

DEPLOYING TECHNOLOGY: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rising and development of Information Technology offers a spectacular pattern to explore the new teaching model and to provide an effective way to teach language. The use of internet and multimedia in language teaching is a major breakthrough as it gives an outstanding platform to language teachers who have always been avid users of technology. In the present era of globalisation an appropriate use of these wonderful sources may prove a powerful tool to the teaching fraternity to excel in the respective field and to meet unavoidable challenges of language teaching. It also enables them to fulfill an ever growing demand of the students and to satisfy them to the fullest. An infusion of technology into the classroom surely strengthens the bond between trainers and learners by providing them with an effective and entertaining tool of teaching. Thus the present paper critically analyses the use of internet and multimedia in language teaching and simultaneously introduces suggestions and strategy for an effective teaching in order to offer an absolute solution to the most controversial educational issue of teaching a foreign language to the linguistically diverse students.

INTRODUCTION

Time, space and intelligence are all inseparably linked. Man's passion to be more intelligent, to go farther in space and faster in time is not new. What has changed is the fantastic ease and speed of travel and communication now available. We have created a situation where nomadism of people and their possession is constantly increasing. The society cannot escape this new nomadism. Mobility and distance show how diverse training needs are today and how classical educational systems rigid in time, space and content are no longer able to provide solutions. The current situation is favourable for the elaboration of new models for teaching and learning. Multimedia resources such as interactive online games, video clips, podcasts and data sets allow the trainers to address a range of learning styles and meet the need of every learner. While showing video to the entire class or overseeing individual online interaction multimedia resources can provide a gateway to a whole new level of learning for the trainers and learners.

In the current scenario computer assisted language learning has become a trend. It gears up the process of language learning mainly because of the availability of a wide range of technological tools. The language learners no more feel pressurised as they get a lot to choose from the wonderful world of technology including word processor, websites, e-mail, chat, wikis, blogs, podcasts, online reference tools, Radio, TV, CD Rom, Computers, C.A.L.L., the Internet, Electronic Dictionary and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's. It has surely offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching and learning model. It has reduced the anxiety of students and pressure of trainers providing them with a positive and harmonious environment for mutual growth.

The effective use of Internet and multimedia helps in making teaching interesting and more productive. Modern technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change. It lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture. Technology is utilized for the upliftment of modern styles; it satisfies both visual and auditory senses of the students.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Technology in language teaching is not new. Indeed, technology has been around in language teaching for decades – one might agree for centuries, if we classify the blackboard as a form of technology, tape recorders, language laboratories and video have been in use since the 1960s, and 1970s, and are still used in classrooms around the world. Dudeney and Hockly, 2007

Technology is the broad term used to address any kind of media (electronic or otherwise) which help support learning. Technology is used for teaching primarily the same knowledge and skills that teachers teach in the classroom. What is special about technology is that it provides opportunities to supplement familiar teaching strategies in important ways. In connection with the advancement of information technologies, the view upon the multimedia and internet has changed considerably.

With the web based technologies and the internet the foreign language students now have access to authentic material and native speakers at any time. One of the goals of the trainer should be to identify ways in which students can effectively take advantages of these rich resources to enhance their learning and improve their foreign language skills. For the students who would like to practice their new language skills outside of the classroom, a wealth of opportunities now exists through the web and the internet. Like most things the effectiveness of technology depends on how it is used. One needs to be creative exploring the web and its capabilities, discovering what works and what doesn't and as one

becomes more familiar with these resources one can find opportunities to improve language skills that go well beyond what is offered in the traditional textbook.

Didactic software presents new subject matter in a more interesting way, for instance animation, pictures, authentic photos, video sequences, etc. Each of them can be accompanied by sound or spoken word. It is dynamic and addresses all senses of a learner. Information is presented in a great variety of ways. The student is no longer passive in the learning process due to various forms in which a piece of information is delivered to him/her. As a result, students understand a new subject matter more easily, quickly and their motivation and interest are stimulated.

Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures. There are many techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situation. Some are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. The teaching principle should be to appreciate new technologies in the areas and functions where they provide something decisively new, useful and never let machines takeover the role of the teacher or limit functions where more traditional ways are superior. There are various reasons why all language learners and teachers must know how to make use of the new technology. Here we also need to emphasize that the new technologies develop and disseminate so quickly that we cannot avoid their attraction and influence in any form.

When implementing multimedia in a language classroom, it is essential to possess factual information from a particular field of study. Moreover the teacher has to have some ICT competences as well. Of course, it is up to the teacher to prepare a reasonable activity aimed at work with the internet. He/she also has to take into consideration proficiency level of students and inform them about appropriate web pages, giving them relevant addresses. Students have to be warned in advance that not all information is true and valuable and thus suitable as a studying material. It is essential to train students in the ability to select information on www pages. In case of young learners, language multimedia programmes are suitable. Adult learners can benefit from programmes with their own solutions, making use of the internet.

TRADITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES VS. NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Radio/TV	Computers
Audiotapes/ CDs	Data Projectors
Videotapes/DVDs	Internet and Web
Cameras	Standalone Software

Telephones	MP3 Players Handheld Devices/ Cellphones Interactive Whiteboards
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TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE TEACHING: AN ANALYSIS

21st century students are tech – savvy, worldly and quick to shrug off what can't be proven. Today's students see right through false claims that learning a language is easy. The notion that one can play an audio program while drifting off to sleep and wake up fluent, an idea that once seemed seductively easy, is now dismissed as a myth.

