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Educational Trends in the Development of Philological Education in Azerbaijan in the Era of Digitalisation: A Forecast of the Future

Aliyeva Gulchohra Babali

PhD in Philology, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of English Language Azerbaijan State Marine Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2266-947X>

***Correspondence email:** emma_fn@mail.ru.

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Abstract: Education is an indicator of societies socio-economic and cultural development provides the national interests of the country in all areas of its activities in the world arena. The process of integration of cultural, educational, scientific, as well technical spheres – the introduction of modern norms and the standardization of education, the development of science and technology, the culture’s expansion, and the dissemination of scientific and technological achievements. Contemporary professionals face the recent year’s scientific and technical developments problems. The solution of these problems is conditioned by the need of their professional skills continuous development even after having obtained the higher education and the specialization diploma. The penetration into all fields of professional activity of the skills traditionally characterized by high technology leads to the emergence of new trends. The current axiom “digital humanities” is gaining popularity. In this context, the implementation of combined scientific, cultural-educational, and other projects and the involvement of scientists and specialists in research programs are particularly important. The COVID-19 pandemic affected more than 169,015 students in Azerbaijan (Valiyev & Valehli, 2022). This fact forced educators to develop new methods of teaching, with the introduction of distance learning as a single alternative to the desire for pedagogical continuity. Such a situation led to many difficulties, such as lack of experience,

technical problems, and difficulties with technical equipment. In addition, many teachers realized that they required digital skills. This paper presents the trends of education with the use of closed survey among teachers in the field of philology. The university community had to develop new ways of teaching and learning, particularly the introduction of distance and online learning that kept students connected and offered different perspectives. Search engines found 457 articles between 2018 and 2022. Relevant articles were searched in the Scopus and UpToDate databases, relevant articles for 2018-2022 were selected and processed by the title and abstracts, 20 scientific works were presented in this study. As a result, the situation of education in Azerbaijan was identified, one highlighted negative trends and prospects for the development of philological education in the context of digitalisation. The highlighted trends and forecasts give a new outline of the impact of digital technologies and the problems of changes in learning, knowledge sharing, and transformation in philological education. The findings open new perspectives on the relationship between science and society and the role of philological research in the context of digitalisation.

Keywords: pandemic, digitalisation, distance learning, philological education, digital society.

Introduction

Researches concerned with digitalisation are a valuable asset to the development of society and education. This scientific thought enables the design and implementation of effective methodical development strategies that serve as the basis for the construction of public knowledge and the new global challenges that have arisen with the pandemic (Anderson, 2018). This research allows to project a new dynamic of transition to responsible innovation that can master a globalized society and face new challenges and, particularly, the war in Ukraine, global warming, the factor of inequality between peoples (Kuorme & Heinla, 2020). That is why this study is designed to investigate the digitalisation of the humanities, which are part of a “digital humanism” (Koseoglu et al., 2020) and a new vision of the world, are important to address the challenges posed by the use of digital technology in higher education. The definition and implementation of national standards of education are the main trends in the development of education in modern Azerbaijan. Integration of education covers all levels of education, but most often it is used in the formation of the content of philological education (Jalilbayli, 2022).

Digital technology transforms the world because, like any revolutionary technology invented by humans, it transforms the society in which it was invented and integrated (Huwer et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to understand and predict this transformation in order to at least try to avoid disadvantages and especially to benefit the most from progress. In this context, Pacheco et al. (2018) emphasize that technology is a priori “neutral,” but its misuse by humans can lead to serious consequences. Digital technology-and at its core computing-is not just technology, it is also science, industry, and now culture (Mykhailyshyn et al., 2018). It is for this reason that modern education seeks to enable every educator to become a developer and not just a consumer of this transformation, to enable every educator to realize themselves in the new educational environment (Namestyuk et al., 2020). Langset et al. (2018) offer their contribution to digital learning in the context of current educational issues and challenges. The authors conduct digital science research in collaboration with other disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches, and primarily with the philological sciences, cognitive sciences, and neuroscience. In this context, let us add that an interdisciplinary approach should promote scholarly work, where the challenge is to know how to work together beyond disciplinary

