

Article

Applying the ZPD to Language Teaching: A Study of the Integration of an Online Assessment Tool into a Chinese Programme

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Received: 5 October, 2022/Accepted: 18 September, 2023/Published: 21 February, 2024

Abstract

During the time of Covid-19, language teaching faced numerous challenges and underwent significant changes. Online teaching platforms emerged as valuable tools in the digital learning environment. However, there has been limited exploration of how technologies are integrated into the online learning context, particularly in terms of supporting assessment design and promoting learner agency. To address this gap, the current paper conducted a study at an Irish university, involving eight students over the course of one academic year. These students were provided with both formative Loop quizzes for reviewing their learning content and summative Loop quizzes as continuous assessment tests. The qualitative research data for this study were gathered through participants' questionnaires. The findings indicated that Loop quizzes as a mediating tool effectively complemented students' synchronous learning in a flexible and efficient manner. An essential aspect of this project was the examination of the social context in which students demonstrated responsible learning actions and experienced areas for improvement under the guidance of the teacher. The pedagogical model employed in this study was derived from the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development, which demonstrated the development of learner agency. The potential study extends to offer insights for language educators as they seek to adapt their teaching practices to cater to the evolving needs of contemporary language learners.

Keywords

Assessment, Chinese, learner agency, Loop quiz, ZPD

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a sudden and dramatic shift from classroom teaching away to online teaching. Consequently, designing new courses with the integration of online tools has become necessary and urgent to correspond to the constantly evolving situation. Online learning platforms are situated to demonstrate their essential roles in teaching within the domain of language education (Chang & Lan, 2021; Fernando, 2020; Tsai, 2021). Loop, a metaphorical representation of fostering a continuous cycle of learners utilising various technologies to support their learning, has demonstrated its pedagogical

value in the digital learning environment. It enables students to engage with course content, connect with teachers, and interact with fellow learners without the constraints of time and space. Within Loop, students have easy access to their notes, participate in discussion fora, construct their ePortfolio and participate in live interactive online classes (Dublin City University, 2022). A notable feature of Loop is its quizzes, which encompass a range of question types and can serve both formative and summative assessment purposes (Dublin City University, n.d.).

In the Irish context, all teaching went online when universities followed the government guidance and closed campuses in early March 2020. Despite the widespread adoption of online teaching, few contributions have been made to examine how online assessment tools are used to assess students' learning outcomes, especially in relation to a Chinese learning context in an Irish university setting during the Covid-19 pandemic. This project draws upon Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework to establish an online learning environment where students can articulate thoughts and construct meaning. In specific terms, the project ascertains the role of Loop quizzes in student learning, shedding light on how students are learning, with a particular focus on promoting learner agency.

2. Literature review

This section begins by covering the concept of learner agency and delves into its key features. It also draws attention to the significance of the ZPD as a foundational framework that underpins learner agency and the implementation of assessment as a mediating tool in a language learning context. The ZPD serves as the cornerstone for linking assessment with learner agency and enacts students' learning activities within a socially constructed learning environment.

2.1 Learner agency

Seeking to strengthen the conditions that promote learner agency and enable its realisation, several key features of learner agency come into play. The first feature revolves around learners' responsible actions, where they express their desire to take accountability for their learning and actively engage in learning. As highlighted by van Lier (2008), agency encompasses an awareness of being responsible for one's actions in relation to the environment and others affected by those actions. This view aligns with the definition that "learner agency refers to the feeling of ownership and sense of control that students have over their learning" (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021, p. 2). The awareness and sense of agency are often associated with learners' growth mindset. A growth mindset empowers students to take initiative and practise self-regulation when engaging in the learning process (van Lier, 2008).

