

## Today's Practical Forms, Methods and Tools of Technologies to Improve the Methodology of Teaching Foreign Languages in Preschool Education

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### Abstract

The last years increasingly raised the issue of using modern technologies in the educational process. It is not only new technical means, but also a new forms and methods of teaching, new approach to learning. The main goal that we set for ourselves, using modern technologies in learning a foreign language it's to show how technology can be effectively used to improve the quality of teaching foreign language students, the formation and development of their communicative culture, learning the practical mastery of a foreign language.

**Keywords:** highlight, foreign, communicate, modern, assist, approach

**This paper aims to highlight the role of using modern technology in teaching English as a second language.** It discusses different approaches and techniques which can assist English language students to improve their learning skills by using technology. *A case study has been done to appreciate the response of typical English language classroom students for using technology in the learning process.* Upon this practical study, the paper diagnoses the drawbacks and limitations of the current conventional English language learning tools, and concludes with certain suggestions and recommendations.

*The introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) to education creates new learning paradigms.* We are dwelling in a world which technology has reduced to a global village and the breakthrough in technology is underpinning pedagogical submissions. It may become imperative therefore to have a rethinking on how to ameliorate the constraints of second language users through the applications of modern technologies. The interactions between new technology and pedagogical submissions have been found to an extent to be addressing the heterogeneous needs of second language learners and any global discovery which aims at minimizing learners' constraints is a welcome development in a rapidly changing world of technology.

*This paper therefore is an overview presentation of how modern technologies can be of assistance to both teachers and students of a second language setting.* The rapid growth in ICT experienced by the technologically advanced nations of the world has helped them to overcome some of the barriers in teaching and learning. Applications of modern day's technologies in the field of teaching and learning can make it possible for teachers, students and others to join communities of people well beyond their immediate environment to critically review, analyze, contribute, criticize and organize issues logically and contextually having professionalism and the transformations of the entire society in view. Now, new technologies such as the reported computer enhancements with new software and networking make it much easier for educators to conquer space and time, with the motive of ameliorating constraints and academic conflicting issues. We

can now bring learning to virtually any place on earth anytime for the purpose of achieving the desirable learning outcomes.

***In the past, learning and education simply meant face-to-face lectures, reading books or printed handouts, taking notes and completing assignments generally in the form of answering questions or writing essays.*** In short; education, learning and teaching were considered impossible without a teacher, books and chalkboards. Today, education and training have taken on a whole new meaning. Computers are an essential part of every classroom and teachers are using DVDs, CD-ROMs and videos to show pupils how things work and operate. Pupils can ***interact with the subject matters through the use of such web based tools and CD-ROMs.*** Moreover, each pupil can progress at his/her own pace [1].

***Technology allows distance learning: Perhaps the greatest impact of technology in the field of learning is its ability to help several people learn simultaneously from different locations.*** Learners are not required to gather at a predetermined time or place in order to learn and receive instructions and information. All one needs is a computer connected to a modem (or with a CD drive); these tools can literally deliver a ‘classroom’ in the homes and offices of people.

***Technology allows group Learning: There are naysayers who argue that distance learning of this sort cannot help pupils receive the support of traditional group-based learning.*** For proving this theory wrong, technology has helped provide distance learners with online communities, live chat rooms and bulletin boards. All these allow pupils to collaborate and communicate even though they are isolated in their own space.

***Technology allows individual pacing: Multimedia tools, on-line and CD-ROM based training have helped eliminate the need for an instructor-based lesson plans.*** Pupils who grasp concepts faster proceed and move along, without being held back by ones who need more time and help for learning. Such individual pacing is beneficial to all.

***Technology helps lower training costs and increases productivity: Another benefit of using technology to reach many pupils in shorter time is lowering training costs.*** Corporate and academic Institutions can reduce their costs of delivering lessons to pupils on a per-pupil basis. Moreover, technology produces quantifiable results and allows pupils to put into practice this information quickly and with better results. Through the use of technology, pupils can considerably save time and increase their productivity. Both these points justify the higher costs of advanced technological tools.

***Roadblocks in the use of technology in learning: Naturally, for education technology to have a positive impact on pupils, it should be designed and prepared well.*** Tools used for disseminating information must be developed with pupils in mind. There are also factors like lack of computer/technology literacy to be considered. Schools and businesses must bear in mind that education technology is simply a tool and its success depends largely on the amount of planning that goes into it. Using education technology can be a right choice as long as all such factors are considered.

