

A Review of the Impact of Informal Digital Learning of English on EFL Students' Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract

This brief literature review aims to underscore the importance of informal digital learning of English (IDLE) on EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. Starting with a review of foundational theories and early studies on WTC, this paper draws on a range of recent studies examining the relationship between IDLE and language learners' WTC. The review highlights the positive influence IDLE has on learners' autonomy, confidence, motivation and engagement with English. In addition, it was found that language learners who took part in IDLE achieved higher academic success. The findings suggest that informal digital environments and interactions, including social media and games, play a significant role in reducing language learners' boredom and anxiety, thereby encouraging more frequent communication in English. The review concludes that employing IDLE and integrating elements of IDLE into formal language instruction could enhance the overall learning experience and result in achieving more learning outcomes. This paper discusses the ways in which language instructors can encourage IDLE activities.

Key Words: Willingness to Communicate, Informal Digital Learning of English, EFL, Learning Beyond the Classroom, Digital Learning

İngilizce'nin Örgün Öğrenme Dışındaki Dijital Öğreniminin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenen Öğrencilerin İngilizce İletişim Kurma İstekliliği Üzerindeki Etkisine İlişkin Bir İnceleme

Özet

Bu kısa literatür incelemesi, İngilizce'nin örgün öğrenme dışındaki dijital öğreniminin yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin İngilizce iletişim kurma istekliliği üzerindeki önemini vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. İletişim kurma istekliliğine ilişkin temel teorilerin ve erken dönem çalışmalarının bir incelemesiyle başlayan bu makale, örgün öğrenme dışında dijital olarak İngilizce öğrenme süreciyle iletişim kurma istekliliği arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen bir dizi yeni çalışmaya yer vermektedir. İnceleme, İngilizce'nin örgün olmayan şekilde dijital öğreniminin öğrenci özerkliği, özgüveni, motivasyonu ve İngilizce ile etkileşimi üzerindeki olumlu etkisini vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, örgün öğrenme dışında dijital şekilde dil öğrenen öğrencilerin daha yüksek akademik başarı elde ettiği bulunmuştur. Bulgular, sosyal medya ve oyunlar gibi örgün eğitime dahil olmayan dijital ortamların ve etkileşimlerin dil öğrencilerinin can sıkıntısını ve kaygısını azaltmada önemli bir rol oynadığını, ve dolayısıyla daha sık İngilizce iletişimi teşvik ettiğini göstermektedir. İnceleme, örgün öğretim dışındaki dijital öğrenme aktivitelerinin kullanılmasının ve resmi dil eğitimine entegre edilmesinin genel öğrenme deneyimini iyileştirebileceği ve daha fazla öğrenme çıktısı elde edilebileceği sonucuna varmıştır. Bu makalede, dil eğitmenlerinin örgün öğretim dışındaki dijital öğrenme aktivitelerini nasıl teşvik edebilecekleri tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İletişim Kurma İstekliliği, İngilizce'nin Resmi Olmayan Dijital Öğrenimi, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce, Sınıfın Ötesinde Öğrenme, Dijital Öğrenme