The assumption of learner responsibility can only be realised when learners are actively involved in the learning process and have opportunities to act as interdependent social agents (North et al., 2022). Learners' agency manifests and evolves through social interactions, as it is "realised through what happens between people: the relational investment in the other" (Collins & Raymond, 2021b, p. 12). Agentive learning shapes learners' sense of community and their potential for progress within that community. Learners who are influenced by the community demonstrate a desire to be part of it and construct their learning pathways within this supportive environment. As a result, learner agency "is nurtured in environments that support the development of quality relationships, inclusive of intergenerational relationships" (Collins & Raymond, 2021a, p. 15). This approach "shifts the perspective from seeing learners as individuals to viewing them as interconnected within a dynamic and evolving community" (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021, p. 26).

Learner agency is not a fixed trait but rather a constantly evolving process. It emerges and develops through interactions within a social context, "where identity and relationships are emergent" (Collins & Raymond, 2021b, p. 12). Mercer (2012) aptly describes the emergent nature of learner agency,

where contexts and environments are integral parts of a complex system and change in one system or component of a system leads to change in the other. These meaningful interactions in learning contexts allow teachers and students to “make collaborative contributions, create fulfilling experiences, and maximize meaning potential around the classroom ecology” (Liu & Chao, 2018, p. 83). In this context, teachers play an essential role in creating opportunities for learners to exercise agency. When teaching practices support learners in becoming active agents in learning, it enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of their educational journey (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021).

2.2 The ZPD

The concept of the ZPD, rooted in Vygotsky’s work, holds significant importance in fostering learner agency. The ZPD is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This developmental nature of the ZPD reflects learners’ ongoing learning process and achievements. Key to the ZPD is social interaction, which “encompasses the relation between the individual and the social environment” (Xi & Lantolf, 2021, p. 45). The learning context consists of learners and more capable others, and their interaction embraces a supportive learning environment. While Vygotsky’s (1978) focus is primarily on children’s internal developmental processes, Xi and Lantolf expand the concept to include any learners’ independent developmental achievement, suggesting that the ZPD “is a process open to adults as well, depending on access to new forms of mediation, including when we learn languages beyond our native language” (2021, p. 43). Vygotsky (1981) introduces the notion that learning processes are mediated by tools, including symbolic tools or signs, which “regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves and thus change the nature of these relationships” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1). Mediation is a central aspect of the Vygotskian understanding and signifies “an involvement of a third factor (mediator) into the interaction between two objects, events, or persons” (Kozulin, 2018, p. 23). In language learning contexts, mediation supports learners in developing as social agents, for example, by “creating the space and conditions for communicating and learning” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90).

Assessment plays several important pedagogical roles and serves as a mediating tool in this project. It allows teachers to determine the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes and provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of their teaching efforts as well as areas for improvement (Dean et al., 2022). Furthermore, assessment-related feedback plays a critical role in enabling teachers to reflect on students’ learning experiences and provide appropriate guidance (Kenyon, 2021). Feedback also positively impacts both teachers and students, allowing them to “modify their approaches to teaching and learning respectively and help to know whether the learning objectives have been achieved (Foster et al., 2021, p. 72). Consequently, it is essential for assessment to be closely tied to these learning objectives (Dean et al., 2022). These assessment activities, completed by students, serve as a means to demonstrate their learning outcomes and are integral to the overall learning process. Assessing learning outcomes is a critical step, and assessments can be conducted in both formative and summative ways. Formative assessments help in understanding students’ comprehension of specific topics and assess their knowledge development during the module. They also aid educators and students in evaluating the effectiveness of their approaches. On the other hand, summative assessments examine how assessments contribute to students’ module grades and ascertain the achievement of learning objectives (Foster, Taylor & Walker, 2021).

Despite the acknowledged importance of learner agency and the ZPD in language learning contexts, limited research has explored the development of learner agency under the guidance of teachers, especially in the context of Chinese language learning with the application of the ZPD in assessment design. The current study aims to address this research gap by investigating how an online assessment

tool impacts students' learning process when framed within the ZPD framework. The primary research question guiding this study is: "How can Loop quizzes as an online assessment tool impact students' learning process when the ZPD is utilised as the framework?"

3. Methodology

This section presents the research setting and outlines the assessments designed to facilitate students' understanding of the learning outcomes addressed by the modules. It also justifies the use of qualitative research for this project and provides an explanation of the data collection procedure.

