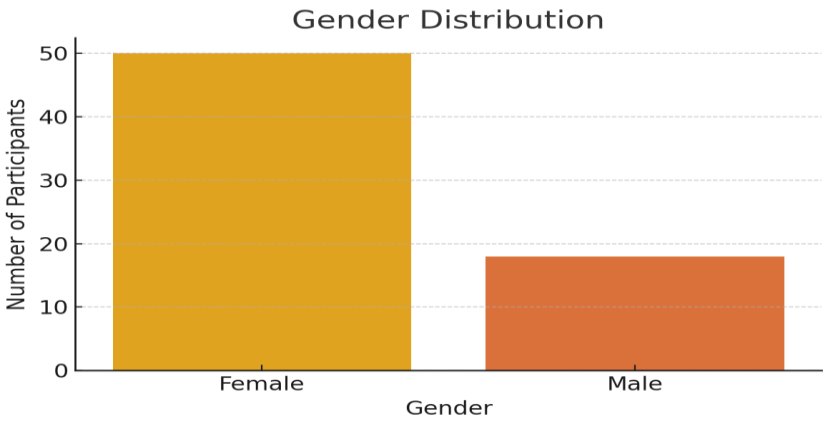
Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Descriptive Statistics

The quantitative phase of the study included 68 participants. The sample consisted predominantly of females; 73.5% were female (n = 50) and 26.5% were male (n = 18). The vast majority of participants were enrolled in public schools (82.4%, n = 56), while 17.6% (n = 12) attended private schools. Distribution by grade level showed that most students were in 9th grade (67.6%, n = 46), followed by 10th grade (14.7%, n = 10), preparatory class (13.2%, n = 9), and 11th grade (4.4%, n = 3).

Figure 1

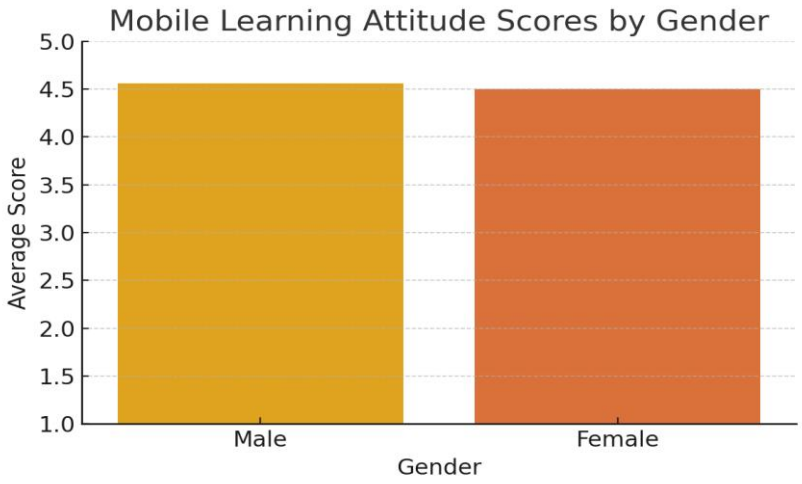
Gender Distribution of the Participants



In terms of socioeconomic characteristics, 72.1% of students reported belonging to middle-income households, 26.5% to high-income households, and 1.4% to low-income households. Most participants owned multiple technological devices (typically smartphones, tablets, and computers), indicating high levels of digital access. Parents' educational levels were also relatively high; most mothers and fathers had a high school diploma, bachelor's degree, or master's degree.

Figure 2

Mobile Learning Attitude Scores by Gender



Overall Scale Descriptive Statistics

The overall mean score on the scale was 3.92 (SD = 0.51), indicating that participants generally exhibited positive attitudes toward mobile learning in the context of English language education.

Differences Based on Mother's and Father's Education Levels

Students whose mothers held undergraduate or graduate degrees demonstrated statistically higher confidence in using mobile technologies ($H = 6.14$, $p < .05$). Students whose fathers

had graduate-level education perceived mobile learning as contributing more to lifelong learning ($H = 7.02$, $p < .05$). These results suggest that parental literacy levels may be an important familial factor influencing students' technological self-confidence and thus their tendency to adopt digital tools.