***With the development of technology and the boom of digital revolution, foreign language teachers find it necessary to think about effective new ways to create a better foreign language teaching and learning environment that is supported by multimedia technologies.*** As a result, Computer Assisted Language Learning, or CALL, has become increasingly popular in the foreign language teaching field. Based on the analysis of the features of CALL, this paper is focused on how multimedia can play an important role in EFL classrooms. The literature review was

conducted on definitions and the development of multimedia. Furthermore, the review of the literature was conducted on multimedia as a teaching method from both theoretical and pedagogical aspects. By analyzing the weakness and the strength of CALL, some practical and effective teaching ways, as proposed by professional educators and qualified teachers, are discussed on how to effectively use multimedia in the classroom [2].

**Following the literature review, the writer makes the following conclusions: multimedia English teaching is a recent technique with both strengths and weaknesses.** Teachers, who are regarded as the most important factor in instruction effectiveness, need to make full use of multimedia to create an authentic language teaching and learning environment where pupils can easily acquire a language naturally and effectively.

**Multimedia is a recent and popular term in the field of computer usage.** Generally speaking, multimedia is the combination of text, sound, pictures, animation, and video. Typical set-ups include CD-ROM, CD-ROM player, sound equipment, and special hardware, which allow the display of sophisticated graphics. With the rapid development of the internet, which has become a powerful medium for it provides a number of services including “e-mail, the World Wide Web (WWW), newsgroups, voice and video conferencing, file transfer and exchange and numerous corporate services delivered through specialized programs”. In the context of teaching, multimedia can be called an integrated media, which consists of various media forms such as text, graphic, animation, audio, etc. to browse, query, select, link and use information to meet pupils’ requirement. Smith and Woody defined multimedia as “the use of both visual aids and verbal descriptions to illustrate concepts” [3].

#### Development of Multimedia Applied in English Teaching

**According to Mudge , Multimedia applied in English teaching may include four stages.** The original stage can be dated back to the 1950s when only a few foreign language institutes started to employ phonograph, broadcast, movie, tape recorder and other current media in foreign language teaching. During that time, audio and video were once considered a significant revolution to the teaching of foreign language. Following in the 70s and 80s, audio and video developed dramatically with the advancement of electronic technology. Electronic taping, slide projectors, videocassette players, language labs and other electronic devices were included in this era. By the turn of 90s, **multimedia technology was becoming increasing available in foreign language instruction because of the development of computer technology and the coming of the digital revolution.** In the early 2000’s, the internet became a powerful medium for the delivery of computer-aided learning materials. The internet provides a worldwide means to get information, lighten the work load, and communicate with each other at any time and at any place. CALL which is Computer Assisted Language Learning came into play during the later part of the 20th century. Warschauer divided the history of CALL into three stages: behavioristic CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL. Behavioristic CALL applied in 1960s and 1970s was based on the behaviorist learning and featured repetitive language drills. The computer was regarded as a mechanical tutor to deliver the materials to the pupils. An example of a behavioristic CALL strategy is PLATO [4].

**PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), the best-known tutorial system, is a special hardware consisting of extensive drills, grammatical explanations, and translation tests at various intervals.** The next stage, communicative CALL, appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It focused on the communicative teaching method and encouraged pupils to generate original utterances through the process of discovery, expression and development rather

than just repeat the prefabricated language. Pupils were supposed to make use of the computer or the hardware to assist them in language learning. What they actually work with is not the computer but their classmates or teachers. In this model, the computer is viewed as stimulus or tool. Popular CALL software developed in this period included word processors, spelling and grammar checkers. Following this stage is the third stage, integrative CALL which included the development of multimedia computers and the Internet. This model not only integrates various skills (e.g. listening, writing, speaking and reading) but also bonds different technologies serving as effective and comprehensive tools for language learning and teaching. With integrative CALL, teachers were moving away from communicative perspective of teaching to a more social way, which emphasizes the language use in authentic social environments. Applying this multimedia networked computer in the language class provides pupils a more effective means to learn English. For instance, pupils can have rapid access to the background, grammatical or vocabulary explanations, pronunciation information while the main lesson is in the foreground. Besides, pupils under this model are usually encouraged to engage in their own language development rather than learn in a passive way. The history of CALL suggests that multimedia can serve a variety of purposes for language teaching. It can serve as a tutor to offer language drills or a stimulus to stir pupils to think. With the advent of the advanced technology and internet, computer usage in language teaching provides an authentic environment for pupils to communicate with native speakers in an inexpensive means [5].

*Nevertheless, the application of multimedia in English teaching is not as widely used as expected.* A reason for this could be the underdevelopment of technology and immature pedagogy about using multimedia in teaching foreign languages. For example, multimedia cost is high and not all educational institutions can make use of this tool. In addition, many teachers are not trained in using multimedia to teach English. According to Gong & Zhou, some teachers who have been aware of the applicability of multimedia teaching tend to focus on the flowery and fancy courseware and neglect the teaching aim, teaching object and teaching content, so the whole English classroom would become a demonstrating hall of computer functions.

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