



The Advantages Of Using Information Technologies In Teaching English As A Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

The use of information technology (IT) in English language teaching has revolutionized the learning experience, offering numerous advantages for both teachers and students. This article explores the positive aspects of integrating IT into English language learning. Nowadays the importance of incorporating Information Technologies in Foreign Language (FL) education has often been emphasized, especially by foreign language pedagogy scholars.

The aim of the paper was to summarize the results of the observations carried out at institutes in order to map ways of improving students' foreign language were developed suitably and sufficiently in the observed EFL lessons. The analysis showed that EFL courses at the institution tend to regard the importance of integrating skills with the usage of ICT in FL education. As a result of discussion and analysis we concluded that it is pivotal to make use of 21st century skills in the process of teaching EFL.

Keywords:

English as a foreign language (EFL), Information Technologies (IT), Integrated skills, teaching, learning, 21st century skills, methods

1.Introduction

Learning a foreign language has become a popular trend in today's globalized world. We live in an era where the rapid development of information and communication technologies causes a lot of significant changes in our lives, including the educational process.

The English language's global position as the dominant method of international communication is mostly attributed to the rapid development of high technology, economics, and technologies. This increases the motivation of students who want to study English as a foreign language for intergovernmental communication and scientific research.

The 21st century is the age of globalization and information technology as Harry Samuels argues,

"Much more recent developments in social media and information technology are taking foreign-language education in new directions" [18]. English is one of the world's most significant communication languages, so learning it is essential. As a result, English language teaching has become one of the most significant courses in school. In fact, the language is spoken by more non-natives than natives. There is also the diversity of context in terms of learner age, nationality, and learning background, which has become an important characteristic of contemporary English language instruction. All teachers in Uzbekistan

face the problem of teaching in general, and teaching English in particular, effectively.

"We will continue to focus our attention on deeper teaching of English and other foreign languages as priority," according to №4947, "Strategy of actions in five priority directions of development of Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021," published on February 7, 2017. Simultaneously, we will intensify our efforts to provide professional development and training in the areas that are necessary for us and other legal and regulatory requirements. A thorough understanding of a foreign language includes both practical proficiency and an understanding of its academic underpinnings. The socio cultural background of studying foreign languages in Uzbekistan has evolved since the turn of the century.

Interactive learning platforms, multimedia resources, and online games can make learning English more engaging and motivating. Students are often more receptive to learning when the material is presented in a dynamic and interactive format, leading to increased motivation and a greater desire to participate in the learning process. This increased engagement translates to better comprehension and retention of the language.

Personalized Learning:

IT allows for a more personalized learning experience. Adaptive learning platforms can adjust the difficulty and content to suit each student's needs and pace. This personalized approach ensures that each student receives the support they need to succeed, fostering a sense of accomplishment and encouraging continuous progress.

Expanded Access to Resources:

Online libraries, language learning apps, and video platforms provide students with a vast array of resources, extending beyond the limitations of traditional classrooms. This accessibility empowers students to learn at their own pace and explore various aspects of the language, including different accents, dialects, and cultural contexts.

Improved Communication Skills:

Many IT tools facilitate communication practice. Online forums, language exchange platforms, and video conferencing tools allow students to interact with native speakers and other learners, improving their spoken and written communication skills in a safe and supportive environment. This practical application of the language through interaction greatly enhances learning outcomes. Development of Digital Literacy:

In today's digital world, it's crucial for students to develop digital literacy skills. Integrating IT into English language teaching equips students with the necessary skills to navigate the online world effectively. They learn to use technology to research, communicate, and create, preparing them for future academic and professional endeavors.

Challenges and Considerations:

While IT offers numerous benefits, educators must address potential challenges, such as:

- * Digital Divide: Ensuring equitable access to technology for all students is crucial.
- * Teacher Training: Teachers need adequate training and support to effectively integrate IT into their lessons.
- * Maintaining Balance: It's essential to balance the use of technology with other pedagogical approaches, ensuring that learning remains engaging and meaningful.