Perception of Good Education

Participants defined "good education" as a process centered on the learner, positioning the teacher not as a transmitter of knowledge but as a guide. According to student Eddy, this approach is rooted in an educational philosophy tailored to students' individual differences, interests, levels, and personal needs—an approach requiring greater personalization and effort. Participants also emphasized that feeling comfortable and not being under pressure contributed to effective learning. Teachers described themselves not only as sources of knowledge but also as mentors/facilitators guiding learners through the educational process. One of the key principles of digital applications is their personalized programs and question sets, which analyze users' weaknesses and focus on them. The positive scale scores obtained from the Mobile Learning Attitude Scale ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.51$) support the view that personalized programming is one reason for these favorable attitudes. Three subthemes emerged from the qualitative data: personalized learning, learner-centeredness, and the teacher's guiding role.

> "Good education is instruction adapted to the student's needs." (Student, Eddy)
>
> "A model where students do not feel pressured and feel comfortable." (Student, Lucy)
>
> "In good education, the teacher is like a guide, a mentor." (Teacher, Lily)

Digital Tools

Participants emphasized that digital applications play a positive role in making learning enjoyable, motivating, and enriched with up-to-date content. Gamified learning systems capture students' interest and make lessons more fluid and sustainable. Students also noted that digital environments align well with their daily habits due to their portability and accessibility, making learning more natural, engaging, and available without time or location constraints. The positive results from the English Mobile Learning Attitude Scale ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.51$) also support this perspective. Students highlighted their technological affinity and described their generation as the most frequent users of such tools. Digital tools were found to be particularly effective in vocabulary learning. Three subthemes emerged:

enjoyable and motivating features, alignment with contemporary student lifestyles, and effectiveness in vocabulary teaching.

"Digital tools are both more efficient and more fun." (Student, Lucy)

"There is a leaderboard in Duolingo; it motivates you." (Student, Zari)

"Our generation is the one that uses these tools the most." (Student, Zari)

"They are very helpful for learning new words." (Student, Eddy)

Socioeconomic Differences and Challenges

Although digital tools were generally seen as effective, several challenges that may limit their full integration into language education were reported. Three subthemes were identified: advertisements and energy/time limitations, access problems, and paid features. In-class advertisements that cannot be skipped, premium restrictions, in-app limitations, and monetized additional features decrease students' motivation and hinder learning. Participants, including teachers and students, mentioned the increasing monetization of educational applications. Students who had problems obtaining devices or accessing the internet stated that these issues are barriers to equal access and learning opportunities. These challenges indicate that the educational potential of digital language-learning applications is overshadowed by commercial concerns and digital infrastructure inequalities in Türkiye.

However, when all scale items were examined, students' attitudes toward mobile learning did not differ significantly based on family income level or whether they attended public or private schools ($p > .05$; $p > .05$). Thus, survey data suggest that these access issues are not statistically associated with socioeconomic status. This contradiction implies that problems related to internet access and device availability may not be limited to particular socioeconomic groups but instead reflect a broader structural digital infrastructure issue.

"Energy/time limits reduce my motivation." (Student, Eddy)

"One of the biggest problems is internet access." (Student, Lucy)

"Everything is being monetized." (Student, Zari)

Language Skills

Digital applications were found to support receptive skills such as vocabulary, listening, and reading. However, they offered limited support for productive skills such as writing and speaking. While quantitative data showed high perceptions of effectiveness regarding mobile learning, qualitative findings clarified and contextualized these results. Students' belief that applications contribute to their learning stems largely from rapid improvements in receptive

skills. However, these benefits do not compensate for the lack of support in crucial productive areas. This suggests that digital tools cannot serve as a stand-alone solution.

"They are very helpful for learning new words." (Student, Eddy)

"Reading and listening become easier with digital tools." (Student, Zari)

"They do not help much with writing." (Student, Lucy)

Participation

Classroom participation was found to be influenced by digital features, classroom dynamics, and student motivation. Two subthemes emerged: reward- and game-based participation and lack of intrinsic motivation. Students tend to participate more when topics interest them; otherwise, participation is achieved through rewards such as additional points. Qualitative data also showed that gamified structures and reward systems in applications increase students' interest and encourage them to continue learning.

"Digital tools are both more efficient and more fun." (Student, Lucy)

"There is a leaderboard in Duolingo; it motivates you." (Student, Zari)

"They learn more when they play games." (Teacher, Lin)

"When I say I'll give extra points, all hands go up." (Teacher, Vikram)

"If the topic does not interest them, they do not participate." (Teacher, Bea)

Participation Differences by Gender

This tendency for reward- and game-based participation is supported by quantitative socio-demographic findings. According to the Mann–Whitney U test, female students reported significantly more positive attitudes than male students regarding the belief that mobile learning increases efficiency ($U = 298.5$, $p < .05$) and confidence in using mobile devices ($U = 305.0$, $p < .05$). Female students' higher confidence and efficiency perceptions serve as an important factor supporting their participation dynamics in digital settings. Student Zari's statement, "*There is a leaderboard in Duolingo; it motivates you.*" is consistent with the generally positive attitudes of female students toward mobile learning.

