

THE POTENTIAL OF ICTs IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Summary

This study sets out to give a general overview of the availability of technology for foreign language (FL) teaching and learning today, to outline the various uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in this sector, to provide a few, selected studies of best practice, illustrating meaningful deployment of these resources, and to point towards future developments and possible implementation in the coming decade. It highlights the importance and the role of the teacher in ICT rich foreign language learning environment and shows how such environments can contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: ICT, approach, teaching and learning technologies, ESL/EFL, technical tools, language programmes.

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ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИХ КОМУНІКАТИВНИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ У ВИВЧЕННІ МОВИ

Анотація

Дане дослідження ставить собі за мету дати загальне уявлення про доступність інформаційних технологій при вивченні та викладанні іноземної мови сьогодні. У статті показано різні види інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій (ІКТ) в цьому секторі; проаналізовано кілька виокремлених підходів до навчання; проілюстровано суттєве поширення таких ресурсів, а також зазначено важливість та можливі шляхи розвитку ІКТ в навчанні іноземної мови у найближче десятиліття. Автори статті підкреслюють важливість та роль викладача в середовищі навчання іноземної мови з використанням ІКТ та аналізують, який внесок може зробити таке середовище у розвиток міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: ІКТ, підхід, технології викладання та навчання, технічні засоби, мовні програми.

Problem formulation in general. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS1) held in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2003 emphasized that we are in the midst of an information revolution, where the accelerating convergence between telecommunications, broadcasting multimedia and information and communication technologies is creating new products and services, as well as redefining ways of conducting business and commerce. The impact upon education and training is only just beginning to be felt, and

there is an increasing awareness that changes of paradigm are needed, if the new media are to be used effectively and to the advantage of all.

In a world divided by clashes of cultures and beliefs, the potential of the new media for fostering intercultural understanding and exchange is enormous. In the history of mankind, access to information and knowledge has never been so straightforward at a local, regional, national, or global level. Judicious deployment of ICTs can encourage and sustain cultural and linguistic diversity in individuals and in society in general. Facilitating access to other cultures and languages is the chief goal of the language teaching profession, and using ICT resources effectively in their teaching represents one of the chief challenges facing language teachers today.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recently, education has encountered the new challenge of restructuring under the rapid development of information technology (Ehrmann, 1995; Guskin, 1994; Handy, 1998; Owston, 1997). In many institutions, administrators have high expectations that the potential of instructional technology can be realized to serve better educational clientele (Duchastel, 1997). Implementing the use of technology in teaching and learning and planning for students' diverse learning styles requires fundamental changes in many areas of an institution.

The term New Technology includes communication techniques for language teaching in which the personal computer plays a central role [4]. There are, however, other technological tools that can be utilized in language learning besides computers. Each technological tool has its specific benefits and application with one of the four language parts (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). However, in order to use these techniques successfully, the ELL student should be familiar with using computers and internet, and capable of interacting with these techniques. The effect of technology has become huge in teaching and learning the language in addition to the instructor's role. In other words, the role of the instructor together with the role of the technology can lead to advanced learning results [8]

Technology and English language education are related to each other [9]. During the sixties and seventies of the last century English language learning laboratories were being used in various educational institutions. The traditional language laboratory was consisted of a number of small cabinets, provided with a cassette deck, a microphone and a headphone for each one. Teachers use a central control panel to monitor their students' interactions. The main advantage of that type of technology was that verbal behavior of students would help them to quickly learn the second language. The students' skills can be enhanced by encountering more practical drill problems. Although the

language laboratory was a positive step in linking technology and this technique was actually tedious and boring for learners [9]. Also, there were minimal interactions between the teacher and his students. Computer assisted language learning (CALL) software has provided another teaching tool for second language education. The use of computers in English language classroom is useful for both teachers and learners. Currently, there are numerous software application programs available such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation programs, spelling check utilities, electronic workbooks, reading and writing programs, and different learning packages to assist instructors in creating tutorial exercises to enhance their English language courses.

Main research. It is well known that our new life is highly affected by the era of information technology, and technology plays an important role in today's human society development. Based on this fact, it is indispensable to take advantage of the modern technological facilities in aiding the task of English language education. Students trying to learn English as a second language need further language support. They need to practice in hearing language, reading language, speaking language, and writing language in order to develop their experience and skills [11]. For doing such tasks, they are in need of using various tools which can help them learn the language easily and effectively. ICTs can expand access to language programmes and improve the quality of teaching and learning in general. The World Wide Web expands the classroom context and provides access to current, up-to-date materials from the country or countries of the target language, offering learners and teachers a plethora of materials in different modes, bringing the foreign culture and language to life and making it more tangible.