The fundamental question is what kind of improved educational systems are we going to propose for our society of tomorrow given the rapid transformation of information technology? Their use should correspond to students' level of proficiency, state of mind and overall conditions in the whole group or classroom. However, an evaluation of mutually interconnected issues related to teaching process is an inseparable part of using any teaching aid, including computers. Good didactic aids can be helpful both in the teaching and learning processes. They can be designed in a way so that they respect individual differences and endowments of the learner, including learning styles. Innovation of teaching process can be achieved by means of internet that can be used in the following ways:

- Provides the trainer vocabulary, grammatical phenomena, information on culture and also develops their independence and self- studying abilities through active participation in communication process.
- An eternal source of information on varied topics.
- Includes the work with authentic texts and numerous perspectives of the studied phenomena that require analytical and critical thinking.
- Nurture a passion to learn more and more.

ADVANTAGES

1. Fun to use: Nowadays the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment fail to arouse students' interest in the teaching process. On the contrary multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally and humanely draws learners' attention towards fruitful work e.g. the traditional pattern including class boards and books appear to be old fashioned. References to events technological devices or procedures in these manuals appear to be obsolete. The reading text on debatable topics which normally should lead to an animated discussion often seen a passé. The audio resource found on the CD provides needed samples of voices other than teacher's. It provides accurate accent and pronunciation pattern for a particular term and gear up the process of language teaching.

Moreover it greatly cultivates interest and makes learning a fun.

2. Increased motivation: Traditional teaching has hampered students' capacity to comprehend certain language resulting in the passive participation of students and making it difficult for a teacher to achieve the target of communication. But with the technical aid the students' curiosity can be easily aroused involving them in different activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates that surely offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students.

3. Authenticity and critical thinking: Using internet in the classroom makes impossible possible. It provides the learner a plethora of on-line newspapers, radio broadcasts, podcasts and chat forums one can access and a good number of these have special pages for language trainers and learners providing them with a platform to exercise the Reading skills, pronunciation skills. One can look up a word in dictionary, practice listening with or without reading along and draft and submit prose on a forum. With a multimedia e- learning tool one can learn while playing on net without any pressure of classroom teaching.

4. More Time efficient: Multimedia teachings enrich teaching content and make the best of class time. It breaks the teacher centred teaching pattern and makes teaching more efficient and fruitful. The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. The traditional teaching model mainly emphasized on teachers' instruction culminating in limited information. On the contrary, multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for language learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time.

5. Learners centered: Using technology in the language classroom stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. A major feature of multimedia teaching is to train and improve students' ability to listen and speak, and to develop their communicative competence, during this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator becomes more prominent.

6. Portable and flexible: In addition, multimedia teaching is portable as well as flexible. It can be used anytime anywhere. Even being on a drive a teacher can solve the problems of the students. It is obvious that the context can be created not only in the classroom, but also after class. It can also create a multimedia language environment for the purpose of conducting language teaching. In such circumstances, students can use the new technology for extracting the maximum output to their benefit.

7. Fast and individualised feedback: Another advantage of using technology is that the learners feel motivated because of the free choice of selecting the content and in case of inter- active expressions one can check the answer immediately rather than waiting for a feedback from the teacher. It is gratifying for the learner to see his successes instantly thus it acts as a motivational tool too. Consequently the learner feels tempted to visit to a more academics resources to quench his thirst for unlimited knowledge.

8. Addresses multiple learning styles: In practice, if technology would be properly implemented in language teaching, the students could make full use of speaking and listening materials and develop their overall capacities which is the main objective of introducing technology to modern teaching. Thus this leads to systematic training on students' listening, speaking, reading and writing, improves their expression ability and lays a fundamental basis for their personal as well as professional communication. It is true that one of the ultimate goals is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the process of language learning.

9. Real life skill building: To sum up, Technology allows students to vary the amount of time they spend, the help they request, and the path they take through a learning activity. It also enables the teachers to tailor instructions specifically to individual learners and helps learners develop learning strategies that benefit them even beyond the classroom. Furthermore Technology provides authentic material in a quick accessible way. Thus the possibilities are endless what one needs to do is to exploit the resources for maximum output.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Too expensive to afford: Using technology in the classroom is a bit complicated as setting up the infrastructure for an appropriate use of technology is not very cost effective and sometimes it demands a huge amount that is not affordable by everyone.

2. Need of certain unavoidable skills: Computer literacy is still quite insufficient as many teachers still have not acquired some of the fundamental ICT skills due to certain factors but it surely requires special skills and training to implement technology in the classroom. Deficiency on part of the teachers adversely affects the efficiency of students.

3. Monotonous and Time consuming: Sometimes the use of technology becomes monotonous and time consuming as the teacher has to spend long hours for training schedules to learn and at a later stage figuring out the best way to implement that effectively in the classroom.

4. Uncertainty of results: As indicated earlier, there is no single predictable outcome for using computers, any more than there is for using books or libraries. Thus teachers and institutions are expected to invest large amounts of time and money without any guarantee of achieving fruitful results. In spite of the certain drawbacks integrating new technologies should be an important goal of language programs as its not only unavoidable in the age of globalisation but it is also essential in order to keep pace with the modern developments in technical fields.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we see that an appropriate implementation of technology in the language classroom will surely be beneficial for the students but at the same time it can't be said to be a panacea for language teaching; yet the prudent use of technology can be a boon as it provides the means to help reshape both the content and processes of language education. Computer technologies have also helped the teachers and students to transcend linguistic, geographical, and time barriers. In conclusion the use of new technologies has transformed the life of students in all aspects which will certainly be paramount for success in their academic and professional pursuits.

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