



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PRIVATE
COMMERCIAL AND COMPETITION LAW
(IIPCCL - AUSTRIA)

Research Article

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Modern Tools, Real Classrooms: Impact and Sustainability of Akelius E – learning in Albania

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/bjir-2026-0011>

Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of students' and teachers' perceptions of the Akelius digital language learning platform in Albanian public schools. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from 100 students and four English language teachers with qualitative insights derived from classroom observations and teacher reflections. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, incorporating descriptive statistics and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha). The findings indicate high levels of student motivation, engagement, vocabulary development, and integrative participation. At the same time, the study identifies notable pedagogical and infrastructural challenges affecting the effective implementation of the platform. Overall, this research contributes to the educational technology literature by offering a detailed analysis and evidence-based recommendations for the implementation of blended and integrated digital learning environments.

Keywords: educational technology, blended learning, Akelius, inclusive education.

1. Introduction

Educational technology has become a fundamental component of education systems worldwide. The rapid process of digital transformation, further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly reshaped teaching and learning practices, highlighting both the potential and the limitations of virtual platforms within classroom settings. In Albania, the Akelius Digital Language Learning Initiative was introduced in 2020 and subsequently integrated into primary education as part of broader national strategies aimed at enhancing digital competence and promoting inclusive education (Evaluation Report: Using Akelius at IOAFP, n.d.). This study examines the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the platform, with

a particular focus on pedagogical effectiveness, learner motivation, and educational equity.

2. Literature Review

Research in educational technology consistently emphasizes that digital tools are most effective when embedded within coherent pedagogical frameworks rather than used as isolated technological solutions (OECD, 2021). Blended learning approaches that integrate digital technologies with face-to-face instruction have been shown to enhance student engagement, autonomy, and overall learning outcomes (OECD, 2022). UNESCO (2021) highlights that technology can promote educational equity only when issues related to access, teacher preparedness, and integrative instructional design are systematically addressed. Within the field of foreign language education, technology-enhanced learning environments provide multimodal input that supports vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and learner confidence.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected using structured Likert-scale questionnaires administered to students and teachers, while qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and informal teacher reflections. The participants consisted of 100 students aged 9–10 years and four English language teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience. All participating teachers had received formal training in the use of the Akelius Digital Language Learning Initiative platform.

4. Results – Students’ SPSS Analysis

Table 1. Students’ Descriptive Statistics (N = 100)

Indicator	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Ease of use of Akelius	100	0	0
Enjoyment of learning English	100	0	0
Motivation through games	87	10	3
Vocabulary improvement	92	5	3
Preference for independent learning	85	10	5

The results presented in Table 1 indicate high levels of student acceptance and motivation. All students reported ease of use and enjoyment, suggesting that the platform is developmentally appropriate for primary school learners. The observed increase in motivation through game-based activities aligns with theoretical perspectives on gamification, which emphasize engagement and intrinsic motivation (Berdousis, 2025, pp. 70–84). Vocabulary development emerged as the most significant learning outcome, highlighting the effectiveness of the platform in providing repetitive exposure and multimodal input (Akelius A2 Level – A Practical Guide for English Language Teachers, 2024). However, lower reported improvements in writing and listening skills suggest that these areas may require additional teacher-guided instruction and structured classroom activities.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics – Students’ Questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach’s Alpha (α)
Students’ perceptions scale	0.86

The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.86 indicates strong internal consistency, suggesting that the student questionnaire reliably measures perceptions of motivation, engagement, and perceived learning outcomes.

5. Results – Teachers’ SPSS Analysis

Table 3. Teachers’ Descriptive Statistics (Likert Scale 1–5)

Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Integration of language skills	4.75	0.5
Student motivation	4.5	0.58
Engagement and gamification	4.75	0.5
Progress monitoring	4.25	0.96
Support for students with SEN	5.0	0.0

Teachers’ responses indicate consistent agreement across all pedagogical dimensions. The highest mean score for supporting students with special educational needs highlights the platform’s inclusive potential, particularly in diverse classroom settings. Low variability in responses reflects a strong consensus among teachers, while slightly lower scores in progress monitoring suggest potential challenges

related to class size and time constraints (Blended Learning Using the Akelius Digital Language Learning Platform, 2024).

Table 4. Reliability Statistics – Teachers’ Questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach’s Alpha (α)
Teachers’ perceptions scale	0.89

The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.89 indicates excellent internal consistency, supporting the reliability of the teachers’ questionnaire and strengthening the robustness of the findings.

6. Discussion

The integrated findings from SPSS analysis of both students and teachers indicate that Akelius Digital Language Learning Initiative is most effective when implemented as a pedagogically mediated digital tool within a blended learning framework. Students’ high levels of motivation and engagement align with teachers’ perceptions of improved skill integration and comprehensive learner support. These results reinforce international research emphasizing the central role of teacher mediation in the implementation of educational technology (OECD, 2021). Rather than replacing traditional instruction, the platform complements classroom practice by providing structured opportunities for repetition, visual support, and individualized pacing. From an inclusion perspective, the platform’s multimodal design offers particular benefits for learners with special educational needs and those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, supporting the emphasis on equity-oriented digital education advanced by UNESCO (2021).

It should be noted that these conclusions are based on perceptions rather than direct causal effects on language achievement. Nevertheless, positive perceptions represent an important prerequisite for the sustainable integration of technology in educational settings.

7. Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The relatively small sample of participating teachers limits the generalizability of the findings, while the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. In addition, this study does not examine the influence of parental or legal guardian support on students’ academic performance. However, research in education consistently shows that students whose parents demonstrate interest and support are more likely to achieve higher academic success (Haryanto, 2024, pp. 19–36). Parental involvement has been found to enhance student motivation and create a positive learning environment at

home, leading to improved concentration and better study habits. Furthermore, active parental participation in school activities and regular communication with teachers is associated with higher student self-esteem. Conversely, insufficient parental support may contribute to lower academic performance, increased absenteeism, and a higher risk of school dropout (Lin, 2025, pp. 1–10). Understanding the role of parental engagement is therefore essential for developing effective strategies to improve student outcomes. Infrastructural challenges, including limited internet connectivity, insufficient access to digital devices, and large class sizes, may also affect the consistency and quality of platform use (Lytvynova & Demeshkant, 2024). These contextual factors should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Akelius Digital Language Learning Initiative be systematically integrated into structured blended learning routines rather than used intermittently. Teachers should receive ongoing professional development focused on pedagogical integration rather than solely on technical training. Schools and policymakers should invest in strengthening digital infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to devices. Collaboration between English language teachers and ICT specialists may further enhance students' digital competence. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, larger sample sizes, and objective measures of language achievement to strengthen the evidence base.

Additional Implications

- Develop differentiated teacher training programs that address varying levels of digital competence to ensure effective integration of Akelius in classroom practice.
- Promote peer collaboration and the exchange of best practices among teachers to establish communities of practice focused on blended learning.
- Implement regular student feedback mechanisms to monitor engagement and identify opportunities for improvement in the digital learning experience.
- Explore integration of Akelius with other educational technologies to create a more cohesive and comprehensive learning ecosystem.
- Ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is considered in the design of content and activities to improve accessibility and relevance.
- Establish clear institutional policies to safeguard student data privacy and ensure the ethical use of digital learning tools.

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