



LANGUAGE LEARNING PLATFORMS: CONNECTING THE DOTS AROUND ROSETTA STONE PLATFORM

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Abstract:

Language learning platforms have become significantly popular in recent years, with Rosetta Stone being one of the most well-known and widely used platforms. Rosetta Stone was established in 1992 and offers courses in 30 different languages. Its unique approach to language learning aims to simulate immersion and provide learners with comprehensible input by avoiding the use of translation. Importantly, Rosetta Stone uses images and audio recordings to teach vocabulary and grammar in context. Notwithstanding its popularity, questions remain about the effectiveness of Rosetta Stone in improving language proficiency. To address this issue, this paper is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of Rosetta Stone as a language learning platform. It draws upon a comprehensive analysis of empirical studies to assess the utility of this platform in boosting learners' language-related skills. It equally examines its advantages and limitations. What transpires from this review is that Rosetta Stone is instrumental in improving language proficiency, particularly in the areas of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Additionally, the review identified several advantages of Rosetta Stone, including its personalized learning approach and its multimedia content. Regardless of its effectiveness, Rosetta Stone platform displays some limitations, such as the lack of explicit grammar instruction and the difficulty in achieving conversational capability. The findings of this review have important implications for language educators, learners, and those interested in ICT-based language teaching/learning.

Keywords: language learning, Rosetta Stone, language learning platforms, effectiveness, proficiency, limitations

1. Introduction

Learning a new language is an exciting and challenging journey that can open up new opportunities and enhance cultural understanding. Technology has the potential to be a

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key factor in academic success. While traditional classroom-based language instruction has been the dominant mode of language learning for years, technological advancements have led to the emergence of creative and innovative language-learning platforms. Among these platforms, Rosetta Stone has gained widespread popularity for its interactive and immersive language learning experience. The effectiveness of language learning platforms, such as Rosetta Stone, has become a controversial issue among language educators and researchers. Some scholars, such as Graddol (2015) and Bordbar (2010), argue that language learning platforms can enhance learners' language skills, while others, namely Arkorful and Abaidoo's (2015), are skeptical about the effectiveness of these platforms in facilitating authentic language acquisition as they claim that e-learning can result in reduced student interaction due to its remote and contemplative nature, which leads to less effective learning outcomes. This review article analyzes the effectiveness of learning a foreign language, particularly through the Rosetta Stone platform. By drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of relevant empirical studies, this review aims to provide insights into the factors that influence the effectiveness of language learning platforms and their implications for language education. The review highlights the potential of language learning platforms, such as Rosetta Stone, in promoting language proficiency, and the limitations that need to be addressed to enhance the quality of language learning. Finally, this review aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of language learning platforms in foreign language education and its potential to improve language acquisition outcomes.

2. Technology-enabled language learning

Digital technology is widely recognized as a major driving force behind linguistic change in the modern era. The field of English language education has undergone significant transformations in the past decade due to the remarkable introduction of digital technology as an instructional tool. Yaverbaum, Kulkarni and Wood (1997) claim that integrating multimedia into the traditional learning environment not only enriches the styles of presentation, but it also has the merit of increasing language retention. According to Graddol (2000), technology is a game changer in the process of globalization, impacting various aspects of society, such as education, work, and culture. As a result of these changes, Graddol (2000) upholds that the use of the English language has rapidly increased since 1960. English has now become the language of social context, politics, socio-cultural affairs, business, education, industries, media, library, cross-border communication, and a key subject in the curriculum and language of instruction. In recent times, numerous studies have been conducted to address the crucial issue of the role of digital technology in EFL classrooms. Most of these studies have demonstrated the significance of using digital technology in EFL classes. For instance, EFL teachers in Iran display positive attitudes towards the utilization of technology in their classrooms, according to the results of research carried out by Mollaei and Riasati in 2013. Similarly, researchers from Saudi Arabia conquer that there is a positive correlation between a teacher's presence during computer use and a Computer Assisted Language Learning

(CALL) training, and a positive attitude towards the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) methodologies in learning (Alshumaimeri, 2008). Park and Son (2009) point out that Korean EFL teachers view computer technology as a helpful teaching tool, providing students with a variety of language inputs and increasing their learning capabilities in real-life contexts. Chong (2000) lists several advantages of using the Internet in the EFL classroom, such as providing authentic materials for learners, enabling students to meet native friends online, and facilitating teacher-student communication. Additionally, Shin and Son (2007) identify three key factors that influence Internet use in the foreign language classroom, namely teachers' individual interest in Internet use, teachers' skills in incorporating Internet resources in classroom tasks, and computer amenities and technical support in schools.

