A STUDY ON THE USE OF EDTECH TOOLS TO ENHANCE GRADE 8 STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

Phung Thi Thu Hien[1*], Bui Thi Huong Giang[2]
[1]*Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School, Thai Nguyen city*
[2]*Thai Nguyen University*

ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Received:	13/5/2022	This research was conducted at Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School in Thai Nguyen city, where most of the students are supported learning devices, including high-tech tools such as smartphones, computers, tablets, and laptops. The school year 2021-2022 is the third one in which teachers and students have to face the COVID-19 pandemic, so there have been a lot of online lessons to be done. The research, therefore, focuses on the use of EdTech tools to increase grade 8 students' motivation in learning English at Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School. By using four different tools of EdTech, the researcher set out to investigate whether these EdTech tools enhance student motivation to learn, and if so, to what extent. The research described a cycle of action research conducted on eighty-four students in grade 8. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and students' diaries. The research results showed that the use of EdTech tools increased the students' motivation in learning English in the classes at school and in online lessons significantly. Some pedagogical implications are also suggested in the hope of assisting Vietnamese teachers in teaching and increasing learners' interest in learning English.
Revised:	07/6/2022	
Published:	07/6/2022	
KEYWORDS		
EdTech tool		
Motivation		
Enhance		
Increase		
Learning English		

This research was conducted at Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School in Thai Nguyen city, where most of the students are supported learning devices, including high-tech tools such as smartphones, computers, tablets, and laptops. The school year 2021-2022 is the third one in which teachers and students have to face the COVID-19 pandemic, so there have been a lot of online lessons to be done. The research, therefore, focuses on the use of EdTech tools to increase grade 8 students' motivation in learning English at Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School. By using four different tools of EdTech, the researcher set out to investigate whether these EdTech tools enhance student motivation to learn, and if so, to what extent. The research described a cycle of action research conducted on eighty-four students in grade 8. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and students' diaries. The research results showed that the use of EdTech tools increased the students' motivation in learning English in the classes at school and in online lessons significantly. Some pedagogical implications are also suggested in the hope of assisting Vietnamese teachers in teaching and increasing learners' interest in learning English.

NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÔNG CỤ EDTECH ĐỂ TĂNG ĐỘNG LỰC HỌC TIẾNG ANH CỦA HỌC SINH LỚP 8 TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG TRUNG HỌC CƠ SỞ CỦA TỈNH THÁI NGUYÊN

Phùng Thị Thu Hiền[1*], Bùi Thị Hương Giang[2]
[1]*Trường Trung học cơ sở Tân Thịnh, Thái Nguyên*
[2]*Đại học Thái Nguyên*

THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài:	13/5/2022	Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện tại trường Trung học cơ sở Tân Thịnh, thành phố Thái Nguyên, nơi hầu hết học sinh có các thiết bị học tập là các công cụ công nghệ cao như điện thoại thông minh, máy tính, máy tính bảng và máy tính xách tay. Năm học 2021-2022 là năm thứ ba thầy và trò Nhà trường phải đối mặt với đại dịch Covid-19 nên đã có rất nhiều tiết học trực tuyến. Nghiên cứu tập trung vào việc sử dụng các công cụ EdTech để tăng động lực học tiếng Anh của học sinh lớp 8 tại trường Trung học cơ sở Tân Thịnh. Bằng cách sử dụng bốn công cụ EdTech khác nhau, nhà nghiên cứu đặt ra mục tiêu điều tra xem các công cụ EdTech này có thực sự làm tăng động lực học tập của học sinh không và nếu có tăng thì tăng ở mức độ nào. Nghiên cứu mô tả một chu kỳ nghiên cứu hành động được thực hiện trên 84 học sinh lớp 8. Dữ liệu sẽ được thu thập thông qua bảng câu hỏi, phỏng vấn và nhật ký của học sinh. Kết quả của nghiên cứu cho thấy việc sử dụng các công cụ EdTech đã làm tăng động lực học tiếng Anh của học sinh trong các tiết học trực tiếp ở trường cũng như trong các bài học trực tuyến một cách đáng kể. Một số gợi ý cũng được đề xuất với hy vọng hỗ trợ giáo viên Việt Nam trong việc giảng dạy và tăng hứng thú học tiếng Anh của người học.
Ngày hoàn thiện:	07/6/2022	
Ngày đăng:	07/6/2022	
TỪ KHÓA		
Công cụ EdTech		
Động lực		
Nâng cao		
Tăng lên		
Học tiếng Anh		

