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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MODERN ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES AND PLATFORMS IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. Leadership development has become an important objective of contemporary higher education, alongside the development of communicative and intercultural competence. Foreign language lessons provide opportunities for learners to practise decision-making, collaboration, public speaking, negotiation, critical thinking and responsibility in authentic communicative situations. This article examines how modern online technologies and educational platforms can support the development of these leadership-related competencies. Using a narrative review and comparative analysis of relevant research, it considers collaborative platforms, learning management systems, interactive response tools, gamified applications and videoconferencing environments. The article proposes practical principles for integrating digital platforms into foreign language instruction and identifies limitations that institutions should consider, including access, digital literacy, privacy and unequal participation.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, leadership skills, online learning, educational technology, collaborative learning, digital platforms, student autonomy, communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language education is increasingly expected to prepare learners not only to communicate accurately but also to participate effectively in academic, professional and social life. In this context, leadership is best understood as a set of learnable behaviours rather than a fixed personal quality. These behaviours include setting shared goals, initiating discussion, listening to others, making informed decisions, resolving disagreements, delegating tasks and accepting responsibility for collective outcomes. Language lessons are particularly suitable for practising such behaviours because learners must use language to exchange information, explain positions and coordinate action.

Digital technologies have expanded the range of ways in which these learning experiences can be organised. Shared documents, virtual noticeboards, learning management systems, online polling, quiz applications and videoconferencing tools allow students to collaborate synchronously and asynchronously. They can also give quieter learners additional channels for contributing ideas and enable teachers to observe group processes more systematically. A review of research on technology-supported language learning and twenty-first-century skills reports that digital tools have been used to connect language practice with communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy [1]. Research on Padlet has likewise reported positive effects on communication and collaboration in particular EFL contexts, while also indicating that results are context-dependent [2].

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Nevertheless, the presence of technology does not automatically create a leadership-oriented classroom. If students merely answer individual quiz questions or watch online materials, opportunities to lead, negotiate and take responsibility may remain limited. Therefore, online platforms should be selected according to the pedagogical purpose of an activity, not simply because they are new or engaging. The purpose of this article is to analyse the potential effectiveness of modern online technologies in developing leadership skills through foreign language teaching, identify practical uses of selected platform types, and formulate recommendations for educators.

METHODS

This article employs a narrative literature review and comparative pedagogical analysis. Relevant scholarly publications on technology-supported language learning, collaborative learning, learner engagement and digital classroom tools were examined. Particular attention was paid to research discussing Padlet, Kahoot!, Mentimeter, online collaborative documents, learning management systems and videoconferencing. The sources were compared according to the skills addressed, the forms of learner interaction they support, and the implications for leadership-oriented language activities.

The analysis was organised around five dimensions:

1) communication and public expression;
2) collaboration and shared responsibility;
3) decision-making and problem-solving;
4) initiative, autonomy and project management;
5) reflection, feedback and accountability.

These dimensions were used as an analytical framework rather than as a validated psychometric scale. Since the article synthesises published research and does not report a new classroom experiment, no original participant sample, intervention data or statistical effect sizes are claimed. The conclusions should therefore be interpreted as a research-informed pedagogical synthesis that can guide future empirical studies.

RESULTS

1. Collaborative platforms and shared responsibility

Collaborative platforms such as Padlet and shared online documents can make group thinking visible. Learners can post ideas, comment on peers' contributions, organise evidence and jointly prepare presentations or written products. In a foreign language lesson, a teacher might ask small groups to investigate a social issue, compare viewpoints and publish a short recommendation in English. Students can rotate roles such as facilitator, language editor, evidence checker, timekeeper and presenter. Each role creates a manageable opportunity to practise a leadership behaviour while ensuring that leadership is not monopolised by the most confident speaker.

Research on Web 2.0 tools in EFL education has reported that Padlet-supported collaborative activities can positively influence learners' perceived communication and collaboration skills [3]. The broader literature also describes online collaborative tasks that connect language practice with problem-solving, creativity and digital literacy [4]. These findings support the use of shared digital spaces as a means of structuring interaction. However, the platform itself does not ensure equal contribution. Teachers should establish individual accountability—for example, requiring every learner to submit one evidence-based contribution and provide feedback to another group.

2. Interactive response tools and learner voice

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Tools such as Mentimeter and similar audience-response systems allow students to submit short answers, vote on options, rank proposals or respond to a prompt. These functions are useful for developing leadership because effective leaders need to elicit opinions, interpret group preferences and justify decisions. For example, students can anonymously rank possible solutions to a community problem, discuss why the results differ, and then agree on a final recommendation in English. Anonymous responses may help learners who are hesitant to speak publicly contribute before the discussion moves to oral interaction.