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Introduction

In the increasingly interconnected and digitally mediated modern world, the ways learners access and engage with language learning have undergone a noteworthy transition (Siemens, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2011). The rise of digital technologies has enabled learners to utilize social media applications, games, and streaming platforms, thereby exposing them to authentic language use (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Liu et al., 2023). It can be observed that in today's world, language learners spend more time indulging themselves in entertainment in L2 online than they do in the classroom learning L2. They intentionally consume or are occasionally exposed to media in L2, interact or spectate interactions with others online, and engage with L2. Learners may make use of digital technologies to seek opportunities to practice communicating with others in L2, improve their language proficiency, interact with a similar-minded community, be informed about other cultures, and stay up-to-date with global topics (Zadorozhnyy & Lee, 2025; Liu & Darvin, 2023). During the language learning process, there may be intersections in the context of the curricula and the media learners consume in their leisure time. In other words, learners may watch a video on "lesser-known facts about nutrition" in their leisure time outside the classroom at some point and come across the same topic in the classroom as the unit's focus. In this case, the learner may be more willing to participate in the discussions and share their knowledge, bringing in what they have learned informally in the digital setting into the formal instruction setting. In that sense, informal digital learning can be employed to increase topic familiarity. Owing to this, understanding how these intersections may occur and affect learners' willingness to communicate in the classroom can be critical in effective lesson planning. It is significant to note that not all students who are knowledgeable on a topic are willing to actively engage in classroom discussions and make contributions. Understanding the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC), one of the key psychological factors influencing language acquisition, may help language teachers create more engaging lessons. WTC, which has been an area of interest for researchers for over four decades (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998; McCroskey & Baer, 1985), was originally viewed through the classroom-based communication lens (Burgoon, 1976), however, it is now being re-evaluated in light of digital environments brought along by technological advancements (Lee, Drajati, 2019). Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE), which refers to engagement with English outside the classroom, such as watching videos on social platforms, communicating with others on social media, playing online games, and listening to podcasts, has made a name for itself as an influential factor affecting learners' communicative behaviours (Lee & Lee, 2019; Sauro & Zourou, 2019). In this regard, language teachers need to be aware of the impact digital technologies may have on the language learning process and encourage learners to make use of them effectively (Malcolm, Hodgkinson, & Colley, 2003). Owing to the mounting empirical support for the role of informal learning influencing WTC, there is a need for a review on how IDLE contributes to learners' WTC (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Liu et al., 2023). This review explores the potential qualitative

correlations between IDLE engagement and EFL learners' WTC, aiming to combine emerging patterns across various studies without making causal claims. The current literature review aims to combine recent research on IDLE with the theoretical foundations of WTC, emphasise the positive impacts of IDLE on EFL learners' WTC, and discuss how integrating elements of IDLE into formal language instruction can support more learner-centred and communicative approaches.

The Research Question

The present literature review seeks answers to the following research question.

RQ1: What are the potential impacts of engaging in Informal Digital Learning of English on EFL learners' Willingness to Communicate?

This study explores the question through a qualitative lens, focusing on EFL learners' perceptions and experiences rather than seeking statistical conclusions.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesised that engaging in informal digital learning of English activities will have a positive impact on EFL learners' willingness to communicate.

Willingness to Communicate

MacIntyre et al. (1998) define communication in L2 as a "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with specific person or persons using L2." This definition may be used to explain the concept of WTC as it refers to an individual's readiness to initiate communication in the target language when given the opportunity. Factors influencing learners' willingness to communicate have been an area of interest for researchers over the past decades. Evolving from the early work of Burgoon (1976), the construct of unwillingness to communicate became prevalent decades ago. Burgoon (1976) defined unwillingness to communicate as "a chronic tendency to avoid and/or devalue oral communication". Burgoon (1976) defined a person with communication reticence as someone who avoids oral interactions, takes any kind of question regarding the content of their speech as personal criticism, and therefore, as someone who shows a predisposition of unwillingness to communicate. Building on the work of Burgoon (1976), McGroskey and Baer (1985) evaluated WTC in first language concepts and regarded it as a personality trait. They concluded that willingness to communicate was related to communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, introversion-extraversion and self-esteem. MacIntyre et al. (1998) state that the learning process's main goal should be to increase language students' willingness to look for communication opportunities and partake in communication. MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggest several variables may impact an individual's willingness to communicate. Some of which are how well the communicators are acquainted with each other, the extent of the evaluation of the speaker, the discussion topic, along other factors. Furthermore, MacIntyre et al.