* Corresponding author. *Email: phunghiencn@gmail.com*

1. Introduction

The importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken [1]. English has increasingly become important in many fields, including medicine, engineering, and education [2]. Vietnam, in particular, as a developing country, needs to use this global language to demonstrate its international power. The Ministry of Education and Training has paid more attention than ever before to teaching and learning foreign languages, particularly English. It is strongly stated in the project titled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, 2008-2020," also known as the "National Foreign Languages Project 2020." After that, the Prime Minister approved the adjustment and supplementation of the project of teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system for the period 2017-2025 by the decision 2080/QD-TTG dated December 22, 2017.

Many students in Viet Nam find it difficult while learning English, which is known as a compulsory subject at schools. Moreover, the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic is currently taking place very complicatedly. Most schools across the country are closed and students have to study online [3]. Sitting online continuously for many hours in front of electronic devices makes them tired, and lose concentration and interest. So what can help the students learn English better? Motivation, without a doubt, is the key to any learning [4]. It can be said that learning motivation is the decisive factor for the active participation of students in the teaching process. It also helps students improve their behavior problems and create a positive learning environment. [5]. This study aims at investigating the use of features of four EdTech tools, namely Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid in the classroom which contribute to enhancing students' motivation to learn English with two questions that need to be answered:

1. Do grade 8 students enhance motivation as a result of using Edtech tools in learning English?

2. To what extent does the use of Edtech tools affect grade 8 students' motivation in English learning?

1.1. Motivation

The motivation was inspired by the Latin term "Move," which means "movement" for the first time and is an English word. Motivation is a force that causes people to behave in particular ways, and from the perspective of management, the goal of creating motivation in employees is to have behavior that brings the greatest benefits to the organization. Motivation is vital in language learning[6]. Students who have high motivation are seemed to learn more quickly than students who have low motivation [7]. As a result, motivation should be regarded as one of the most important factors to consider when researching second or foreign language motivation.

1.2. EdTech Tools

EdTech (a combination of "education" and "technology") refers to hardware and software designed to enhance teacher-led learning in classrooms and improve students' education outcomes [8]. Edtech is the practice of introducing IT tools into the classroom to create a more engaging, inclusive, and individualized learning experience [9].

There are thousands of EdTech tools available to improve the experiences of students, teachers, and administrators. But within the limitation of the study, only four EdTech tools (Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrip) were chosen.

1.3. Action Research

Action research is an approach to educational research that is commonly used by educational practitioners and professionals to examine, and ultimately improve, their pedagogy and practice. In this way, action research represents an extension of the reflection and critical self-reflection that an educator employs daily in their classroom. When students are actively engaged in learning, the classroom can be dynamic and uncertain, demanding the constant attention of the

educator. Considering these demands, educators are often only able to engage in fleeting reflection, and for accommodation, modification, or formative assessment. Action research offers one path to more deliberate, substantial, and critical reflection that can be documented and analyzed to improve an educator's practice [10].

2. Research Method

Action research with qualitative and quantitative methods was used in this study. The first tool was the quantitative method from questionnaires and the rest tools were the qualitative method from students' diaries and interviews. In this study, the author followed Kurt Lewin's model action research [11]. The action research was conducted with 84 students in 2 classes at Tan Thinh Lower Secondary School, Thai Nguyen city. The study focused on using EdTech tools in enhancing grade 8 students' motivation in English learning.

3. Finding and discussion

3.1. Results of the questionnaires

The quantitative method was applied to questionnaires. The items on the questionnaire were mostly based on the Attitude toward Statistics Questionnaire [12]. Their results were collected and analyzed to answer the first research question. The results were shown in the following tables.

Table 1. *Facility*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The classroom environment should also be equipped with adequate facilities such as fans, lights, projectors, TV sets, Internet, and loudspeakers for learning English.	45 53.57%	35 41.66%	4 4.77	0	0

As shown in table 1, a large number of students had positive attitudes toward the opinion that a classroom should also be equipped with adequate facilities such as fans, lights, projectors, TV sets, Internet, and loudspeakers for learning English. These are the important things for the researcher to be able to carry out this study.