Grade Level and Openness to Out-of-Class Learning

Participation dynamics also varied by grade level. Ninth-grade students demonstrated higher motivation and confidence toward mobile learning. The Kruskal–Wallis test showed that 9th graders had more positive attitudes toward using mobile devices to extend learning outside the classroom ($H = 7.93$, $p < .05$) and toward confidence in learning new applications independently ($H = 8.67$, $p < .05$). This aligns with the technological affinity and lifestyle compatibility noted in the "Digital Tools" theme, particularly student Zari's remark: *"Our*

generation is the one that uses these tools the most." Ninth graders' openness and confidence toward technology support their active engagement in digital learning processes.

Figure 3

Grade Level Distribution

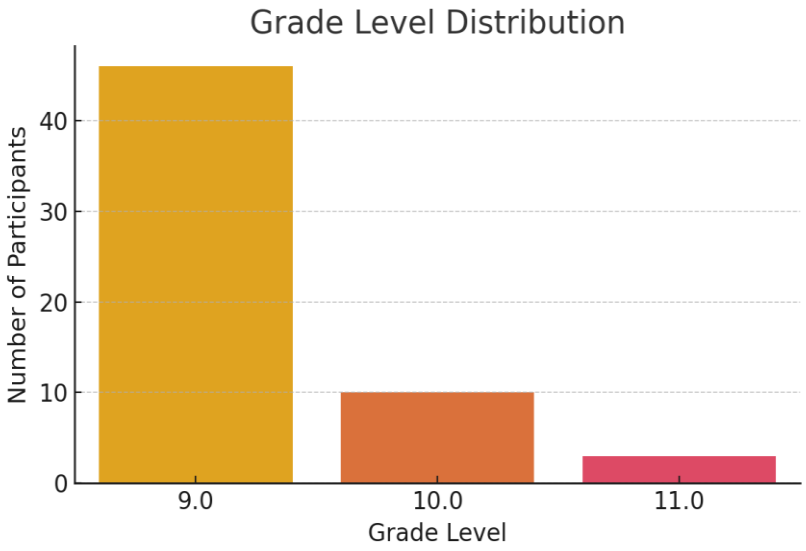
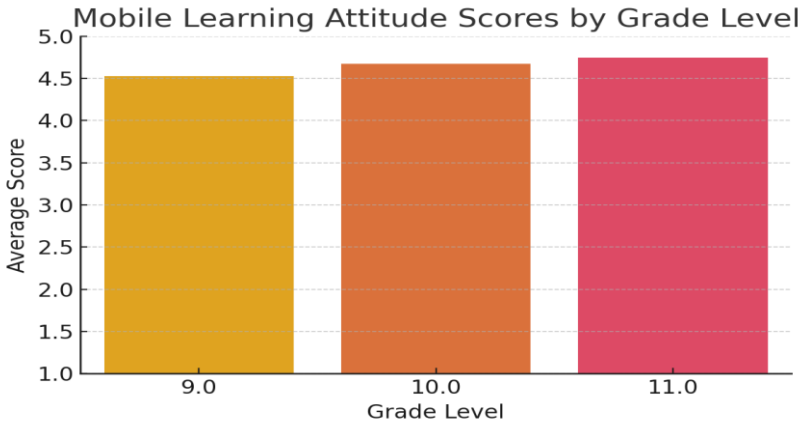


Figure 4

Mobile Learning Scores by Grade Level



Conceptual Relationship

The conceptual map reveals the relationships among core themes derived from the qualitative data and provides a structural understanding of how digital tools influence foreign language teaching and learning processes. At the center lies the theme *Digital Tools*, which plays a central role in shaping various dimensions of the educational experience.