(1998) conceptualise WTC as the final step in a pyramid which consists of six layers and make a distinction between the enduring and situational influences. According to this, while intergroup relations and learners' personality represent the long-term properties of the environment, the situational influences are regarded as temporary, dependent on the situation the learner is in and can be explained as the learner's desire to speak to a person in particular and the knowledge of the topic. This model defines WTC as not a fixed trait but a dynamic, context-based disposition that may be impacted by external factors and internal states. Researchers believed that identifying the elements that would increase or decrease learners' willingness to communicate would provide insight into creating more efficient courses and maximising the learning outcomes. Early research on WTC focuses on qualities in the classroom, e.g., learner dynamics and characteristics, their perception of the language they are learning, and their teacher.

Informal Digital Learning of English

IDLE, which is brought along by advances in technology, is defined by JS Lee and K Lee (2019) as a non-instructional learning environment, delivered online, out of the classroom. It is important to emphasise that this type of learning is self-directed and non-instructional. On the contrary of structured, traditional classroom instruction, IDLE includes a wide range of activities such as watching videos in English on social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram, watching films in English on streaming platforms like Netflix, taking part in conversations on social media, interacting with other players while playing online games, listening to songs or podcasts and being active in online communities and forums. JS Lee and Dražati (2019) categorise these IDLE activities into two groups as receptive and productive. The former is about reading and listening activities where the language learner does not need a speaking partner, whereas the latter refers to activities that would produce an output. Commenting on posts on social media and using the chat in online games could serve as examples for productive IDLE activities. Connectivism, a learning theory developed by Siemens (2005), lays the groundwork to understand how the theoretical foundation for IDLE would work in contemporary contexts. Dissimilar to traditional learning theories that underscore internal cognitive processes or face-to-face interaction, the theory of connectivism places learning within digital environments and highlights the ability to navigate, interpret, and contribute to distributed sources of knowledge. In the context of IDLE, learners are not limited to formal instruction, which takes place in the classroom, but explore English-language content across various digital platforms. Due to the rapidly changing, dynamic nature of these platforms, learners' exposure to authentic language and their knowledge based on new information and interactions is constantly being updated. Finally, given that IDLE is free from anxiety-inducing factors present in the formal education setting, such as performance-based assessment, being exposed to unknown content, and being an active participant, it offers low-stress opportunities for language learning. It allows learners to be active seekers of knowledge in their own time and develop a sense of autonomy. This autonomy

can improve confidence in their linguistic skills, which is an important component of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). As learners become more confident through regular, informal exposure to English, they are more likely to take initiative in real-life communication, e.g., commenting under a video, responding to a thread on an online forum, or engaging in casual conversation, thus translating internal readiness into observable communicative behaviour. In line with this, MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model suggests that learners' willingness to communicate would be affected by some situational factors like the social position of the person being addressed, how formal the situation they are in, learners' interests and how well they know each other and other non-situational, stable factors like communication anxiety, self-regard and personality. In that sense, IDLE comes to the forefront as an appealing learning environment for EFL learners, free from additional stress factors.

Method

The study adopts a semi-systematic literature review approach to explore how qualitative studies have investigated the relationship between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' engagement in Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) and their Willingness to Communicate (WTC). The review synthesises findings from recent studies and examines how informal digital learning of English may influence EFL learners' willingness to engage in communication. Several electronic databases, including Elsevier, Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar, were employed during the search for the relevant literature. Journal articles, dissertations, and conference papers were examined. Inclusion criteria included the keywords "*Willingness to Communicate*", "*Informal Digital Learning of English*", and "*Learning Outside the Classroom*". The studies included in the present review were chosen according to their relevance to EFL learners' engagement in informal digital learning activities and their willingness to communicate.

