CHAPTER 9

THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF AUTHORING TOOLS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language classrooms around the world have experienced new pathways with the changing trends in recent decades. For the 21st century, it can be said that one of the most effective change factors in the language classroom is technology. With the help of ongoing research on teaching language skills with technological tools, significant changes have been observed in recent decades. Nowadays, the students require 21st century skills, ICT (Information and Communication) skills, and language skills at the same time in order to fulfill the requirements of being a 21st century citizen. Many countries started to implement 21st century skills in a cross curricular way (Ananidou and Clara 2009), and Turkey is one of them. According to the public announcement made by Ministry of National Education in 2017 (see the References), 21st century skills have been added to the curriculum in many subjects. Competencies have been redefined in the curricula of many subjects in line with 21st century skills, and competencies in English have also been redefined under the umbrella term "21st century skills".

When 21st century skills are taken into consideration, a big discussion can be observed in terms of their definitions, concepts and requirements. On this issue, Dede (2010) highlights that 21st century skills are named differently by different people due to the fact that people name the concepts in the same way but they mean different areas. In that sense, Dede names this situation as a 'reverse Tower of Babel problem.' It can be said that mostly accepted and common terms named for 21st century skills in publications are 4Cs (namely communication, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking). For creativity skill, Halverson (2018) points out that teachers require flexibility; thus, by making the students choose from a va-

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se kinds of tools provide us an enriched educational experience when compared with the days we used to have.

All in all, it must also be kept in mind that "A computer program, no matter how sophisticated, is not the same as actual, direct exposure to another culture" (Gong, 2002, p. 9). On condition that chances are available, direct exposure to another culture is the best way to develop the speaking skill. However, provided that conditions are not suitable, virtual authoring tools might be the ways to foster the speaking skills of the 21st century digital natives. It is expected that the results of the present study might shed light on the practitioners so that they would add authoring tools in line with their particular needs into their syllabi.

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