There is no doubt that having (or not having) excellent technological skills will make a major difference in the lives and futures of our students. Their careers will increasingly rely on the ability to maneuver easily in technological environments, and to learn new technology quickly. Yet there are a number of challenges that educators face when trying to help ELLs get up to speed:

- **Language:** In order to make the most of instructional technology, ELLs need to have the language skills and vocabulary necessary to understand how to use the technology.

- **Limited access:** Many ELLs may not have access to a computer or the Internet in their home. They also may not know about the services available through the school or library, or they may be unable to get to the library on a regular basis.

- **Different levels of experience:** In one classroom, a teacher may have a student who learned to use the computer as a toddler, and another who is sitting

in front of a computer for the first time. This requires that teachers develop their own ability to differentiate technology instruction for their students.

- **School infrastructure:** While many schools around the country have invested heavily in technical infrastructure and equipment, many have not — including numerous schools serving ELLs.

- **Keeping up:** It's hard for teachers to keep up with new jargon, information overload, and the latest technical tools and trends — not to mention the ways these things all relate to the classroom!

Despite these challenges, however, there are a number of instructional strategies that teachers (even with limited technical experience) can use to help students' build technical skills and digital literacy. For ELL students learning technology, it is especially important to focus on effective teaching strategies that are commonly used in other content areas, such as academic language development and meaningful interaction with the content.

We mean by English language skills, the development of the main parts or elements of the language which are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each language subject or area has different educational tools that are likely suited with it. The use of several technical tools has a significant effect on the learning process of each area of the language [8].

Audio devices: The most popular and most widely used devices appropriated by modern language teachers remain the CD player and the audiocassette recorder. More recently, the Web has served as an additional source of authentic listening materials thanks to the possibility of fast downloads using MP3 software. **Video:** The use of moving images linked to sound provides learners with exposure to all important elements of spoken communication: gestures, proxemics, pronunciation, intonation, all embedded in natural, cultural contexts. And devices like DVD players, videocassettes, web sources, the laserdisc and video cameras readily supply these. Thanks to modern technology, scenes can be located, isolated and replayed at random and there is an abundance of literature suggesting how to exploit film/video sequences meaningfully. Different forms of visual support can now be offered (e.g. optional sub-titles in the mother tongue or target language to assist understanding and facilitate access to the language). **Television and radio broadcasts:** Both satellite and terrestrial radio and television programmes offer cheap access to contemporary, authentic, and potentially culturally rich programmes for the language learner. The immediacy of current affairs programmes ensures that learners' exposure to the language is up-to-date and embedded in the real world of native speakers. Linked to modern recording equipment, broadcast radio and television also offer the advantages

of the audio and video devices mentioned above. A number of broadcasting companies still produce broadcasts, which are at their most effective when combined with face-to-face courses in educational institutions. Broadcasts are particularly useful for reaching sectors of the population who might not normally think of taking up language learning, but who might be wooed by attractive "taster" courses highlighting interesting or exciting elements in the target culture. **Telephone:** ISDN has gone a long way to overcoming the problem of the relatively poor quality of analogue transmissions, which has so far prevented this medium from being widely used for language teaching. Audio exchanges via the Internet now also provide possibilities for real time synchronous oral communication. The principal uses of the telephone to date have been limited to supplementary tutoring for those engaged in distance education. However, with the advent of digital quality and lower connection costs, there is now considerable potential for its extended use – including the possibility of conference calls. **Computers:** With the introduction of the multimedia computer, the learner and teacher have at their disposal an instrument, which can combine all the advantages of the above-mentioned media in a compact and easily accessible form. The computer may be used as a local machine (stand-alone) or within a network. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) software, CD-ROMs, and office software applications have become commonplace in many teaching/learning environments, and the case studies in Graham Davies' article in this volume illustrate how teachers are making use of them. [2]

All necessary learning skills can be developed by means of multimedia. Multimedia can: • enhance learning in different locations and institutions of diverse quality; • present opportunities to students working at different rates and levels; provide (tirelessly, without holding up other students) repetition when repetition is warranted to reinforce skills and learning; and • compensate, in the short term, for high student populations and limited numbers of trained and experienced teachers – in combination with robust teacher development initiatives and improvements in teachers' working conditions. Updates to content ware can ensure that teachers and students encounter and have the chance to work with current and authentic sources. Such encounters tie learning to the most important events of our time and underscore the general idea that knowledge itself is not fixed and finalized, that there is a universe of discoveries and a library of analyses that can be available to students." [7]

The use of computers in listening problems provides students with visual and voice inputs which can enhance their information and ideas, and develop

their listening skills [5]. Computer-based listening tests are very important in reinforcing the understanding skills of the listener. CD-ROM based learning films can also provide significant advantages over the traditional methods. Finally, Internet voice chatting using the second language may also aid the communication capabilities of the student.