Corpus and Selection Criteria

The corpus for the present literature review comprises articles, dissertations, and studies related to Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in EFL contexts. This includes studies published in peer-reviewed journals and relevant academic databases. The literature was drawn from various studies conducted on a global scale, with a focus on English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environments. The sampling process involved the selection of studies on the impact of informal digital learning of English on digital platforms (e.g., online platforms, applications, social media, and streaming services) on learners' WTC. To ensure relevance and coverage of both theoretical foundations and current trends, studies from the past 50 years (1975 to present) were considered. Even though IDLE is a relatively recent concept, the wider date range allows the inclusion of foundational and theoretical works related to WTC and informal learning that predate the formalization of IDLE. This provides a richer context for understanding how contemporary digital

learning fits within the broader language learning and communication literature. Only studies published in English were included in the review.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection for the present review involved systematically searching several academic databases, including Elsevier, Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The process was carried out in several stages. A list of relevant keywords was used to look for studies on the concept of Willingness to Communicate and Informal Digital Learning of English. Following the initial keyword search, the results were screened for relevance. All studies which did not focus on IDLE or WTC, were not on EFL contexts or were not written in English were excluded from the review. Full-text articles, studies, dissertations and conference papers that met the inclusion criteria were reviewed for thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process for the present literature review involved a qualitative synthesis of the selected studies to pinpoint recurring themes and patterns regarding the relationship between Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in EFL contexts. As the review seeks to identify conceptual connections, a thematic analysis approach was employed. Studies were categorised based on their focus, and key themes were identified.

Findings

The thematic analysis revealed that informal learning might contribute to students' willingness to communicate, along with several other positive impacts. In a systematic and bibliometric review, Aiju et al. (2025) found a growing trend linking informal learning of English to psychology and a steady increase in the volume of publications on technology-mediated learning. Relatedly, a key finding from Sauro and Zourou (2019) suggests that active engagement with internet users who are like-minded leads to autonomous learning. In addition, they also state that learners form various identities on various social platforms. That is to say, on a streaming service platform, learners are consumers and critics of media they are interested in, on a social media platform where people share video clips, they are both spectators and commentators of various materials, whereas on a writing-based forum, they may use English to ask about a problem or share a solution. In all these platforms, their interaction with other internet users will be different and result in more exposure to authentic language use. Supporting this and underscoring the importance of learner autonomy once more, Godwin-Jones (2011) indicates that, given that informal learning is personalised, it leads to enhancing learner autonomy. Similarly, a study by Lee et al. (2018) revealed that learners who engage in IDLE activities can become fluent without formal instruction.

Confidence and motivation are important benefits associated with IDLE. Lee and Drajiati (2019) found that Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) activities can be employed to reduce student anxiety and increase confidence and motivation. According to the study, learners who engaged in IDLE

activities felt more confident and motivated in taking part in English exchanges. Supporting this, in a study examining the progress of two language learners who improved their English proficiency, Liu and Darvin (2023) found that taking part in IDLE activities, such as dubbing English videos using mobile applications, resulted in learners being more motivated to take part in IDLE activities more frequently and explore other websites and forms of media, they emphasise that the learners who used to be more engaged in receptive activities later became more comfortable in productive activities and began to show more active presence online (e.g. replying to others' posts on forums). In addition, Liu and Darvin (2023) state that there was a contrast in the student's behaviour in class and online, underscoring that the student wasn't overly active in the classroom, whereas he was an active commentator online, in an interview the student reveals that he felt more relaxed and confident online. This finding reveals that WTC behaviour in the classroom is not an exact representation or indicator of WTC online. Zadorozhnyy and Lee (2025) found that competence is closely associated with IDLE, and students who felt confident and capable in their language classes have a higher tendency to engage in IDLE activities. Similarly, they revealed that students who felt confident in their capability in digital environments had a stronger tendency to look for learning English opportunities digitally. This refers to a wide range of activities, ranging from consuming media in English to listening to songs in English. An important finding of the study is that language students who felt confident about their language abilities in digital environments and have a community that they find supportive show a higher tendency to consume and create materials in L2 digitally.