Table 2. *Students' attitudes toward the teacher's strategy*

Item 2	Lessons with Quizzes	Lessons with Kahoot	Lessons with Padlet	Lessons with Flipgrid	Others
Which teacher's strategy are you interested in when learning English?	82 97.62%	77 91.67%	79 94.05%	68 80.95%	2 2.39%

As can be seen in table 2, 82/84 students chose the lessons using Quizizz. Seventy-seven respondents were fond of lessons using Kahoot. Seventy-nine students were interested in lessons with Padlets and 68 of them were keen on the lessons with Flipgrid. Just only two students liked other activities. This showed that most of the students were interested in learning English with the use of the EdTech tools such as Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid.

Table 3. *Students' attitudes toward the teacher's behaviors*

Item 3	Being patient with students	Encouraging students	Helping students feel more comfortable	Helping students feel more self-confident	Others
What teacher's behaviors do you like?	10 11.92 %	83 98.81%	76 90.48%	80 95.24%	1 1.19%

Table 3 reveals that most of the respondents liked the teacher's help and encouragement. Thus, extrinsic motivation is very important for 8th graders. Many of them may not see the benefits of learning English, but most of them will be very enthusiastic to learn if they can get encouragement and help from teachers.

Table 4. *Students' attitudes toward the teacher's teaching methods*

Item 4	Yes	No
Do you like the teacher with lots of interesting creative ways to teach?	84 100%	0

All the students in the study said '**Yes**' to this question. It showed the students' desire for the teachers' creativity in teaching English. They must always find out suitable methods, and appropriate teaching tools to meet the learning needs of their students.

Table 5 *The EdTech Tools*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. Learning English with EdTech tools such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Flipgrip, and Padlet is so attractive.	49 58.33%	33 39.28%	2 2.39%	0	0
6. The EdTech tools Kahoot, Quizizz, Flipgrip, and Padlet help me have new positive experiences in learning English.	47 55.95%	35 41.66%	2 2.39%	0	0
7. The EdTech tools Kahoot, Quizizz, Flipgrip, and Padlet help me stimulate thinking and react faster in learning activities.	35 41.66%	44 52.38%	5 5.96%	0	0
8. The EdTech tools Kahoot, Quizizz, Flipgrip, and Padlet help me develop my language skills and apply better skills.	34 40.47%	48 57.14%	2 2.39%	0	0

Table 5 showed that the students had a very positive attitude towards the use of EdTech tools in learning English and demonstrated that the EdTech tools have enhanced their motivation in English learning.

3.2. Students' diaries

Students' diaries, as well as interviews, were used to answer the second research question.

The students were required to use the snippet technique to write their diaries after each lesson using the Edtech tools. They were also asked to expand on their snippets by writing their impressions of each lesson using the EdTech tools. This helped the researcher get specific and consistent insights into each snippet and the changes in students' English learning motivation. The data from the students' diaries were analyzed qualitatively.

Through the students' diaries, the author recognized that the students appreciated the effectiveness of EdTech tools in learning English because these tools helped increase their motivation in learning. The students were more active and interested in lessons. The interaction between students and teachers, and among students was more positive. This created a comfortable atmosphere in classrooms which brought high results in learning. Among the four tools, Quizizz was most favored by the students, then Padlet ranked in the second position, Kahoot in the third one, and Flipgrid ranked in the final one. The reason was that Flipgrid sometimes hard to access.

3.3. Interviews

There were six following questions used in the interviews between the researcher with her students. The questions were translated into Vietnamese to make sure students understand and answer the questions exactly.

1. Can you introduce a little background information about yourself? (name/ age/ grade?)
2. Do you like the teacher using Quizizz/ Kahoot/ Padlet/Flipgrid tools in class? Why?/Why not?
3. How did Quizizz/ Kahoot/ Padlet/Flipgrid tools help you?
4. Among Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid, which tool do you like best? Why?
5. What difficulties did you have when using these tools in learning English?
6. What are your other ideas about the EdTech tools Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid?

100% of students answered 'yes' to the second interview question (Item 2) and clearly stated how the tools Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid helped them in their studies and their difficulties when using these tools as well as what made them enjoy learning with these tools (Items 3,4,5,6). It also showed that students extremely enjoyed the English lessons that used these tools. The increased number of students participating in activities with Quizizz, Kahoot, and Padlet in class and the increased time spent studying at home showed that students are excited about learning with these tools. In addition, students also loved their classmates' and teachers' interactions with their learning products. This showed that students have been very active in commenting, interacting, and evaluating learning products when using the EdTech tools. The assignments and learning products of the students were shared very well. This turned out that the EdTech tools have had a positive effect on the attitude and sense of participation of most of the students in the study, clearly promoting their learning motivation.