relationships, focusing on some basic problems and knowing how to define methodologies for evaluating the results of this work, without which there can be no rigorous progress for the benefit of students (Dykhnych et al., 2022). The development of relevant and reliable knowledge, in the context of the accelerated evolution of the relevant practical field, is a challenge in itself. Progress is impossible without realizing that understanding the use of digital technologies in education and learning is not limited only to their technical and pedagogical aspects.

Research Problem

In order to foresee the changes of education in Azerbaijan in the era of digitalisation, a closed survey (anonymous questionnaire) was conducted among the teachers of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University in the field of philology. Based on the analysis of tangential works and questionnaires, trends and forecasts of future breakthroughs and prospects for the development of philological education were highlighted. As well as to describe the problems concerned with the shift to distance learning in during the pandemic and to show how these challenging could be undergone in the particular field of philology.

Research Focus

The highlighted trends and projections provide new insights into the impact of digital technologies and the challenges to learning, knowledge sharing, and transformation in scholarly practice. They open new perspectives on the relationship between science and society, as well as the role of philological research on digitalisation.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the article is the scope of philology in digital era, to describe the shift of face-to-face to distance learning in terms of digitalisation. The objectives are to show how challenging is it for students and educators to teach and learn in digitized modality considering the skills to be learned in this particular field of philology. To describe the prospects of knowledge acquisition and the means of its transfer in a technological process, to highlight the main axes for the successful digitalisation of philological education, to describe the negative trends and challenges facing Azerbaijani education in the pandemic.

Research Methodology

General Background

The following theoretical methods were used in the study: analysis of scientific and pedagogical research, synthesis of research results, and the main transformations of education in Azerbaijan. The empirical method of research combined with the modern method of interviewing online focus group, observation, and survey (closed anonymous questionnaire survey). The closed method of research questionnaire, observation, and survey of teachers of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University revealed the research questions.

Sample / Participants / Group

In the first phase, a questionnaire was administered to 100 faculty members from different departments in the field of philology. The study was conducted at Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University. In the cluster selection, philology professors were selected. They were sent a Google form with a questionnaire to their university mailboxes.

The focus group was offered an online questionnaire. All responses were analyzed in detail. All participants in the online focus group (100 participants, including all faculty members from different majors) provided approval of their willingness to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was conducted on the Internet in the author's own domain.

Instrument and Procedures

The online focus group method was used to obtain qualitative information. The respondents were the target audience of teachers of different higher groups who connected to an online form session. On their monitor screens, the moderator sent a google questionnaire form. The moderator chose google forms to make it easier for the online focus group, in case of poor computer typing skills. The google form offered was essentially a closed questionnaire. The scope of the qualitative questions given to the online focus group was to reveal their opinion concerning trends of education in the field of philology. Teachers were asked basic questions on trends in educational development:

1. Whether the gaps between the achievements of modern science and the content of the disciplines need to be bridged.

- a) yes
- b) no

2. The enrichment and modernization of the invariant component education is a priority.

- a) yes
- b) no

3. It is necessary to optimize the proportions between the humanities and natural-mathematical knowledge blocks.

- a) yes
- b) no

4. Humanization of the content of higher philological education is the main vector for its development.

- a) yes
- b) no

5. It is necessary to strengthen the training program by forming interdisciplinary integrated blocks of knowledge content.

- a) yes
- b) no

6. The intensifying of social and practical disciplines and the latest information technology introduction is prior.

- a) yes

b) no

7.The adaptation of curricula and their methodological support in accordance with the conditions and needs of a multicultural and multi-ethnic student body.

a) yes

b) no

8.Improving the organizational mechanisms and methodological foundations of curriculum knowledge to ensure that it is absorbed by the vast majority of students.

a) yes

b) no

Data Analysis

The object of the research as general population was the questioning. According to the focus-group answers the conclusions were applied. The sample population in the experiment was the respondents. The subject to study was the questioning. The units of the analysis were the answers of Dagestan Humanitarian Institute labor collective.