3.1 Research setting

The current project was conducted at an Irish university, involving eight students from two learning cohorts. These students had been studying the Chinese language for either two or three years on a full-time basis, majoring in either Translation Studies with Chinese or Business Studies with Chinese. The project spanned one academic year, which included two semesters. Semester 1 and semester 2 consisted of 10 weeks and 13 weeks, respectively, with two contact hours and approximately 8 independent learning hours per week in each semester. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the Chinese modules were exclusively delivered online via Zoom. As a result, student assessments were also conducted online, primarily using two broad types of Loop quizzes. In this study, these quizzes were classified as "review quizzes", which were designed to support students in reviewing their learning content once or twice per week, depending on their learning process. The review quizzes did not contribute towards students' module grades. Students were also presented with six continuous assessment (CA) tests given in the form of Loop quizzes, referred to as "CA quizzes" in this study. These CA quizzes covered aspects of listening, reading, and writing. The performance of students in these CA quizzes determined their final module grades. Both the review quizzes and CA quizzes incorporated a variety of question types, such as embedded answers, multiple choice, true-false, matching, drag and drop to construct sentences, essays etc. Some samples of the quiz questions can be found in the Appendix.

3.2 The assessment design

The module activities in this project were guided by the principles of Backward design ([Heineke & McTighe, 2018](#)). The first stage involved the learning outcomes, which outlined what learners were expected to understand and do by the end of the modules. In the second stage, the focus was on determining the evidence required for learners to demonstrate their progress towards the learning outcomes established in the first stage. The third stage emphasised the creation of activities that would facilitate learners in acquiring the targeted knowledge and skills, comprehending essential concepts, and applying their learning in meaningful ways. In this project, the teacher designed assessments aligning with the teaching content and maintaining consistency with the established learning objectives. The process of designing, creating, developing, and delivering the module assessments aimed to effectively incorporate them into the modules and optimise their impact on student learning. The assessments were strategically integrated with the learning activities, ensuring that students co-constructed new knowledge through interaction with the teacher and mediation by online learning tools. The five essential questions, which were proposed by Little and Erickson in the context of assessment planning, analysis, and evaluation, were carefully considered:

1. "Why is the assessment being undertaken?"
2. What is being assessed; what is the construct?

3. How is it being assessed, evaluated, and fed back or reported?
4. Who are the agents in the assessment processes?
5. What are the intended and envisaged uses and consequences of the assessment?" (2015, p. 127)

In response to these five questions, the assessment design in the current project included the following considerations:

- 1a. The assessments were designed to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their achievements of the learning outcomes in both formative and summative ways. This allowed for ongoing feedback and monitoring of their progress as well as a comprehensive evaluation at the end of each semester.
- 2a. Students' learning activities were assessed both on a weekly basis through review quizzes and at the end of each semester through CA quizzes. The review quizzes helped to gauge their understanding and knowledge retention, while the CA quizzes covered various aspects of listening, reading, and writing to assess their overall language proficiency.
- 3a. Some Loop quizzes, such as multiple-choice questions, were automatically marked, but the teacher also reviewed the results to monitor students' learning process closely. For other types of assessments, the teacher personally marked the submissions and provided students with relevant feedback.
- 4a. Students were encouraged to actively participate in the weekly review quizzes, which were not counted towards their final grades. This approach aimed to foster a focus on learning and improvement rather than solely on grades. On the other hand, the CA quizzes, which contributed to their final module grades, were completed by students under a more formal assessment process.
- 5a. The weekly quizzes served as a valuable tool to monitor students' learning process regularly and enabled the teacher to provide timely feedback as well as adjust teaching practices as needed. The insights gained from the CA quizzes, on the other hand, not only demonstrated students' learning outcomes but also helped to inform future instructional adjustments and improvements for subsequent cohorts of students.