2.Literature review

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is the practice of teaching English to students with various first languages. This term is commonly used to denote that the English Language Learner may have previously acquired more than one language. TEFL can take place at public or private schools, at a language school, or with a tutor. Students studying English as a second language are referred to as ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. These pupils are most commonly referred to as ELLs. The 21st century necessitates the explicit integration of learning methodologies, digital competencies, and professional skills. Higher education institutions in general, and EFL classrooms in

particular, should equip students with methods and procedures that promote the acquisition and development of abilities like as creativity, critical thinking, cooperation, self-direction, and cross-cultural awareness. According to Varis [21], governments and schools should prioritize removing barriers to access and connectivity, supporting professional development, advancing E-learning innovation, encouraging digital literacy, and implementing lifelong learning. According to Lotherington and Jenson [12], globalization and digitalization have transformed the communication environment, influencing how and with whom we communicate, as well as profoundly altering the terrain of language and literacy education. English foreign language (EFL) students, on the other hand, come from a variety of backgrounds, have varying levels of achievement, and have unique learning styles, all of which have an impact on their ability to acquire and utilize the foreign language [1].

Information technology involves using computers to store, retrieve, transfer, and manipulate data or information. IT is often utilized in the context of commercial operations rather than personal or entertainment technologies. IT is considered a component of information and communication technology (ICT). An information technology system is often an information system, a communications system, or, more particularly, a computer system that is operated by a small number of people.

Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that emphasizes the importance of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as the necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems that allow users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

3.Method:

Before we get into the relationship between 21st century skills and EFL learning and teaching, we'll first define the EFL setting

quickly. According to Rogers [16], the twentieth century saw a surge in language education methods and approaches. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) remains one of the most effective ways. CLT has influenced syllabus design and methodology by emphasizing communicative skills, learner-centeredness, and interactivity.

This has led to the development of novel teaching methods, including topic-based instruction (CBI), task-based instruction (TBI), and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). According to Armstrong and Warlick [3], in an increasingly digital and networked world, students must be able to demonstrate knowledge, apply information, and articulate ideas persuasively.

To use multimedia literacy, individuals must be able to read for meaning, process information using software tools, communicate knowledge through practical and technical skills, and use the information highway ethically.

To begin adopting new approaches aimed at integrating content, culture, technology, and lifelong skills [19], the EFL classroom must transition away from traditional methods centered on language mastery. As Ledward and Hirata note [10], 21st century talents are a combination of subject knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies required for success in business and life. According to Ledward and Hirata, these skills extend beyond computer literacy to critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and teamwork.

These abilities enable individuals to prosper in the new economy by improving their ability to access, synthesize, and transmit information, collaborate across differences to solve difficult challenges, and produce new knowledge through inventive use of numerous technologies.

Piyush Mathur, a philosopher, noted theoretical contrasts between interpersonal and mass communication technologies [13, pp. 200–2020]. The Skills Framework for the Information Age is one of several approaches for describing and managing competences for ICT professionals in the twenty-first century. Without a doubt, ICT is an effective and innovative teaching tool that improves EFL

learning. The rapid development of ICT has naturally influenced all areas of the language education process. Technology has a positive impact on teaching and learning English. Technology can be used in teaching techniques to improve and facilitate foreign language acquisition. Computers, the internet, smart boards, and mobile phones are employed in the target language learning process to increase student motivation and linguistic awareness [2, pp. 22-27].

When the pandemic began, all professors started using online platforms like Moodle, Zoom conferences, Telegram groups, and other social networks. The research participants were fifth-semester students from various educational departments at the school. The study was undertaken with two groups of students: fifth semester, third-year English for particular purposes (ESP) students. The data was collected using two types of tests, specifically midcourse assessment and exam. ESP teachers prepared vocabulary and reading assessments on the Moodle platform, while the CEFR method was used in the foreign language department. At first, the students believed this method of acquiring learning skills was difficult but beneficial.

They were first worried about online lessons and exams, but as time went on, they became accustomed to the integrated learning approach. Finally, participants stated that the course materials generated by teachers on the site are used not just during English sessions, but also to develop independent study skills.