Today, the improvement of student training programs occupies one of the leading places in the overall context of the modernization of the content of higher education in Azerbaijan (Nodira, 2022). Characterizing the development of teaching content in the university and the institute, we can highlight the contradictory aspects, so important from the dialectical point of view of this process, as:

- Contradiction between the unlimited amount of knowledge accumulated by mankind and the limitations of educational programs. There is no full opportunity to reflect this knowledge in sufficient volume and with appropriate depth.

- Contradiction between the integrity of spiritual and practical experience of mankind and predominantly fragmentary or disciplinary way of teaching students.

- Contradiction between objective content of knowledge and objectivity of forms and modalities of their translation and assimilation.

- Contradiction between social conditionality of knowledge content and individual-subjective characteristics of students' needs and dispositions for its assimilation.

Research Results

2020 was a test case for the whole world, Azerbaijan was no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic has put higher education in an unprecedented situation and forced them to set up distance learning as the only alternative to striving for pedagogical continuity (Habibova, 2020). The results of a closed survey allowed investigating the impact of the pandemic on educational trends in the development of philological education, to highlight the problems faced by Azerbaijani teachers at the beginning of the transition to online learning, to determine the forecasts of digitalisation of university education in Azerbaijan. The first stage of the conducted closed-ended questionnaire revealed the main challenges, which were found in all the answers to the survey.

Table 1

Challenges During the Shift to Distance Learning During the Pandemic in Azerbaijan

Trends	Ratio	Teachers' Responses
Lack of contact with students	89% of teachers	Responded that at the beginning of the shift to distance learning, there was a lack of a unified database with the personal students emails
Technical problems	78% of teachers	Poor internet connection and inconsistency with the choice of initial online platform
Difficulties with connection	80% of teachers	The development of new digital skills requires time and rapid response in critical situations

Source: authors own development.

The following survey responses can be summarized by the fact that the rapid evolution of web technologies and the intensive use of social media have contributed to the introduction of many forms of distance learning and the accessibility of scientific information to all students. The widespread use of digital tools has had a major impact on higher education in Azerbaijan, changing the content and methods of teaching/learning.

Indeed, as the survey participants noted, most of the specialists in the field of philology have responded accordingly to the rapid digitalisation in the post-pandemic environment, as they have already acquired the necessary skills and abilities. It is about the instructional content development in the context of the permanent transformation of educational platforms, the use of social media, online resources, simulation centers, distance learning, computational cloud technology, and artificial intelligence. In the era of digitalisation, the communication tools of philological education are changing both education and science. Digitalisation is changing not only the content of philological education but also the traditional tools and methods of teaching humanities subjects, the role of the teacher and students.

Data Analysis

The main course of action for the future for philological studies was identified by survey participants as putting the student back at the center of learning. It is about re-examining the levels and types of constructed skills, teaching methods with not only the creation of a multimodal and decentralized personal learning environment but also with the creation of real individualized learning policies. An effective teaching is a necessary but not sufficient condition for educational transformation. It is necessary to plan teaching/learning activities, to guide the desire to learn, and to plan learning over time.

In this aspect, Arici et al. (2019) emphasize that the countries most advanced in integrating digital technology into education, such as South Korea, the Netherlands, and Australia, are those where this issue was approached from a pedagogical perspective. without hesitation in questioning the functioning of the education system. These are the countries where there was not only a strong pedagogical commitment but also a strong political will. As the authors explain, knowledge develops. In all disciplines, the processes of knowledge construction and education are being transformed, enriched by digital technologies. The aggregate of philological disciplines no longer allows for the construction of

the knowledge needed by a twenty-first-century person. It is important to consider new knowledge, to articulate it between them because of the transdisciplinary complexity and openness to the technological process.