3.3 Data collection procedure

As a qualitative research project, the research data for this study were collected through participants' anonymous questionnaires administered on Google Forms at the end of the academic year. The data were subsequently analysed thematically to address the primary research question, following a meticulous process of data coding and categorisation. Utilising thematic analysis allowed for a comprehensive exploration of students' experiences and perceptions concerning the integration of Loop quizzes, guided by the teacher, in the language learning process. The research findings emerged and were subsequently presented in the succeeding section, where they were further elaborated upon through three primary themes in Section 5. These themes provided insightful perspectives on the impact and effectiveness of Loop quizzes as a mediating tool in language learning.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations played a pivotal role. To safeguard participants' privacy and confidentiality, all students who willingly participated in this project were assigned pseudonyms. Additionally, any information that could potentially identify the participants was carefully removed from the data collection process. This ensured that their identities remained protected and anonymous. Moreover, the participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the project at any point before its publication, without facing any consequences. This commitment to voluntary participation reaffirmed the ethical integrity of the research.

4. Findings

The key findings of this study revolved around students' experiences with Loop quizzes, encompassing both the weekly review quizzes and the six CA quizzes. Additionally, this section presents crucial data regarding the interactions that took place between the teacher and students throughout the learning process.

4.1 Benefits of completing Loop quizzes

In relation to Loop quizzes, all eight students completed the six CA quizzes. Analysis of the data revealed that these CA quizzes played an important role in helping students to review topics and assess their progress each semester. The effectiveness of the CA quizzes was evident as they served as an impetus for students to improve their language proficiency in various topics over specific periods. For example, one student mentioned, "The CA tests helped me to learn Chinese because I had to study and prepare for them, so I reviewed all of the semester's work" (S4). However, students' primary motivation to complete the CA quizzes was driven by their desire to obtain good grades. One student stated, "I completed all of the CA tests because I wanted to get good grades" (S4), while another pointed out, "I completed the CA loop quizzes as they contributed to our final grade" (S5).

Two students completed all the review quizzes, while four students completed 90% or more of the review quizzes. The remaining two students completed 86% and 71% of the review quizzes, respectively. Most students expressed a positive attitude towards the review quizzes and actively strove to complete them. For instance, one student indicated, "I always completed [them] on time" (S3), while another student mentioned, "I completed all of the quizzes (except one time when [I] forgot and the deadline had passed)" (S4). The value and benefits of the review quizzes were apparent to students, as they helped them to revise their learning content and increase their knowledge level. For example, one student recalled, "I found that they were a good way to better understand grammar points and vocabularies" (S2). Some students felt that the review quizzes summarised the essential in-class content and helped them to identify areas they needed to work on. For example, one student stated, "I found the review quizzes to be very useful to figure out what I knew and what I needed to revise" (S8), while another noted, "I could identify what aspects of grammar or vocabulary I didn't fully understand or needed to go back over" (S5). When reflecting on the impact of Loop quizzes on their learning, students pointed out that the quizzes allowed them to track their learning progress and identify the areas where they needed improvement. "I was able to track my language learning progress and see where I need to improve" (S1). One student observed the links between the review quizzes and classroom teaching, stating, "It was really important to complete the quizzes because they set the basis for the discussions in class" (S6).

4.2 Helpful features of Loop quizzes

Both the review quizzes and the CA quizzes consisted of a diverse range of question types, and the majority of students reacted positively to them. The variety of question types made the quizzes engaging, as one student pointed out, "I enjoyed the different types of questions as it made the tests more engaging" (S8). Another student mentioned, "I liked all the questions and the fact that there were a variety of types so that the questioning didn't get repetitive and kept me engaged" (S5). The diversity of questions not only aroused students' interest but also made the quizzes "fun to do, entertaining and also helped to learn language in a more practical way" (S1). Some students expressed preferences for specific question types. For example, "'Drag and drop' was very useful in understanding the word order of Chinese. The 'True or false' questions were often more challenging than the others as they required you to read the question more carefully" (S8). Creativity-related questions were also well-received, with a student mentioning,

“I like the questions where I had to create a sentence using a certain character based off of a question. This is excellent practice using Chinese in a practical way. I really had to think and be creative” (S4). Furthermore, certain questions encouraged critical thinking, as one student recalled, “There was one time when the quiz was just filled with blanks. We had to base everything on our own thinking, but I think it also made us really think about the grammar points we had learned and try to apply them ourselves which was useful” (S5).

