

CONNECTIVIST LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY: TRANSFORMING THE TEACHER'S ROLE INTO A PLE CURATOR

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Abstract. The rapid evolution of educational technologies and the diversification of Web 3.0/4.0 tools have called into question the hierarchical, teacher-centered structures traditionally embedded in Learning Management Systems (LMS) within foreign language instruction. Grounded in Siemens' Connectivism theory [6. 2005] and Attwell's Personal Learning Environment (PLE) framework [1. 2007], this paradigm shift extends the learning process beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom, placing learners at the center of their own digital learning networks. Consequently, language educators are experiencing a profound transformation, moving away from their traditional roles as "knowledge transmitters." This theoretical study explores the emerging role of the "PLE Curator" for instructors in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language (TTFL). It analyzes the instructor's multifaceted new functions, including serving as a digital infrastructure architect, scaffolding facilitator, digital mentor, and action-oriented task designer. Furthermore, the paper addresses key challenges associated with this professional evolution, such as pedagogical resistance, digital literacy demands, and ongoing professional development needs.

Keywords: Connectivism, Personal Learning Environment (PLE), PLE Curation, Teacher Role, Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language.

Annotatsiya. Ta'lim texnologiyalarining jadal rivojlanishi hamda Web 3.0/4.0 vositalarining xilma-xillashuvi chet tili o'qitishda an'anaviy Ta'limni Boshqarish Tizimlari (LMS) tarkibidagi iyerarxik va o'qituvchiga yo'naltirilgan tuzilmalarni savol ostiga qo'yimoqda. Simensning Konnektivizm nazariyasi hamda Ettvellning Shaxsiy Ta'lim Muhiti (PLE) konsepsiyasiga tayanadigan ushbu paradigmal o'zgarish ta'lim jarayonini sinf xonasining jismoniy chegaralaridan tashqariga olib chiqib, ta'lim oluvchini o'zining raqamli ta'lim tarmog'i markaziga joylashtiradi. Natijada, til o'qituvchilari an'anaviy "bilim uzatuvchi" rolidan uzoqlashib, chuqur transformatsiyani boshdan kechirmoqdalar. Ushbu nazariy tadqiqot Turk tilini xorijiy til sifatidagi o'qitish (TTXTO') kontekstida o'qituvchilarning shakllanayotgan "PLE Kuratori" rolini tahlil qilishga qaratilgan. Unda o'qituvchining raqamli infratuzilma me'mori, pedagogik ko'mak (scaffolding) tashkilotchisi, raqamli mentor hamda harakatga yo'naltirilgan topshiriqlar loyihachisi kabi ko'p qirrali yangi funksiyalari o'rganiladi. Buning ustiga, maqolada ushbu kasbiy evolyutsiya bilan bog'liq bo'lgan pedagogik qarshilik, raqamli savodxonlik talablari va uzluksiz kasbiy rivojlanish ehtiyojlari kabi asosiy muammolar ko'rib chiqiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Konnektivizm, Shaxsiy Ta'lim Muhiti (PLE), PLE Kuratorligi, O'qituvchi roli, Turk tilini xorijiy til sifatida o'qitish.

Аннотация. Стремительное развитие образовательных технологий и диверсификация инструментов Web 3.0/4.0 ставят под сомнение иерархические, учителецентрированные структуры, традиционно присущие системам управления обучением (LMS) в преподавании иностранных языков. Данная смена парадигмы, опирающаяся на теорию коннективизма Сименса и концепцию персональной обучающей среды (PLE) Этвелла, выводит учебный процесс за пределы физических границ аудитории, помещая обучающегося в центр его собственной цифровой образовательной сети. В результате преподаватели иностранных языков переживают глубокую трансформацию, отходя от своей традиционной роли «трансляторов знаний». Настоящее теоретическое исследование посвящено анализу формирующейся роли «PLE-куратора» для преподавателей турецкого языка как иностранного (ТКИ). В работе рассматриваются многогранные новые функции преподавателя, включая его роль как архитектора цифровой инфраструктуры, фасилитатора педагогической поддержки (scaffolding), цифрового ментора и разработчика деятельностно-ориентированных заданий. Кроме того, в статье освещаются ключевые трудности, связанные с этой профессиональной эволюцией, такие как педагогическое сопротивление, требования к цифровой грамотности и потребности в непрерывном профессиональном развитии.

Ключевые слова: Коннективизм, Персональная обучающая среда (PLE), Кураторство PLE, Роль преподавателя, Преподавание турецкого языка как иностранного.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technologies into educational contexts has brought about a radical shift in how knowledge is produced, circulated, and accessed. Traditional language pedagogy positioned the teacher as the primary source of authority, the main provider of knowledge, and the sole executor of the curriculum [1. 2007]. Corporate Learning Management Systems (LMS)—such as Moodle or Blackboard—replicated this paradigm within digital environments, operating as rigid, closed "walled gardens" due to their hierarchical and inflexible structures [4. 2012]. However, today's digitally native learners navigate complex, interconnected networks where information is no longer centrally distributed, but remains dynamic and fluid [6. 2005].