It is believed that the main trend in the development of philological education in Azerbaijan is the change in the status of knowledge itself. It is about “humanities knowledge,” which becomes salutary in the face of global shifts and upheaval. The constant flow of new information complicates the mission of philological education. Its goal can no longer be limited to transmitting an established body of knowledge. It is now necessary to learn how to learn and acquire skills that will enable one to realize the new reality (Aliyeva et al., 2021). The ability of the Azerbaijani education system to integrate these dimensions is a condition for the success of education policy.

Of course, digital technologies are constantly questioning and rethinking the role and missions of teachers. This rethinking of their tasks, and therefore of the profession, goes side by side with the need of providing quality training in digital tools and systems for all teachers. This is the foundation of educational policy in Azerbaijan, integrating digital technologies. As Allahyarova (2023) writes, the integration of technology in its practice disrupts the modes of teaching-learning and, particularly, distance teaching requires new skills. The results of the closed survey identified various classifications of distance learning skills for teachers in the philological field. One distinguishes three main areas of competence:

Table 2
Classifications of Distance Learning Skills for Educators

Skill	Task
Pedagogical	course design
Cognitive	leadership (mentoring) learning and spiritual development
Social	communication, feedback
Managerial	learning management
Technological	digital skills
Facilitation	student supervision

Source: author’s own development.

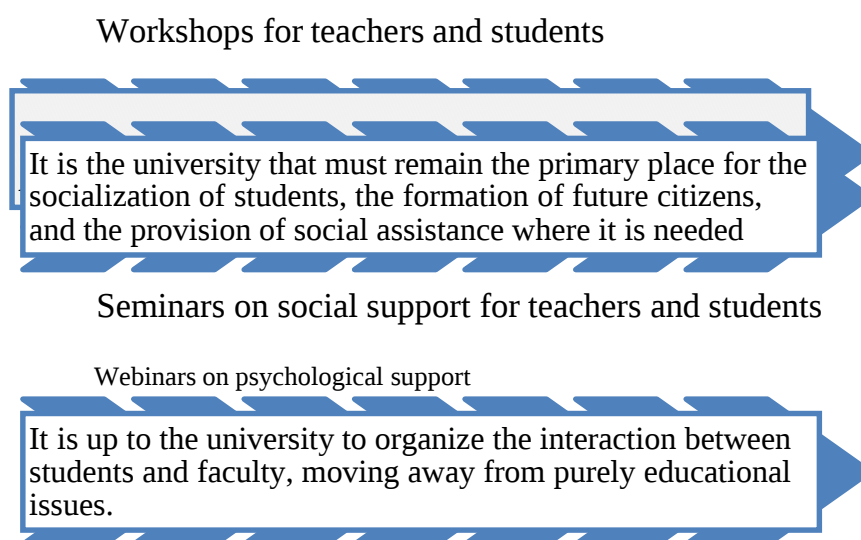
The major developments in distance learning concern the pedagogical design of courses and student support, with the need to see the student as “the learning foundation”. This implies creativity and solid training, which must be constantly enriched. Finally, the use of digital technologies in philological education requires explicit government support. Policies for the digitalisation of education may differ from country to country, but they cannot be limited to the infusion of financial resources. Policies must be the bearers of the vision of society, science, and education in a digital society. The digitalisation of teaching/learning and distance learning obviously completely changes teachers' pedagogy and their roles and missions and leads to a complete rethinking of their profession, which requires the development and implementation of appropriate training for all teachers in all areas of liberal arts education. A new vision of the world and strong political support are needed.

The crisis pedagogy aim is enabling every student to continue learning without productive cessation. Modern philological education in Azerbaijan seeks coherence in the educational process, articulation between projects and programs, multidisciplinary teamwork, and complementarity between educational actors.