Engagement in IDLE also appears to contribute to academic success and digital competence. Lai et al. (2015) found that language learners who engaged in IDLE activities achieved higher academic grades, improved their digital competence, and increased their self-efficacy beliefs in their language abilities. Additionally, intercultural competence and creativity are positively influenced by IDLE. Liu et al. (2023) reported that taking part in IDLE activities improved students' curiosity, openness to other cultures, and capability to understand the differences in cultures. Furthermore, in a study examining the impact of generative artificial intelligence on EFL students' creativity, Khoso et al. (2025) suggested that integrating generative artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT facilitates learning and creative language use, showing a positive relationship between AI use and EFL students' creativity.

The themes that came to the forefront were that engaging in IDLE activities led to learner autonomy, improved learners' confidence and motivation, increased their academic success, and reduced their stress. Other studies also found that engaging in IDLE activities led to being more open to other cultures.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the literature review revealed that engaging in Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) has an influence on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' Willingness to Communicate

(WTC), confirming the hypothesis established. WTC has been an area of interest for researchers for decades, whereas IDLE remains a relatively new concept. By synthesizing foundational research on WTC with emerging studies on IDLE, this review bridges an important gap, highlighting the evolving dynamics between IDLE and EFL learners' WTC. Today, the growing number of publications investigating the relationship between the role of IDLE and language learners' WTC proves that there's a significant dynamic between them. In that sense, language teachers have to recognise that IDLE takes place outside the classroom and does not function the same way as formal instruction. Beckett and Hager (2002) distinguish formal and informal learning, and define formal learning as single-capacity and individualistic learning, which instructors stimulate, whereas they define informal learning as holistic, collaborative, and activated by individuals. Thus, it can be said that IDLE comes to the forefront as an effective way to encourage learner autonomy. Teachers may also provide more specific guidance, recommend specific video content channels or forums, and illustrate how learners may make use of these materials effectively, e.g., set goals, use subtitles, etc. However, the feasibility of such support depends on language teachers' digital literacy levels. Barriers may include limited professional development, time constraints, and varying familiarity with digital tools. Addressing these challenges requires teacher training programs to focus on digital pedagogy and informal learning strategies.

As shown by Sauro and Zourou (2019), active online engagement leads to learner autonomy. Correspondingly, MacIntyre et al. (1998) state that the ultimate goal in L2 education is to increase learners' willingness to communicate, and any program that fails to produce students who are unwilling to use the language can be regarded as a failed program. The Theory of Planned Behaviour proposes that the most immediate cause of behaviour is to engage in a behaviour, and building on this, MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggest that "intention must combine with opportunity to produce behaviour". In line with this, it can be said that the responsibility to ensure that learners have the opportunity to contribute to a meaningful discussion falls onto the teacher's shoulders. It is important to create opportunities where learners feel free to share what they are watching, following, or listening to in English outside the classroom. Beyond creating opportunities, teachers need to make sure that learners need to feel that their experience is valued. Such a positive experience would not only increase their confidence in their abilities but also boost their motivation, which parallels the work of Zadorozhnyy and Lee (2025). Thus, creating a socially supportive environment is of utmost importance. Combining formal and informal learning might achieve this. In line with the study of Liu and Darvin (2023), engaging in receptive informal learning activities eventually leads to engaging in productive informal learning activities. Based on this, teachers may show a few examples of videos where the narrator talks about an experience or explains how to do something, like a tutorial, and expect students to recreate it in their own context, either individually or collaboratively. Learners may be expected to comment on a few of their classmates' videos to mimic an actual online interaction. Given that there is no pressure to complete the productive task in one take, the learners may feel less stressed and more confident and motivated. Based