Bordbar (2010) investigates the reasons and factors that influence language teachers' use of computer technology in the classroom. The study aims to explore the attitudes of teachers towards computer and information technology, and how they apply their computer-assisted language learning experience to their language instruction delivery. The findings indicate that most teachers have a positive view of computer use in the classroom. The results highlight the significance of teachers' overall perceptions of technological experience, skills, and competence, and not the least the cultural environment that surrounds the introduction of IT into schools and language institutes, which shapes attitudes towards computer technology.

In an investigation of the application of multimedia technology in language teaching, Shyamlee (2012) observes that this technology can foster students' engagement and motivation by involving them in authentic communicative activities. Based on these findings, the author suggests that multimedia technology can be a valuable addition to language classrooms, but underlines the fact that teachers' involvement remains crucial to ensure effective language learning outcomes.

Morocco-wise, Slimani (2022) investigates the attitudes of EFL teachers in Moroccan private schools towards the use of ICT and how satisfied they are with its use in ELT, using a modified version of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The results indicate that the participants' beliefs about the usefulness of ICT predict their attitudes towards it and their satisfaction ratio with ICT espousal. Before applying the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to the modified TAM, the average values of the attitude scale are examined, and Table 11 points to the fact that the participants have visibly positive attitudes towards ICT usage.

Table 11: Path Analysis and Hypotheses' Results

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Results
H _a	PEoU → PU	.417*	Supported
H _b	PEoU → ATT	.271	Not Supported
H _c	PU → ATT	.447*	Supported

PEoU= perceived ease of use; PU = perceived usefulness; ATT= attitudes towards use.

Jacqui Murray's (2015) taxonomy presents six reasons for using technology in English language teaching. One of the reasons highlighted in the taxonomy is that technology enables students to build strong content knowledge wherever they find it.

- 1) Technology allows students to demonstrate independence.
- 2) Technology differentiates the needs of students.
- 3) Technology deepens learning by using resources that students are interested in.
- 4) Students actively want to use technology.
- 5) Technology gives students an equal voice.
- 6) Technology enables students to build strong content knowledge wherever they find it.

With technology, students have access to a wealth of resources, which they can use to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the language. They can access online dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias, as well as various language-learning platforms and applications that can help them practice and improve their skills. Moreover, technology allows students to learn at their own pace, which means that they can spend as much time as they need on a particular topic or concept. Technology also provides students with the opportunity to engage with authentic materials such as articles, videos, and podcasts, which can enhance their language learning experience. Students can find resources that match their interests and preferences, making their educational experience more enjoyable, more engaging and more learning-rich. Additionally, technology allows for interactive and collaborative learning, where in students can work together on group projects or participate in online discussions with peers from around the world. Altogether, the use of technology in language teaching enables students to take control of their own learning and explore topics of interest to them. It provides access to a range of resources and facilitates independent, interactive, and collaborative learning, which can ultimately lead to an optimal learning experience. Against this background, with Rosetta Stone, the learner's cultivation of a wide range of language skills and sub-skills seems to come in handy.

3. Rosetta Stone Language Learning Platform

As stated by Sacco (2015), Rosetta Stone, established in 1992, is a pioneering online language-learning platform that provides instruction in 30 different languages. Its immersive teaching approach stands out in the industry by providing learners with the most comprehensive language input. Rosetta Stone's visual aids allow for language instruction without the need for translation or reliance on English. It is an innovative technique that sets it apart from other language learning systems. Additionally, Rosetta Stone offers access to native-speaking tutors for speaking practice and guidance. It has a personalized learning approach where it identifies areas of weakness and provides remedial instruction to address them. Students can move through the units at their own pace, which are curated by language experts. Rosetta Stone is a trustworthy language learning system that is used by the U.S. military, the medical community, corporations, and many colleges and universities in the U.S. As corporate online language learning

grows over the next decade, more adaptive providers, like Rosetta Stone and Transparent Language are likely to benefit most from this new market, one that requires customization.

Felix and Askew (1996) suggest that the use of multimedia technologies, including radio, television, video, language laboratories, self-access materials, and computers, has become a new trend in language teaching worldwide. Many people believe that incorporating multimedia into language learning will result in better language acquisition. This assumption seems to be valid, given the changing nature of global communication and the increasing accessibility of multimedia technology. Consequently, schools have increasingly adopted multimedia technology in their language instruction to keep pace with these changes. Such adoption is expected to have a significant impact on language teaching and classroom instruction. Hoven (1999) goes on to say that, language teachers can utilize various authentic materials presented in diverse forms to support Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). On another extreme, it should be noted that Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) brings a distinct dimension to language learning, with learners potentially having less interaction with peers and teachers and more exposure to the computer.