Regarding the trends and prospects for future post-pandemic philological education in terms of the shifting to distance learning, first and foremost is the continued transformation of pedagogical methods. Even if the urgent transition to distance learning was at times critical, the technological capabilities and digital competence of educators have leveled and optimized the learning process. Now, despite the improvement in Azerbaijan, it is necessary to maintain a group spirit and work collegially in the vector of cutting-edge education. Never before have there been so many tools to achieve these goals, and they only get better every year.

Figure 1

Opportunities to Enhance Digital Skills in the Education of the Future



Source: author's own development.

Obviously, this means that in addition to the pedagogical transformation, it is necessary to offer the faculty the opportunity to improve digital qualifications. Drawing on the results of the survey, the impact on learning of combining experience, knowledge, and skills in the university community is reflected and analyzed. Such experiences allow the articulation of research dimensions, humanities learning, and teaching that are important when it comes to digital university pedagogy.

Discussion

Today, learning is redefining its form. The granularization of knowledge opens up the process of digital multimodal creativity. In recent years, new information and communication technologies have developed to such an extent that there are almost no sectors that do not yet use computers for information transfer and communication. This development of digital technologies has not bypassed humanities education, in particular the philological sciences, so that most educators in this field have not only accepted the idea that the introduction of digitalisation into education is inevitable, but they have also realized that this evolution creates many challenges for them. This explains why information and communication technologies are increasingly part of any philologist's basic tools, and why modern philology is becoming, at least in part, digital.

According to Arora and Srinivasan (2020), all educational processes must be revised. In the context of this work, it is worth noting the SMAC model proposed by scholars (Sociality, Mobility, Analytics, and Cloud). Its aim is to develop a digital culture, turning all objects of digitalisation into learning objects, epicentralized around pedagogical coherence. Indeed, in terms of the rapid development of technology, the education of Azerbaijan is in an age when it is necessary to “learn everything together”. Digitalisation of the country is in a period of mastery, but one should not forget that the mastery has the same basis as the art, requiring the creation by these tools of pedagogical harmony, carrying the message of collective progress (Gillpatrick, 2020).

Azerbaijan's education system faces the challenge of preparing educators with the professional skills that will enable them to work effectively in a digitalized environment. In practice, advanced public universities operate in a competitive environment and are therefore proactive. This is why humanities universities are entering into networked partnerships with technical universities to train a new generation of humanities professionals with a technical slant and science and technology professionals with a humanities slant, something that has been impossible to imagine until now. At the same time, teaching has been partially shifted to an interactive environment: the growth of massive open online courses and the development of cloud-based educational platforms have attracted universities to the digital space. In the near future, we are likely to encounter a “duplication” of universities: there is the existence of a conventional “material” university and its “digital twin” on the Internet, both of which will be able to work together and offer their own educational programs.

There is no doubt that in order to keep up with digitalisation, a set of new skills and competencies is needed. Every educator must have the know-how and knowledge that is a must in the face of technological advances. This is important not only to understand the essence of the production process and how to simplify it with technology but also to be able to manage this process and to be able to evaluate the results of digitalisation (Namestiuk, 2022).

One of the main trends is the transfer of an important part of the educational process to the Internet, blurring the boundary between the so-called “classical university” and the “newest private” education. In Azerbaijan, the market of paid online courses amounts to hundreds of thousands of students per year and continues to grow rapidly. The system of formal education will increasingly have to compete with these educational innovations, which implies an inevitable partnership between the education system and enterprises and the need to develop modular and network forms of education.

Each modern institution of higher education seeks to reflect the interests of the field for which it trains specialists. Although the field of philology shows a pronounced tendency toward digitalisation, this cannot but affect the approach to learning. Today, a number of liberal arts universities in Azerbaijan are setting up working groups to teach digital know-how to students and teachers. Some universities go further, developing master's programs for future CDOs (Directors of Digital Technology), participating in the creation of online courses and textbooks.