Figure 5

Conceptual Map of Interrelations Between Themes

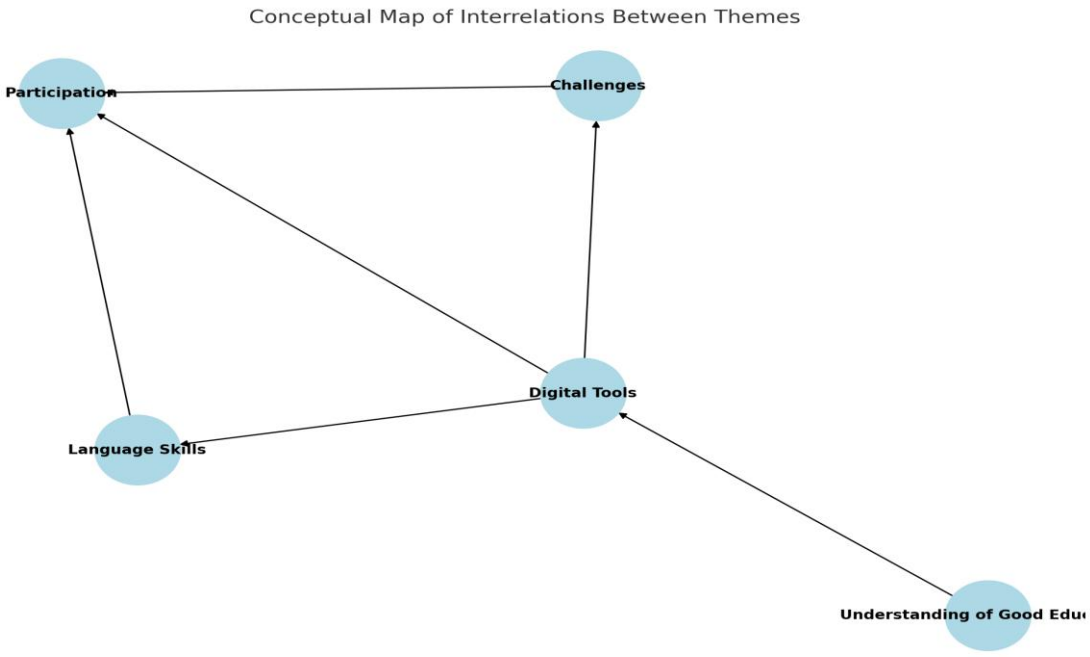


Figure 5 illustrates the inductive relationships between identified themes, showing how digital tools are conceptually linked to language skills, classroom participation, and challenges. The *Digital Tools* theme is directly linked to four others: Participation, Language Skills, Challenges, and Perception of Good Education. This indicates that digital tools support student participation and language skills development but also introduce certain challenges. Their integration also reshapes stakeholders' perceptions of what constitutes "good education." The reciprocal relationship between Participation and Challenges shows that digital tools can encourage engagement while also limiting it through barriers such as access problems or pedagogical misalignment. Similarly, the link between Language Skills and Participation demonstrates that developing linguistic competence through digital environments both enhances and relies on participation. Notably, *Perception of Good Education* is linked only to *Digital Tools*. This suggests that participants' shifting perceptions of educational quality are largely informed by their experiences with digital applications rather than traditional or external pedagogical frameworks.

Overall, the conceptual map illustrates a complex network of interactions: digital tools function not only as instructional resources but also as agents of change influencing educational values, participation dynamics, and skill acquisition processes. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the transformative potential of educational technology when aligned with pedagogical goals (e.g., Selwyn, 2012; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the perceived benefits and limitations of digital tools in foreign language education. Participants appreciated the motivational and engaging nature of such tools, especially in vocabulary learning and in fostering classroom participation. However, concerns were raised regarding technical and economic access barriers, and the limited efficacy in productive language skills like writing and speaking.The study also reveals that student engagement is often externally driven, pointing to a lack of intrinsic motivation in many learners. These insights align with self-determination theory (Li, 2023), which suggests that intrinsic motivation is key to sustainable learning. Overall, digital tools appear to complement but not replace traditional instruction. A balanced and equitable integration of digital platforms — addressing access gaps and pedagogical design — can enhance language education effectiveness and inclusivity (Evans & Matthew, 2012).

This study analyzed the impact of digital applications and traditional curricula in language learning via the perspectives of both teachers and students. Results showed that digital applications offer multiple benefits, particularly when it comes to increasing student motivation and building a more interactive and comfortable learning environment. Nonetheless, it turned out that traditional methods continued to be useful, particularly when teaching basic language skills. Traditional language learning methods, grounded in well-established pedagogical practices, provide significant advantages. Their structured curricula, real-time feedback, peer interactions, and cultural immersion foster a comprehensive learning experience (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). An effective language learning experience requires a balanced integration of both methods, based upon the opinions of both teachers and students. In order to better support the learning process, future studies could examine how digital tools can be used more effectively and how curriculum integration can be enhanced.

In order to increase participation and motivation in foreign language learning, it is recommended that digital applications be integrated more comprehensively into the curriculum as central elements of the learning process. While the traditional curriculum provides the foundation, it may not always be sufficient for students. Digital applications play an important role in closing this gap by supporting language learning through more interactive, personalized, and student-oriented content. This provides students with a more comfortable learning environment.