on the study findings of Khoso et al. (2025), which suggest that generative artificial intelligence can be employed to enhance creativity along with the increased enjoyment of the learners, language teachers can create courses or course materials on prompt-writing; such courses may be beneficial in a variety of contexts, ranging from teaching creative writing to teaching adjectives. These activities can be assigned individually or collaboratively, face-to-face or online. As indicated by Lee and Drajati (2019), IDLE activities can be used to reduce student anxiety and increase confidence and motivation. To achieve this, teachers can openly discuss IDLE with language learners and highlight its importance as a valuable part of language learning, and help them recognise the value and potential that informal learning holds. When employed effectively, informal learning can increase learners' confidence and motivation to converse. Thus, educators should recognise the value of informal learning and consider integrating informal learning opportunities into formal learning environments. This way, educators can promote active participation and language development. As discussed earlier, engaging in IDLE activities leads to increased academic success and should be promoted. Future research is needed to examine the relationship between engaging in specific IDLE activities and EFL learners' WTC in the classroom. Finally, while complementing formal English education with informal digital learning of English, there are some limitations to be addressed pertaining to accessibility and learner engagement. Access to digital tools and the internet is not universal; learners in areas with low resources may face challenges accessing digital content or interactive platforms. This limits some learners' ability to benefit from accessing online content. Moreover, some learners may develop passive habits such as merely watching videos or mindlessly scrolling through content, which limits meaningful engagement. Beyond these, learner motivation and digital literacy also play a crucial role. Without motivation, learners may not take full advantage of IDLE opportunities. These issues underscore the need for more inclusive designs and targeted support strategies to ensure all learners can engage with IDLE meaningfully and productively.

Ethical Declaration

During the writing process of the study titled "*A Review of the Impact of Informal Digital Learning of English on EFL Students' Willingness to Communicate*", scientific rules, ethical and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic publication environment for evaluation.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışma, İngilizce'nin örgün öğrenme dışındaki dijital öğreniminin yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin İngilizce iletişim kurma istekliliği üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeye yönelik kısa bir literatür taramasıdır. İletişim kurma istekliliğine dair temel teorilerin ve erken dönem çalışmalarına yer verilen bu inceleme makalesinde örgün öğrenme dışında dijital olarak İngilizce öğrenme süreci ile iletişim kurma istekliliği arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen çalışmalara yer verilmektedir. Örgün öğrenme dışındaki dijital öğrenim, öğrencinin özerk şekilde, öğretmen tarafından bir yönlendirme olmaksızın dijital araçlar aracılığıyla İngilizceyle etkileşime girmesini ifade eder. İnceleme sonucunda İngilizce'nin örgün olmayan şekilde dijital öğreniminin öğrenci özerkliğini, özgüvenini ve motivasyonunu artırdığı, stresi ve dersten sıkılma durumunu azalttığı bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak, örgün öğrenme dışında dijital şekilde dil öğrenen öğrencilerin daha yüksek akademik başarıya sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Bulgular, sosyal medya kullanımı, İngilizce'nin özgün şekilde kullanıldığı oyunlar ve filmlerle etkileşimin dil öğrencilerinin dersten sıkılma ve kaygı durumunu azaltmada bir rol oynadığını ve dolayısıyla İngilizce iletişim kurmayı teşvik ettiğini göstermektedir. İnceleme, örgün eğitim boyunca örgün öğretim dışındaki dijital öğrenme aktivitelerinin kullanımına yer verilmesinin genel öğrenme deneyimini iyileştirerek daha fazla öğrenme çıktısına yol açacağı sonucuna varmıştır. İngilizce'nin örgün eğitim dışındaki dijital