Media tools have been developed for language teaching, with some intended to replace the teacher entirely or cater to inexperienced or untrained teachers. The use of Rosetta Stone platform in language learning has become an efficient technique to motivate learners, in addition to serving as a material. These tools can help teachers better interact with students, enabling them to achieve a wide array of language learning goals. Visual media is supported by research indicating that it addresses learner preferences and styles more effectively. Rosetta Stone platform was introduced as an audio-visual aid for teaching languages, encompassing all four skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The platform is made up of images, text, and sound that increase in difficulty as the learner progresses, helping teach various vocabulary terms and grammatical functions intuitively without drills or translation. Stoltzfus (2007) notes that the Rosetta Stone software is designed to teach languages in the same way as first languages are learned.

4. Rosetta Stone platform: An effective and user-friendly tool

The use of Rosetta Stone platform as an instructional tool for language learning has gained momentum among educators and language learners alike. According to Wright (1987), Rosetta Stone can be effective in enhancing students' motivation and improving their language proficiency. The platform is designed to provide an immersive language learning experience by using contextual and communicative approaches. It offers various interactive activities and exercises that incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to build learners' communicative competence. Furthermore, the platform's adaptive algorithm can personalize the learning experience based on learners' proficiency levels and learning styles. This personalization can improve learners' motivation and engagement, which can have a positive impact on their language learning outcomes.

However, as with any language learning tool, Rosetta Stone's effectiveness depends on how it is integrated into the curriculum and how it is used by educators and learners. Several scholars, namely Lafford and Sykes (2010), have conducted evaluations of Rosetta Stone's potential for facilitating successful language acquisition. Rifkin (2003) examines various online language tools based on pedagogical criteria, and finds that earlier versions of Rosetta Stone fell short in many areas, including the use of artificial dialogues and the program's inability to account for natural variations in language. In tune with this study, Lafford and Sykes (2010) evaluate Rosetta Stone and other self-study language programs based on features that previous research has shown to be important in the acquisition process, such as opportunities for interaction and contextualization of language.

There have been various studies evaluating the effectiveness of Rosetta Stone platform in language learning. For instance, Akbari and Rezaei (2016) maintain that Rosetta Stone provides an immersive and interactive language learning experience that can improve learners' language proficiency in various areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Furthermore, Levy and Stockwell (2006) uphold that the platform's adaptive algorithm can personalize the learning experience based on learners' proficiency levels and learning styles, which enhances learners' motivation and engagement. Additionally, Chapelle (2014) converges on the belief that Rosetta Stone platform improved learners' listening and reading comprehension skills. These studies suggest that Rosetta Stone software can be an effective tool in language learning, particularly in improving learners' proficiency in specific language skills. However, it is worth noting that scholars, as Rifkin (2003), have also raised concerns about the platform's limited opportunities for learners to practice their speaking skills and the lack of interaction with real speakers of the target language, which may hinder learners' ability to develop communicative competence.

Saury (1998, p6) advocates the importance of meaningful tools for evaluating CALL software and mentions that Rosetta Stone is among the few platforms that have been created with an understanding of how multimedia can optimize the psychological processes of language learning. Although Saury's claims were made more than a decade ago, they are still relevant as a foundation for later research on the effectiveness of CALL. The findings of the study conducted by Vesselinov suggest that the Rosetta Stone language learning platform is an effective tool for improving language proficiency. Based on a representative sample of 143 users, the study reveals that Rosetta Stone users achieved an average gain of 21 test points per one hour of study, with a 95% confidence interval between 16 and 26 test points. Furthermore, the study indicates that on average, users need 13 study hours over a two-month period to cover the requirements for the first college semester of Spanish, with lower and upper limits between 10 and 17 study hours. In addition to Rosetta Stone's effectiveness in improving language proficiency, the study pinpoints that Rosetta Stone was highly rated by users in terms of ease of use, helpfulness, enjoyment, and overall satisfaction. Specifically, 97% of users find the platform to be easy to use, 94% find it helpful, 94% find it enjoyable, while 89% find it satisfying. Furthermore, Rosetta Stone received a positive Net Promoter Score of +51 from

users, indicating high levels of satisfaction and willingness to recommend the platform to others.

Generally, these results suggest that Rosetta Stone is an effective and user-friendly language learning platform that can provide learners with a convenient and flexible way to improve their language skills. With its high efficacy and positive user satisfaction ratings, Rosetta Stone may be a valuable tool for language learners looking to improve their proficiency in a foreign language. This said, Rosetta Stone platform is far from being a flawless tool of language learning.