In addition, the digital applications to be used or developed should be compatible with general educational objectives and language proficiency frameworks (e.g., CEFR). These applications should support both receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing) skills. Blended learning models that combine face-to-face traditional education with digital components can offer a flexible, balanced, enjoyable, and effective learning environment by bringing together the advantages of both traditional and innovative methods. Collecting students' experiences and opinions about these digital applications at regular intervals through structured forms or focus group interviews will support the adaptation of these tools according to student needs and contribute to making the learning process more sustainable.

In conclusion, a transition toward a student-centered, digital language learning environment creates a more effective, motivating, and personalized educational experience. By developing digital tools in line with student needs, establishing regular feedback mechanisms, and maintaining pedagogical coherence, the learning process will become both more inclusive and more aligned with the linguistic and technological requirements of the 21st century. The findings of this study underscore both the strengths and limitations of digital tools in foreign language education. Participants consistently highlighted the motivational and engaging aspects of these tools, particularly in supporting vocabulary acquisition and increasing classroom participation. Such features were especially appreciated by students, who described digital applications as more enjoyable and interactive compared to traditional methods. However, significant concerns were raised regarding the accessibility of these tools. Technical barriers—such as unreliable internet connections or outdated devices—and economic limitations were frequently cited as obstacles, particularly within the context of Türkiye's secondary education system. Furthermore, while digital applications were found to be effective in receptive language skills (listening and reading), their impact on productive skills such as speaking and writing was perceived as limited. Participants noted a lack of opportunities for meaningful output and individualized feedback in these areas.

An important insight from the interviews was the observation that student engagement is often driven by external factors—such as gamification or teacher encouragement—rather than by intrinsic motivation. This finding resonates with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2024), which posits that intrinsic motivation is essential for long-term and meaningful learning. In this context, while digital tools may

initially capture learners' attention, their long-term effectiveness depends on how well they support autonomy, competence, and relatedness—key components of intrinsic motivation. Overall, the results suggest that digital tools can serve as valuable supplements to traditional instruction but are not sufficient as standalone solutions. Their successful integration into language education requires careful pedagogical planning, infrastructure support, and a curriculum that fosters both skill development and learner motivation. Addressing existing disparities in access and ensuring equitable use across different institutional settings will be essential for maximizing the potential of these technologies in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to increase participation and motivation in foreign language learning, it is recommended that digital applications be more comprehensively integrated into the curriculum as central elements of the learning process. While the traditional curriculum provides the foundation, it may not always be sufficient for students. Digital applications play an important role in addressing this gap. Supporting students in managing their own learning processes through digital tools encourages them to take responsibility for their learning. Customizable content and adaptive technologies have led to the development of applications that offer content tailored to students' levels. In this way, both learning efficiency is enhanced and clear goals are set for reaching desired proficiency levels.

Providing students with instant feedback allows them to identify and correct mistakes quickly, which is of great importance in fundamental language learning. In digital environments, teacher-student interaction evolves, and the teacher assumes the role of a guide or facilitator. Isolated knowledge about a technology and isolated knowledge about pedagogy are not sufficient to effectively integrate new technologies in the classroom as pointed out by Mishra and Koehler (2006), since teachers often lack the necessary media teaching skills (Bucher et al., 2020). This not only benefits the student but also significantly eases the teacher's workload. However, not all students may have equal access to digital tools, which may lead to disparities. As a solution, technology use in schools should be encouraged, and access to technological devices should be improved. Furthermore, in order for both students and teachers to use digital tools effectively, digital literacy and technology training must be widely promoted.

Additionally, the digital applications to be used or developed must align with general educational objectives and language proficiency frameworks (e.g., CEFR). These

applications should support both receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing) skills. While digital platforms offer flexibility, personalization, and accessibility, the structured guidance, cultural immersion, and interactive feedback inherent in traditional methods remain indispensable (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Warschauer, 2000). Blended learning models that combine face-to-face instruction with digital components can offer a flexible, balanced, enjoyable, and lasting learning environment by combining the advantages of both traditional and innovative methods.

In conclusion, transitioning to a student-centered digital language learning environment enables a more effective, motivating, and personalized educational experience. AI-powered platforms, gamification, and mobileassisted learning technologies create engaging and adaptive environments that cater to learners' needs (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020). Developing digital applications based on students' needs, establishing regular feedback mechanisms, and maintaining pedagogical coherence will make the learning process more inclusive and better aligned with the language and technological demands of the 21st century.

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