4. Conclusion

The results of the above questionnaires, students' diaries, and interviews obtained after implementation clearly show that students' learning motivation was strongly enhanced when teachers used EdTech tools. They completely agree with previous studies that technology tools help to improve students' motivation in English learning. The EdTech tools Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid assisted students a lot in acquiring and practicing English. Nearly all students responded positively to the use of the EdTech tools in English lessons.

The study shows that Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, and Flipgrid have helped students in two classes at Tan Thinh Secondary School have a lot of motivation in learning English. The significant difference it makes is that monotonous English learners become participatory, confident, and enthusiastic English learners. The study also confirms that feedback and collaboration through EdTech tools significantly contribute to the learners' learning in the online lessons due to the Covid-19 pandemic influence. The study's findings contribute to the previous studies. Thus, the findings of the study in identifying the effects of EdTech tools on learners' motivation provide a clear guideline for the teachers, curriculum planners, and future researchers, especially in teaching online.

Despite the researcher's admirable efforts to carry out the study, there are some unavoidable limitations. Firstly, since the action research only lasted for 10 weeks, students' knowledge may not improve much. Most students only increase extrinsic motivation. The researcher believes that if the duration of using EdTech tools in English learning had been extended, the study's results would have been more reliable and better. Secondly, the study was conducted on a very small scale, with only 84 students. As a result, the findings may not apply to all students at the researcher's school. Thirdly, because EdTech tools are related to IT, both teachers and students need to have certain background knowledge of IT to be able to use them well. Besides, classrooms must have equipment such as projectors and speakers or smart TVs, computers, and the Internet. Students must have an Internet-connected smartphone, computer, or laptop to be eligible to use these tools. Finally, this study did not extensively explore the adverse effects of the four EdTech tools usage as well as the effects of other EdTech tools on students' motivation in learning English. These limitations of the study can be investigated in the next studies to reduce the negative impact of the four EdTech tools in the study and find other EdTech tools that can help students' motivation in learning English at secondary schools in Viet Nam.

REFERENCES

[1] R. Nishanthi, "Importance of learning English in today's world," *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD),* vol. 3, no. 1, p. 18, 2018.

[2] P. Rao, "The role of English as a global language," *Research Journal Of English (RJOE),* vol. 4, no. 1, p. 65, 2019.

[3] A. Le, K. Vodden, J. Wu, and G. Atiwesh, "Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Vietnam," *International Journal of environmental research and Public Health,* vol. 18, no. 2, p. 12, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7828055/pdf/ijerph-18-00559.pdf. [Accessed December 15th, 2021].

[4] R. Espinar and J. L. Ortega, "Motivation: The road to successful learning," *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development,* vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 125-136, 2015. [Online]. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.15446/profile.v17n2.50563. [Accessed December 15th, 2021].

[5] UNICEF, "Viet Nam Case Study," UNICEF Publishing, p. 23, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/9346/file/Sit AnVietNamcasestudy.pdf. [Accessed December 15th, 2021].

[6] M. Seven, "Motivation in language learning and teaching," *African Educational Research Journal,* vol. 8, no. 2, pp. S62-S71, October 2020, doi: 10.30918/AERJ.8S2.20.033. [Online]. Available: http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/uploads/2007- cheng-dornyei-illt.pdf. [Accessed December 16th, 2021].

[7] B. Spolsky, *Conditions for second language learning.* Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990.

[8] J. Frankanfield, "EdTech," *Investopedia*, 2020. [Online]. Available: https://www.investopedia.com /terms/e/edtech. [Accessed February 16th, 2022].

[9] M. Rice, "43 EdTech Companies Changing the Way We Learn," 2021. [Online]. Available: https://builtin.com/edtech/edtech-companies. [Accessed February 16th, 2022].

[10] J. Clark, S. Porath, J. Thiele, and M. Jobe, *Action Research*. New Prairie Press, 2020.

[11] K. Lewin, "Action research and minority problems," in *Resolving Social Conflicts,* G.W. Lewin (Ed.). New York: Harper & Row, 1946.

[12] M. Patten, *Questionnaire Research* (4th Ed). Routledge Publishing, 2017.