Loop quizzes proved to be a valuable source of teacher feedback, encompassing marks, written comments, in-class collective feedback, and personalised feedback upon request, either in writing or orally. Among these, the written feedback played a crucial role in aiding students’ understanding of their performance in the assessments and providing guidance for improvement. For example, one student shared, “I usually received feedback about whether my answers were correct or not. They were helpful because I could see where I had gone wrong and how I could improve in the future” (S5). Receiving marks after completing the quizzes inspired some students to perform better in subsequent quizzes. One student pointed out, “I liked receiving marks because I was motivated for each quiz to get better grades than in the previous quiz” (S1). Regarding the in-class collective feedback, students expressed their positive opinions, with one stating, “I think the feedback in class was good” (S6). Furthermore, students appreciated the teacher’s approachability, with one mentioning, “any feedback required was given and if not the teacher was extremely approachable and helpful as always” (S3).

In addition, the user-friendly and flexible features of Loop quizzes proved to be instrumental in enhancing students’ engagement and understanding of their performance, contributing to an enriched learning experience. For example, one student found the user-friendly nature of Loop quizzes beneficial, stating that they “were easier to complete than an in-class test due to the greater time allowance and the digital format of the tests” (S8). The flexibility of completing Loop quizzes at their own pace facilitated students’ learning process, as one highlighted, “They also helped me to understand the material because I could figure out the questions at my own pace” (S4), while another student pointed out, “I think it was a good way to keep up to date with progress because the percentages are made known on Loop and it’s easy to follow” (S6). The prompt and immediate reception of Loop quiz results was greatly valued by students, as it allowed for immediate feedback on their performance. One student stated, “I found them particularly helpful as often results were available instantly” (S3), while another student shared a similar view, mentioning, “It’s especially helpful that the quizzes would show you your results as soon as you completed the quiz. Then you can review what you got right or wrong while it’s still fresh in your mind” (S4).

5. Discussions

The integration of Loop quizzes into this study has demonstrated the positive effects of technology-enhanced learning in enriching students’ experiences in language acquisition. The key findings of this study are categorised into three primary themes: the pedagogical role of Loop quizzes, the empowering of learner agency, and the practical application of the ZPD.

5.1 Theme 1: The pedagogical role of Loop quizzes

During the transition from traditional classroom teaching to the virtual environment, Loop quizzes emerged as a crucial pedagogical tool for online learning. Carefully designed with specific learning outcomes in mind, these quizzes directly measured students’ progress and achievement (Dean et al., 2022). Loop quizzes, especially the review quizzes, played a significant role in elevating students’ language competence and refining their learning approaches. They provided valuable opportunities for students to reinforce their understanding of specific language points and topics throughout their learning

journey. The connection between the review quizzes and classroom teaching was also valued by students, as it enriched their comprehension of the course content. This integration of online assessments played a mediating role in students' learning process (Vygotksy, 1981; Kozulin, 2018) and emerged as a promising approach to promoting a cohesive learning experience for students (Liu & Chao, 2018).

Beyond the evaluation of learning outcomes, Loop quizzes played a significant role in creating a space and conditions for communication and learning (Council of Europe, 2020) when implemented in conjunction with teacher involvement. Acting as a channel for interaction, these quizzes facilitated collaborative contributions and engendered fulfilling learning experiences (Liu & Chao, 2018). The teacher's approachability and availability in providing both written and in-class collective feedback fostered a supportive learning environment and encouraged students to seek help and actively engage with the learning material (Collins & Raymond, 2021a). The teacher's feedback proved instrumental in helping students to comprehend the effectiveness of their learning and served as a reference for the teacher to gauge whether learning outcomes were achieved (Foster et al., 2021). When the teacher designed assessment questions to assess students' learning outcomes (Foster et al., 2021), they also offered the teacher essential information for reflection (Kenyon, 2021) and insights into potential areas for improvement (Dean et al., 2022).