George Siemens' Connectivism theory (2005) and Graham Attwell's Personal Learning Environment (PLE) framework (2007) represent a major philosophical departure, shifting control over the learning process from institutions to the learners themselves [1. 2007; 6. 2005]. Within this emerging framework, learners become autonomous agents who construct customized digital ecosystems tailored to their individual goals, interests, and proficiency levels. Yet, fostering learner autonomy does not imply that educators become obsolete. Instead, the teacher's role undergoes a qualitative evolution—transitioning from a traditional "knowledge transmitter" into a "PLE Curator" who shapes, guides, and orchestrates these digital networks [1. 2007; 3. 2020].

This study aims to theoretically unpack the concept of "PLE Curation" within connectivist language pedagogy, discuss its pedagogical implications for Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language (TTFL), and highlight the key functions educators must adopt during this professional transformation.

1. FROM KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION TO CURATION: THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN THE NETWORK AGE

In traditional foreign language classrooms, the teacher served as the primary authority responsible for delivering grammatical rules, presenting vocabulary lists, and evaluating student performance. However, the vast ecosystem of authentic online content alongside AI-driven language learning tools has dismantled the instructor's monopoly over information.

Originating from museum and archival studies, the term *curation* refers to the art of selecting, organizing, and contextualizing meaningful items from extensive collections to build thematic exhibitions. Applied to an educational setting, a language teacher acting as a PLE Curator sifts through the overwhelming and unstructured flow of digital content to curate "digital tool and content menus" tailored to learners' proficiency levels, affective needs, and professional interests [1. 2007; 3. 2020]. Rather than delivering pre-packaged information, the educator designs structured pathways that empower students to navigate and access knowledge effectively.

2. CORE PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PLE CURATOR

In a connectivist language teaching model, an instructor serving as a PLE Curator operates across four main pedagogical dimensions:

2.1. Digital Scaffolding Architecture

Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" and the "Scaffolding" principles developed by Wood et al. (1976) evolve into the teacher's most critical instrument within a PLE environment [7. 1976]. Novice language learners (A1–A2) run the risk of experiencing anxiety and digital disorientation when confronted with the vast abundance of online Turkish content [5. 1982]. The PLE Curator constructs digital safeguards tailored to learners' proficiency levels. While providing structured and controlled digital content lists at the A1 level, the instructor gradually withdraws these scaffolds toward B1–C1 levels, progressively transferring control to the learner's autonomy [3. 2020].

2.2. Digital Mentorship and Self-Regulation Guidance

Learner autonomy does not equate to leaving students entirely to their own devices [2. 1977]. The PLE Curator provides mentorship that enables students to set their own learning goals and transform RSS aggregators (such as Feedly), digital note-taking platforms (e.g., Notion, Google Keep), and AI assistants into autonomous learning tools. By lowering learners' affective filters, the curator encourages them to navigate and engage with the digital ecosystem without the fear of making mistakes [5. 1982].

2.3. "Social Actor"-Oriented Task Design

In alignment with the Council of Europe's (2020) Action-Oriented Approach, the language learner is conceptualized as a "Social Actor" performing communicative tasks within society [3. 2020]. Shifting away from conventional paper-and-pencil assignments, the PLE Curator designs authentic digital tasks

where students author target-language blog posts, produce podcast series, or participate in global language exchange networks such as Tandem or Discord [3. 2020].

2.4. Process-Oriented Assessment and E-Portfolio Advising

Evaluating learning within a decentralized, highly personalized, and open-ended PLE ecosystem renders traditional multiple-choice testing inadequate. The PLE Curator tracks student growth and digital artifacts through e-portfolio systems and analytic rubrics, delivering continuous qualitative formative feedback throughout the learning journey.

3. BARRIERS AND POINTS OF RESISTANCE IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The transition from traditional knowledge transmission to PLE Curation is by no means seamless. Several structural and pedagogical obstacles hinder this evolution:

Pedagogy-Driven Resistance and Habitual Patterns: For educators accustomed to teacher-centered instructional methods over many years, relinquishing classroom authority and ceding control to learners can be perceived as a loss of professional status.

Digital Literacy and Techno-Stress: A lack of familiarity with Web 3.0/4.0 tools, AI algorithms, and connectivist instructional design can foster feelings of technological inadequacy (techno-stress) among language teachers throughout this process.

Curricular and Institutional Pressures: Rigid curricula in higher education institutions, mandatory LMS usage, and standardized test-driven evaluation systems constrain instructors' ability to construct flexible, personalized PLE environments.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Digitalization in language instruction extends far beyond installing smartboards in classrooms or uploading PDF materials onto an LMS platform. The true transformation takes place within the philosophical foundation of the learning ecosystem and the redefined role of the educator navigating it. Grounded in Siemens' Connectivism theory and Attwell's PLE framework, PLE Curation elevates the instructor from a passive curriculum implementer to a visionary educational architect who builds autonomous language networks for learners [1. 2007; 6. 2005].

To successfully realize this professional role transition across institutions and centers specializing in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language (TTFL), the following strategic steps should be taken:

In-Service Training: Hands-on workshops focusing on "Connectivist Language Pedagogy" and "Digital PLE Curation" should be organized for language instructors.

Curricular Flexibility: Institutional curricula need to be redesigned with sufficient flexibility to enable learners to construct their own personalized digital learning networks.

Assessment Reform: Rather than relying solely on product-oriented standardized testing, PLE-based e-portfolio systems and digital performance assessment models should be officially endorsed and promoted.

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