

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES AND ONLINE PLATFORMS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES: ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This article explores modern approaches to the integration of digital technologies and online platforms in the process of teaching English to students of technical specialties. It outlines the main advantages of using technologies, including increased student motivation, access to authentic materials, flexibility in the learning process, and the development of autonomous learning skills. At the same time, the article analyzes the key challenges faced by both instructors and learners, such as lack of technical resources, insufficient methodological training of teachers, and the risk of digital overload. In conclusion, it emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach and the continuous improvement of digital pedagogy.

Keywords: online learning, technical education, digital technologies, English language, language training, motivation, challenges.

Introduction

In the context of rapid technological advancement and the digitalization of education, the implementation of innovative tools in foreign language teaching has become particularly relevant. This issue is especially critical in technical universities, where students not only master engineering and applied sciences but also require a high level of English proficiency as the language of international scientific and professional communication. The use of online platforms, interactive applications, and multimedia resources allows the learning process to be adapted to students' individual needs, making it more flexible and modern.

1. Advantages of Using Technologies in English Language Teaching

1.1 Increasing Motivation and Engagement

Gamification tools such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, and the use of visual content (videos, infographics) enhance students' interest in learning. Modern students are "digital natives," and the familiar format of digital interaction contributes to their active participation and engagement.

1.2 Access to Authentic Materials

Resources like YouTube, TED Talks, Coursera, and academic platforms provide students with access to real, contemporary, and professionally oriented language. This promotes the development of reading, listening, and comprehension skills in professional contexts.

1.3 Flexibility and Individualization

Online courses (e.g., Moodle, Edmodo, Google Classroom) enable asynchronous learning, which is especially important for students involved in internships or project work. The ability to rewatch lectures and learn at their own pace encourages independent study.

1.4 Supports for Professional Orientation

Integrating technical vocabulary and simulating professional situations (such as project presentations or participation in online conferences) contributes to the formation of skills necessary for future engineers and IT specialists.

2. Key Challenges and Issues

2.1 Limited Technical Access

Not all students have access to appropriate devices or a stable internet connection, particularly in remote learning settings. This creates a digital divide.

2.2 Insufficient Teacher Training

English language proficiency and pedagogical skills do not always coincide with digital competence. Teachers require support, professional development courses, and access to methodological guidelines for using digital tools effectively.

2.3 Risk of Overload and Decreased Motivation

An excess of digital content and the constant need to stay online may lead to fatigue and reduced interest. It is essential to balance the workload and maintain live communication whenever possible.

2.4 Assessment and Knowledge Control Issues

Automated tests often fail to assess communicative skills adequately. Therefore, flexible and multi-level evaluation systems are needed, including portfolios, projects, peer reviews, and reflective tasks.

3. Practical Recommendations for Technology Integration

- Adopt a **blended learning approach**, combining online tools with traditional in-person classes.
- Implement **technical simulations**, project-based tasks, and real-world case studies.
- Encourage students to create **digital content** (blogs, video presentations, podcasts).
- Provide regular **feedback and monitoring** of the effectiveness of online tools.
- Join **professional networks** and teaching communities to share best practices.

Conclusion

The integration of digital technologies and online platforms into the English language teaching process in technical universities represents a pivotal shift in the educational paradigm of the 21st century. It not only modernizes the classroom experience but also aligns language learning with the realities of a digitally-driven global professional environment. For students of technical disciplines—future engineers, IT specialists, and scientists—proficiency in English is not merely an academic requirement but a vital skill for career advancement and international collaboration.

The advantages of technology-enhanced learning are undeniable. Through interactive platforms, gamification, and access to authentic and specialized content, students become active participants in their own learning journeys. Digital tools foster autonomous learning, support the acquisition of professional vocabulary,

and simulate real-life communication scenarios relevant to their future careers. Moreover, the flexibility provided by online environments meets the practical needs of technical students who often juggle academic, research, and project-based responsibilities.

However, the digital transformation of education is not without its complexities. A range of challenges—technological, pedagogical, and psychological—can hinder the effectiveness of these innovations if left unaddressed. The digital divide remains a significant concern, as does the preparedness of educators to implement and manage technology-rich instruction. Furthermore, without a well-structured pedagogical framework, excessive reliance on digital platforms may lead to cognitive overload, disengagement, or superficial learning.

Therefore, a balanced, evidence-based approach is essential. Technology should be viewed as a means to enhance—not replace—core educational principles. Effective implementation requires thoughtful instructional design, continuous teacher training, adequate technical infrastructure, and mechanisms for student support and feedback. Furthermore, institutional commitment to fostering digital literacy for both faculty and learners must be prioritized.

In conclusion, the use of technologies and online platforms in teaching English to technical university students is a promising strategy that, if executed strategically, can significantly improve language competence and professional readiness. It offers the potential to transform English language learning into a dynamic, relevant, and future-oriented process. However, its success depends on the thoughtful integration of tools, the adaptability of teaching practices, and the continuous evaluation of pedagogical outcomes in line with the evolving needs of students in technical fields.

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