Research on Mentimeter in synchronous online classes has examined its role in student engagement and the ways interactive response systems can support participation [5]. Engagement is an important precondition for leadership practice, but it should not be treated as equivalent to leadership competence. To move beyond participation, teachers need follow-up tasks in which students interpret results, facilitate a discussion, defend a proposal and reflect on how the group reached its decision.

3. Gamification and formative assessment

Gamified tools such as Kahoot! can provide rapid formative feedback on vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. They can increase energy and give teachers immediate information about misunderstandings. In leadership-oriented lessons, the activity can be extended beyond individual competition: teams may explain their reasoning, create questions for classmates, or appoint a rotating spokesperson to summarise the group's strategy. This shifts the emphasis from speed and winning towards shared learning, explanation and responsible coordination.

Chen's classroom-based study of EFL learners' perceptions of lessons incorporating Kahoot! and Padlet suggests that learners may respond positively to lessons that combine interactive assessment with collaboration. Yet gamification needs careful design. If scores and speed are overemphasised, confident or technologically experienced learners may dominate, while others become passive. Teachers should balance quizzes with cooperative challenges, explanatory discussion and reflection on how the team worked together.

4. Learning management systems and project-based learning

Learning management systems, including Moodle and comparable environments, can organise project instructions, resources, deadlines, discussion forums and assessment criteria in one place. Such systems are particularly useful for longer projects in which students must plan work over several lessons. A possible project is to design an English-language digital campaign promoting environmental responsibility, cultural heritage or healthy study habits. Teams define their audience, allocate tasks, gather information, prepare a script, produce a presentation and respond to peer questions.

Project-based tasks create natural opportunities for leadership because learners must turn a broad goal into a sequence of actions. They practise setting milestones, monitoring progress, managing disagreements and revising plans. Digital task boards or shared calendars can help groups assign owners and deadlines, while collaborative documents provide a record of revisions. The teacher's role is to scaffold the process, monitor participation and intervene when responsibilities are unevenly distributed—not to make every decision on behalf of the group.

5. Videoconferencing and oral leadership

Videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams can support online debates, role-plays, simulations, interviews and student-led briefings. These activities allow learners to practise opening a meeting, introducing an agenda, inviting contributions, summarising opposing views and

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closing with agreed actions. Breakout rooms can be used for small-group preparation, followed by a plenary session in which a student chairperson reports the group's conclusions. Asynchronous voice or video recordings can offer additional rehearsal time for learners who need it.

To make these activities pedagogically meaningful, teachers should assess both language performance and the process of leadership. A clear rubric may include clarity of expression, active listening, evidence-based reasoning, inclusive facilitation, task completion and reflection. This avoids judging leadership solely by fluency, confidence or the amount of time a student speaks.

DISCUSSION

The literature-based analysis indicates that the main value of online technologies lies in the learning processes they make possible: shared production, visible contributions, rapid feedback, flexible communication and sustained project coordination. Different tools support different dimensions of leadership. Collaborative boards and shared documents are especially useful for collective planning and co-authoring; interactive response tools help gather and interpret opinions; gamified quizzes can support formative checking; learning management systems support continuity and accountability; and videoconferencing provides opportunities for oral facilitation and negotiation. The most appropriate choice depends on the learning objective, students' proficiency, available infrastructure and the teacher's capacity to design purposeful tasks.

An important implication is that leadership development should be embedded in language objectives rather than treated as an unrelated extra. For example, a debate can target modal verbs for recommendations and the language of agreement and disagreement while also requiring students to listen actively and reach a collective decision. A group presentation can develop persuasive language while requiring students to divide responsibilities and evaluate their own teamwork. In this way, language learning and leadership practice reinforce one another.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. Access to devices and stable internet connections is uneven, and some learners may need support with digital literacy. Online communication can also make it easier for some students to withdraw or for others to dominate. Privacy, data protection, accessibility and platform terms should be considered before tools are adopted. Furthermore, positive engagement or self-reported collaboration does not necessarily demonstrate long-term leadership growth. Future research should use mixed methods, include pre- and post-intervention measures, compare different instructional designs, and examine whether leadership behaviours transfer to new academic or professional situations.

CONCLUSION

Modern online technologies can provide valuable conditions for developing leadership skills in foreign language teaching when they are integrated into structured, collaborative and reflective learning activities. Their educational value is not determined by the number of applications used, but by the quality of tasks and the opportunities students receive to initiate ideas, make decisions, coordinate work, communicate persuasively and take responsibility for shared outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to combine platforms according to clear learning goals, rotate leadership roles, establish individual accountability and assess both language learning and teamwork. A balanced approach—combining digital tools with purposeful teacher guidance and face-to-face interaction where possible—offers a practical route towards developing communicatively competent, independent and responsible learners.

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