In this aspect, it is worth noting Fensham-Smith (2019). In this work, the author résumés that during the greatest crisis and the transition to distance learning, all educators felt a lack of the necessary level of technological education. Indeed, the results of this survey show that this lack of digital skills is largely due to the absence of training in the field. A similar opinion is expressed by European scientists. The authors presented the results of their study highlighting the interest in the contribution of cognitive psychology in the field of distance collaborative learning (Dubé & Wen, 2022) and, therefore, the need to introduce cognitive science into the curriculum of philological subjects. In his work, in a collaborative

learning context, Castro (2019) aimed to develop hypertext references to help understand scientific text in French L2, in a plurilingual context, and pre-and post-test assessment tools in the form of concept maps. A systemic analysis of the complex field of biology, homeostatic equilibrium, consisting of subsystems, allowed the development of an experimental text involving an intrasystem and inter-system type of information, as well as hypertext links consisting of explanations of both types of information. Biology students who participated in the experiment completed three readings, followed by three tasks to recall the learned material and therefore comprehensible information, one unaided reading, one reading with hyperlinks and intra- or inter-system explanations, and one distance paired reading. The results indicate the effectiveness of the method. The post-test concept maps created by students indicated that they understood and integrated scientific concepts and causal relationships between concepts. This study showed the interest and the need to create specific and thorough teacher training in the era of digitalisation of society, in the context of distance learning and globalization.

Aru-Chabilan (2020), in a similar experiment, presented one of the few research studies on the methodological principles derived from an experimental approach to the effects of digital technology on future elementary school teachers' outcomes. The results showed that students accustomed to using digital technology in the classroom understood what they were reading faster and better. The reading speed of hypertext documents acquired by students accustomed to using digital technology was impressive (+30%). In addition, this reading speed does not harm students' academic performance. It confirms that this is indeed a new selective reading mode (learning effective navigation) (Motornaya, 2022). The results show that the skills learned in these systems can advance the reading skills in general.

Speaking about the development of philological science, let us recall Ishchenko et al. (2022) with ideas about the perspective pedagogy – the base configuration of the functions of education: from the role of preservation of the past to the role of stabilizer in a changing world. According to the authors, it is necessary to analyze the current trends in order to identify the consequences that will later have a strong echo and materialize in objects and dangers for 2-3 decades.

The question to be clarified today is whether philological education should focus on cultivating the capacity to adapt to changes or on cultivating a critical attitude toward that change (Hodges et al., 2020).

A possible answer would be that a philological education should develop the capacity for change control, which means developing the critical spirit and attributes necessary to create new meanings. This is not a set of specific skills very important to the modern professional, but rather the ability to understand and anticipate trends in modernity. Usually, there is a general skill set and body of knowledge that every experienced employee should have. This has always been taught in universities, that digitalisation forces you to the further development: to learn to analyze goals, to understand the relationship between processes, people, and machines, and to look for ways to improve your own efficiency.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of this scholarly work survey lead to the reconsideration of philological education in the XXI century, with the generalization of digital technologies in all spheres of life and society. One illuminates this need as follows: the informational flow leads to a generalized competition of all ideas, a deregulation of the 'cognitive market,' with the unfortunate consequence of hijacking, often for the worse. Today, the human attention endures the "impact of screens" and is ace to the misunderstanding of the "new". The society's response to the progress will depend on the possibilities of escape from what

should be called a civilizational threat (Han et al., 2019). Although modern philology has no longer the monopoly on the dissemination of ideas and knowledge as in previous centuries, it must refocus on the fundamental missions that only philology can fulfill and position itself at the center of society, especially with the regard to digital technologies.

It is the philological science that must ensure the respect for the values of the educational system: the access to education for all, the equality of access to knowledge, the guarantee the relevance of information and knowledge, and the evaluation of the process of knowledge construction in students.

It is up to philology to provide humanities students with “deep knowledge,” so it should be able to help them to build the competence in prioritizing information and thus enable students to develop structured knowledge, to implement it, and therefore to promote coherence in their own actions.

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