şekilde öğrenimi ve iletişim kurma istekliliği kavramları makalenin odak noktasıdır. İletişim kurma istekliliği kavramı bireyin sözlü ya da yazılı şekilde iletişim başlatmaya hazır bulunma hâlidir. Bulgular, iletişim kurma istekliliğinin motivasyon, kaygı düzeyi, öz yeterlik, tutumlar ve kişiler arası iletişim durumu gibi faktörlerden etkilendiğini göstermiştir. Son yıllarda yapılan çalışmalar, örgün öğretim dışında gerçekleşen dijital öğrenimin bireyin iletişimde bulunma istekliliğini olumlu yönde etkileyebileceğini göstermektedir. İnceleme sonucunda örgün öğrenme dışında dijital şekilde İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin merak duygusunun, farklı kültürlerle açıklığının ve kültürel farklılıkları anlama becerilerinin pekiştiği bulunmuştur. Bu anlamda örgün öğrenme dışında dijital şekilde İngilizce öğreniminin kültürlerarası yetkinliği desteklemede ön planda olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. İncelemenin başka bir sonucuna göre ChatGPT gibi üretken yapay zekâ araçlarının yaratıcılığı geliştirdiği saptanmıştır, bu bağlamda yaratıcı dil kullanımı teşvik eden bu araçların kullanımının öğrencilerin yaratıcılığıyla pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Bu inceleme makalesi yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin örgün öğretim dışındaki dijital öğrenme aktivitelerine nasıl yer verebileceklerine dair öneriler içermektedir. Buna göre yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin ayrıntılı yönlendirmeler yapmaları önerilir. Bu yönlendirmeler arasında belirli sosyal platformlar ve bu platformların ne amaçla ve ne şekilde (örneğin altyazılı veya altyazısız şekilde video izlemek) kullanılacağına yer verilebilir. Buna ek olarak bu inceleme makalesinde İngilizce’yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin motivasyonunu artırmak için desteklendiklerini hissettikleri bir ortam yaratmanın önemine vurgu yapılmaktadır. Bunu sağlamak için öğrencilerin örgün eğitim dışında İngilizce izlediği, dinlediği, oynadığı materyalleri paylaşabileceği ortamlar yaratılabilir. Örneğin öğretmen, bir anlatıcının bir tecrübesini anlattığı veya bir şeyin nasıl yapılacağını açıkladığı bir videoyu sınıfta örnek olarak gösterip, öğrencilerinden çalışmayı kendi bağlamlarında yeniden canlandırmalarını isteyebilir. Bunun öğrencilerin dijital okuryazarlık seviyesine ve dil öğrenme sürecine olumlu katkıları olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Bu çalışma, son 50 yıl içinde (1975’ten günümüze) yayımlanmış olan makaleler, çalışmalar ve tezlerden oluşan akademik kaynakların taranmasıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elsevier, Scopus, ERIC ve Google Scholar veri tabanlarında “Willingness to Communicate”, “Informal Digital Learning of English” ve “Learning Outside the Classroom” anahtar kelimeleri ile arama yapılmıştır. Nitel, nicel ve karma yöntemli çalışmalar bu inceleme kapsamına dahil edilmiştir. Bununla beraber, bu çalışma yalnızca nitel bir sentez sunmakta, diğer bir deyişle bulguların istatistiksel olarak karşılaştırıldığı bir meta analiz içermemektedir. Bu sebeple bulgular genellenmeden ele alınmalıdır. Ek olarak, erişilebilirlik konusu İngilizce’nin örgün eğitim dışında dijital olarak öğrenilmesinde bir sınırlama olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, öğrencilerin dijital araçlara veya hızlı internet bağlantısına eşit düzeyde erişememesi İngilizce’nin örgün eğitim dışında dijital olarak öğrenilmesinde öğrenim deneyiminin niteliğini ve sıklığını doğrudan etkileyebilmektedir. Son olarak, bazı öğrencilerin

dijital ortamlarda pasif öğrenme alışkanlıkları geliştirmiş olmaları da İngilizce'nin örgün eğitim dışında dijital olarak öğrenilmesini sınırlayan bir diğer faktördür. Örneğin sadece video izlemek veya sosyal medya içeriği tüketmek gibi tek yönlü etkinlikler yabancı dilin aktif ve üretken şekilde kullanımına dair alışkanlıkları teşvik etmeyebilir. Bu inceleme makalesinin bahsi geçen sınırlılıklar göz önünde bulundurularak, bağlama özgü bir çerçevede değerlendirilmesi gerektiği unutulmamalıdır. Gelecekte yapılacak araştırmaların bu sınırlılıkları aşarak daha kapsamlı çalışmalar yürütmesi önerilmektedir.