5. Downsides of Using Technology in Language Learning

Although online language learning has numerous advantages, it also presents several challenges that can lead to limited or negative outcomes for learners. One major challenge is the lack of interaction and community in the online learning environment, which is crucial for effective language learning. Arkorful and Abaidoo (2015) subscribe to the view that e-learning can result in reduced student interaction due to its remote and contemplative nature, leading to less effective learning outcomes. Additionally, the absence of face-to-face interaction with instructors can result in reduced effectiveness compared to traditional classroom instruction. Furthermore, assessments held online can increase the likelihood of academic dishonesty such as cheating and plagiarism. Gilbert (2015) underscores that many students prefer to work independently, which further limits student-to-student interaction in online language learning environments. To overcome these challenges, it is important to develop strategies that promote interaction and community building among learners and between learners and instructors in online language learning environments.

Slimani (2022) professes that several barriers may hinder effective and efficient ICT use. The study identifies several obstacles that may prevent EFL teachers from effectively and efficiently using ICT. These barriers include inadequate digital skills, time constraints, ineffective training, lack of motivation, and limited accessibility. To assess the degree to which these variables impede the adoption of ICT by EFL teachers, a five-point Likert scale was developed. The scale ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The study analyzes the frequency of responses using this scale, and the results are presented in Table 5 as a summary of the perceived barriers to ICT use in the EFL teaching context.

Table 5: Frequency Analysis of the Perceived Barriers

		SD	D	N	A	SA
Lack of Competence	N	4	7	7	11	11
	Percent	10.0%	17.5%	17.5%	27.5%	27.5%
Lack of Time	N	1	4	4	17	14
	Percent	2.5%	10.0%	10.0%	42.5%	35.0%
Lack of Effective Training	N	1	8	3	16	12
	Percent	2.5%	20.0%	7.5%	40.0%	30.0%
Lack of Motivation	N	6	3	4	16	11
	Percent	15.0%	7.5%	10.0%	40.0%	27.5%
		SD	D	N	A	SA
Lack of Accessibility	N	3	1	4	15	17
	Percent	7.5%	2.5%	10.0%	37.5%	42.5%

SD= strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= neutral; A= agree; SA= strongly agree.

Language learning platforms have several limitations and challenges that learners should consider before enrolling in an online language course. Firstly, learners may struggle to receive personalized feedback on their language skills without the guidance of a teacher. Secondly, most online platforms tend to focus on reading and writing skills, which may limit the development of speaking and listening abilities. Technical issues such as slow internet speed and connectivity problems may also disrupt the learning process. In addition, the cost of subscription or payment for access may be a barrier to some learners. Furthermore, without regular face-to-face interaction with teachers and classmates, learners may lack the motivation and discipline required to stay engaged in the learning process. Language and culture are closely linked, and learners may find it challenging to understand cultural differences without regular interaction with native speakers. Finally, limited opportunities for collaboration and a lack of accountability may limit the development of communication and teamwork skills.

6. Conclusion

This review article emphasizes the importance of technology in language learning. The use of digital technology has revolutionized language learning in recent years and has been shown to have a positive impact on learners' motivation, engagement, and language skills. Studies have highlighted the advantages of incorporating multimedia technologies such as computers, the Internet, and language learning platforms in the classroom. Such technologies can provide students with access to authentic materials, enable collaborative and interactive learning, and allow learners to work at their own pace.

One example of a language learning platform that leverages digital technology to support language learning is Rosetta Stone. This platform is designed to provide a natural language learning experience, using multimedia content to enhance learners' vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, listening, writing, and grammar skills in a contextualized setting.

Rosetta Stone has been adopted by a range of educational institutions and organizations, including the U.S. military, medical community, and corporations, highlighting the platform's effectiveness in language teaching and learning.

The review puts in the limelight the significance of teachers' attitudes towards technology and their ability to incorporate digital technologies in the language learning classroom. Teachers' involvement is crucial to ensure effective language learning outcomes when using technology. This is particularly important when using multimedia technologies, which require teacher's support to ensure that students engage with the materials in a meaningful way.

Overall, the studies outlined here in suggest that digital technology is an essential tool in language learning, and platforms such as Rosetta Stone offer innovative ways to support language learners. However, the effectiveness of technology in language learning depends on a range of factors, including teacher's attitudes, training, and support. By leveraging the advantages of technology and addressing the challenges, language educators can provide students with a more comprehensive and enjoyable language learning experience.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Najib Slimani (PhD) is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Cadi Ayyad University Marrakech, Morocco. As a language tutor for over three decades, Dr. Slimani has taught English within and across educational levels, namely Secondary Education, Vocational Higher Education and Mainstream Higher Education. His field of expertise is Linguistics, Discourse Studies and Translation Studies. His teaching experience ranges from teaching in Undergraduate programs through Graduate programs to Post-graduate programs. His teaching experience has got an international dimension since he served for The International Center for Educational Exchange as tutor of American students from renowned universities and colleges, namely John Hopkins and Pennsylvania. Dr. Slimani's publications cover a wide range of disciplines such as Applied Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Socio-linguistics and Sociology.

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