5.2 Theme 2: Empowering learner agency

Central to the enhancement of learner agency was the implementation of the CA quizzes, particularly the review quizzes, which received positive feedback from students. These quizzes were completed by students outside of classroom hours, granting them the flexibility to choose when to engage with the material. A remarkable outcome of these quizzes was their ability to alleviate stress associated with time constraints and foster a conducive learning environment. These quizzes also played a significant role in promoting students' active participation throughout both semesters. Students' continuous efforts and commitment to learning were evidence of their impetus for self-directed learning. As a result, their language competence and learning skills witnessed growth. The importance of active participation during the quizzes also proved to be instrumental in fostering a deeper understanding and retention of language concepts.

The review quizzes not only stimulated students' interest in the course and the language itself but also reinforced the link between learner engagement and agency. As students invested time and effort in studying and preparing, they showcased their commitment to learning and their ability to take initiative and self-regulate their learning (van Lier, 2008). This shift from passive acceptance of learning content to active engagement and application of subject knowledge heightened their sense of agency and positively influenced their dedication to their studies, as supported by North et al. (2022). An essential aspect of the CA quizzes was their empowering effect on students. By allowing students to assess their own progress, they proved particularly effective in enabling students to take ownership of their learning journey. This self-assessment process fostered a sense of control over their language learning process, as emphasised by Larsen-Freeman et al. (2021). As a result, the quizzes facilitated a positive and rewarding educational experience.

Interestingly, this progression of learner agency also influenced the dynamics of student-teacher interactions. As students evolved from individual learners to interconnected participants in a learning community (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021), a growth mindset and a stronger sense of belonging were fostered (Collins & Raymond, 2021a). This collaborative environment further nurtured learner agency when empowering students to shape their educational experiences. The promotion of learner agency through interactive assessments, especially review quizzes guided by the teacher, proved instrumental in cultivating students' active engagement, and commitment to their language learning journey. As learners took greater control of their education, their abilities flourished within a vibrant and supportive learning

community. Crucially, learner agency continuously evolved as both the teacher and students adapted their relationships. The responsible learning actions demonstrated by students played a significant role in shaping their sense of belonging to this evolving community, co-created with the teacher. Mercer's argument (2012) that the teacher and students were integral parts of the learning context, mutually interdependent, perfectly resonated with the nature of learner agency as an ongoing process.

5.3 Theme 3: The application of the ZPD

The findings underscored the positive impact of completing Loop quizzes on students' language learning experiences. Integrating Loop quizzes as a mediating tool within the ZPD framework exemplified their pedagogical impact in the online learning context. Both the CA quizzes and review quizzes played a significant role in supporting students' language learning process and demonstrating the extent to which students acquired certain language points and topics. The CA quizzes prompted students to review and consolidate their understanding of various language topics over specific periods, leading to increased linguistic achievement. The review quizzes proved particularly beneficial in helping students to revisit and consolidate their comprehension of various language topics throughout both semesters. These quizzes offered valuable opportunities for students to recognise their strengths and identify areas that required further attention. As a result, students' performance in Loop quizzes reflected their progress during the learning process and served as individual stages in their developmental journey within the ZPD framework, as defined by Vygotsky (1978).

The learning context of this study afforded opportunities for the ZPD to emerge and informed students' development through their interactions with the more capable others, such as the teacher (Vygotsky, 1978; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). The teacher's involvement highlighted the key feature of the ZPD, where social interaction shaped the relations between students and their social environment (Xi & Lantolf, 2021). In this context, the teacher's involvement played a pivotal role in fostering a supportive learning environment, which involved both Loop quizzes and the creation of opportunities for experiencing learner agency. By actively engaging in the learning process and taking responsible actions, students became social agents and forged a dynamic learning community through interactive opportunities with the teacher. This continuous collaboration enabled students to play an active role in their learning and demonstrate their agency as learners (North et al., 2022). The teacher's support and empowerment further enhanced students' learning experiences and made their educational journey more effective and efficient (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021).