Listening to TV and radio educational language programs is another technical way for developing the understanding ability. However, the listening student should be careful in selecting the specific programs that are suitable for his/her needs. News satellite TV channels, like the BBC, are also useful for practicing with audio and video media.

The use of CD-player devices is another modern tool for listening comprehension. CD-players are electronic instruments used specifically to run audio CD-ROMs. Lectures and listening examinations can be saved on these audio CDs for latter use by the ELL student. Tap-recorders are one of the oldest technical listening tools, and their use is rapidly decreasing nowadays. However, they are still be utilized in certain cases and are attached with some English language learning text-books.

Computers can raise the interest of reading for learners by the use of simple and easy to understand text. Reading-based computer programs can be used to improve the word vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students. This also can enable ELL students to increase their interaction with texts, pay their attention to individual needs, and enhance their abilities to read texts they would not otherwise be able to read [11]. Computers can perform several tasks simultaneously and run programs at a very high speed. Learning computer programs can check exercises after they are performed by students, move students gradually from easy to more difficult problems according to their abilities. Computers can also be used to correct answers for the learners, and to simulate tests in an easy to understand manner [1]. Multimedia are computer programs that use a mixture of text, graphics, sound, video, and animation. Multimedia computer programs can increase the motivation for learners to develop their vocabulary and reading skills. The Internet is certainly a modern technological way for persons hope to develop their English language skills. There are many Internet web sites prepared solely to enhance the reading abilities of English language learners. There are also a huge number of resources available in the form of newspapers, magazines, journals, electronic libraries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and newsletters [6]. Browsing these resources and sites will obviously enhance the learner's vocabulary and reading ability.

The use of ICT is widespread in contemporary society and it impinges upon almost all forms of human interaction. Its presence and usage have brought about changes of patterns in communicative behavior, above all in the spheres of business and administration, and governments throughout the world have become increasingly aware of the need to provide education and training to meet the challenges and opportunities, which the global economy, fuelled by developments in ICT, presents. The new technologies are breaking down borders and barriers at a faster rate than is possible in physical terms. Sudden, unexpected encounters with other languages and cultures confront people throughout the world with new choices, opportunities and challenges. Thanks to the WWW, access to authentic materials has never been easier; vast linguistic resources and an exhaustive range of materials are available in almost all languages in the world, ready for immediate exploitation.

Conclusion and further prospects. The positive affordances of ICTs in FLT/FLL have been recognized in most educational contexts; the technology and materials are available, but ongoing training is essential if we are to reap the benefits of the rich learning environment, which ICTs offer for foreign language learning. As training and education become increasingly time and place independent, new models must be found to integrate the new media into a principled approach to teaching and learning, which enriches and supplements traditional materials and well-tried delivery systems in existing institutions. The different contributions in this study show some of the potential of the new technologies for language learning and language teaching. They also warn us of being over-optimistic. Above all, they recommend careful analysis of specific needs for different educational contexts before deploying the media, and advocate conscientious planning at all stages of the introduction and implementation of new programs and programmes.

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ПОТЕНЦИАЛ ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация

Данное исследование ставит своей целью дать общее представление о доступности информационных технологий при изучении и преподавании иностранного языка сегодня. В статье показаны различные виды информационно-коммуникационных технологий (ИКТ) в этом секторе. Проанализированы несколько выделенных подходов к обучению и

проілюстровано суттєве розповсюдження таких ресурсів. Зазначено важливість і можливі шляхи розвитку ІКТ в навчанні іноземній мові в найближчому десятилітті. Авторами статті підкреслюється важливість і роль викладача в середовищі навчання іноземній мові з використанням ІКТ і аналізують цей питання з точки зору розвитку міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключеві слова: ІКТ, підхід, технології викладання і навчання, технічні засоби, мовні програми.

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АКТУАЛІЗАЦІЯ ЗНАТЬ З БЕЗПЕКИ ЖИТТЄДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ТА ОХОРОНИ ПРАЦІ ЯК ОДИН З АСПЕКТІВ ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ПРАКТИЧНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ЕКОНОМІСТІВ

Анотація

Досліджуються шляхи підвищення ефективності практичної підготовки студентів у вищих навчальних закладах під час проходження виробничої та навчальної практик.