6. Conclusions

This study has investigated the integration of Loop quizzes, implemented within the ZPD framework, in language teaching. Their pedagogical role not only fosters engagement but also empowers students with a sense of ownership and control over their learning journey, leading to the promotion of learner agency. Furthermore, the study reveals the significance of student-teacher interactions, with Loop quizzes serving as vital communication channels. These interactions reflect the Vygotskian approach to learning, highlighting the teacher's role in guiding and supporting the educational process. While the study offers insightful findings, its limitations should be taken into account. The sample size was relatively small, comprising eight students in total. Furthermore, the study was conducted in a specific language learning context, and the results might differ in other language or educational settings. In addition, the unique circumstances of the online learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced students' experiences and attitudes towards Loop quizzes. These factors could potentially limit the generalisability of the findings. Nevertheless, the integration of technology in language learning,

particularly through online quizzes, has shown promising potential in enhancing language learning experiences. As technology increasingly influences language education, adopting innovative pedagogical methods is crucial for deepening students' understanding of languages and developing the essential skills required for language acquisition.

Appendix: Loop quiz question types

1. Fill in the gap using appropriate words (Embedded answers)

1. 这件事儿 他没关系。
2. 她每天骑 自行车上班。
3. 骑自行车既锻炼身体, 节约钱。
4. 你为什么就不能 你爸爸学习呢?
5. 我们想吃 就吃什么。

2. Select the most appropriate answer (Multiple choice)

桌上放_____ 一个球。

Select one:

- a. 过
- b. 在
- c. 着
- d. 在



3. True or false (True-false)

中秋节赏月是从宋朝开始的。

Select one:

- True
- False

4. Pair two parts to form sentences (Matching)

他一边听音乐,

街心公园里来了

进进出出的

那儿安静得

汉堡包又便宜

Choose...
Choose...
很多锻炼身体的老人。
又好吃。
一边看书。
听不到一点声音。
都是年轻人。
Choose...
Choose...

5. Form sentences using the jumbled words (Drag and drop)

。

总是 干干净净 的 他的 房间

6. Complete dialogues (Essay)

Your answers should include at least 10 characters, incorporating the provided words/phrases/structures, but excluding punctuation marks

A: 你会说英语吗?

B: _____? (连.....也.....)

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7. Writing composition (Essay)

Topic: 圣诞节

Requirements:

- 200-250 Chinese characters, including punctuation marks;
- Share a personal story of how you spend 圣诞节 with your family;
- You may also handwrite your answers on separate sheets of paper, take clear photos, and upload them appropriately. However, ensure that the uploaded document is easily readable.
- Integrate the following specified words, phrases, and sentence structures into your composition at least once:

1. 一边....., 一边.....
2. 比.....还.....
3. 越来越
4. 虽然.....但是.....
5. V + 着 (Sentence indicating existence)
6. V + 开

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, underline, list, link, unlink, image, emoji, text color, background color, and font color.

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基于最近发展区理论的线上评估工具在汉语教学中的应用研究

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摘要

新冠疫情给语言教学带来了挑战和改变, 线上教学平台备受关注。然而, 如何把技术整合进包括支持评估设计和提升学习者能动性这样的线上学习环境, 这方面的研究相对有限。有鉴于此, 本文以包括进程性测试和总结性测试两种形式的 Loop 测试为测试工具, 以问卷调查的方式对爱尔兰汉语学习者进行了为期一学年的研究。研究表明, 作为一种中介工具, Loop 测试在辅助课堂教学方面发挥了有效作用。同时, Loop 测试有助于构建社交语境并激发学生的能动性, 使其在教师的引导下展现负责任的学习行为, 从而提高学习效果。该研究的教学法模型来自维果茨基的最近发展区理论。潜在的研究可以帮助语言教师调整其教学活动以便满足当代语言学习者的新需求。

关键词

评估, 汉语教学, 学习者能动性, Loop 测试, 最近发展区

刘伟明, 爱尔兰都柏林城市大学应用语言与跨文化研究学院助理教授, 主要研究方向为语言教师培养、二语教学和对外汉语教学法。