4.Results

The integration of ICT will result in a greater range of English material, situations, and pedagogical methods in the classroom. ICT makes the English-language environment more dynamic, versatile, and innovative. The use of computer technology in language instruction creates a student-centered learning environment. It allows course administrators and professors to modify lesson presentation approaches to engage students with diverse interests, gives learning chances outside the classroom, and is regarded to be more

accommodating of individual diversity. Integrating technology into language training decreases teacher-centered knowledge and students' language learning anxiety, but also motivates them to take risks to practice target language because they are digital natives.

The abundance of real materials, including visuals, animation, music, and video clips, makes it easier to convey and practice language. ICTs improve student attitudes and motivation. The kids are extremely motivated to learn a language because they have positive attitudes regarding language learning, use computers, and learn in a stress-free setting. Furthermore, ICT promotes student autonomy since ICT tools allow learners to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are allowed to choose the material that best suits their learning preferences.

Furthermore, ICT delivers actual circumstances and a realistic learning environment. Because ICTs provide many sorts of facilities and availability of teaching resources, EFL teachers only recommend and create these tools as complementary teaching materials. In contrast to traditional learning environments, ICT promotes student-centered learning while also facilitating teacher-student interactions.

In terms of assessment, ICTs are effective in assessing both receptive and productive skills. The instructor may choose and create appropriate materials to assess pupils' achievement in all skills. Furthermore, the following impacts appeared to be the most noticeable when utilizing ICT to support foreign language education:

- The possibility to adapt easily the teaching materials according to circumstances, learner's needs and response;

- ICT allows to react upon and enables the use of recent/daily news, it offers access to authentic materials on the web;

- Possibility to combine/use alternately (basic) skills (text and images, audio and video clip);

- Lectures become more interesting and less ordinary which boosts learners'

engagement;

-ICT enables to focus on one specific aspect of the lesson [8].

The advantages of ICT usage in foreign language teaching could be listed as:

1. Ability to control presentation. This capacity distinguishes between computers and books. Books have a set presentation, whereas computers can blend visual and audio materials, text with graphics and images.

2. Uniqueness and creativity. A teacher may use various resources for each lesson, as opposed to teaching with textbooks, in which all classes presenting a specific topic are identical.

3. Feedback. Computers provide quick feedback on pupils' answers through error correction. It not only detects the error but also corrects it, occasionally even providing suitable advice.

4. Adaptability. Teachers can adjust computer programs to meet the requirements and language levels of their students [15]. There is significant evidence of the benefits and advantages that the use of ICT can have on learners. The effective use of ICT impacts on learners and various aspects of the learning process can be summarized as follows: ICT increases learners' motivation and thus enhances personal commitment and engagement;

On the other side, the use of ICT in the classroom can have certain disadvantages. Teachers may have trouble integrating and implementing technological technologies into course syllabuses and curricula. There are certain things to keep in mind when using ICTs in EFL lessons. As a result, Livingstone [11, p.12] claims that ICT "is not suitable for all learners in all situations and for all purposes, and may require some considerable learner training for effective use".

The problems in classroom management, the lack of highly experienced teachers, choosing the best technological tool matching with course content, finding reliable and acceptable activities for students' learning styles, the costs of new technological tools, and devices, insufficient physical capacity of classrooms are only certain remarkable issues to be taken into

consideration before employment of ICTs in language classrooms.

Preston and Cox list the following drawbacks of using ICTs in classrooms: difficulties in using software/hardware, need for more technical support, insufficient time to use ICT, too expensive to use on a regular basis, insufficient access to resources, restrictions on lesson content, and counter-productive due to insufficient technical resources [5]. To effectively integrate technology into the classroom, an on-site technical assistant must be engaged to help teachers as needed [4, p.203].

It appears acceptable to expect that education instruction and learning should meet the requirements and interests of individuals as a result of new jobs and technology demands.

However, some parts of such debate require careful consideration. Van Dijk [20] contends that it is important to investigate how power, domination, and social order are imposed, reproduced, and controlled through discourse. He argues that education tends to enact institutional and professional practices associated with power abuse and discursive reproduction; in particular, such abuse and reproduction occur when specific topics, actions, and rules are standardized and formalized in response to the interests and needs of a specific set of actors. Furthermore, Rogers asserts that educators must study discourse critically in order to characterize, understand, and explain the existing relationship between the economy, national policy, and educational practices [16].

According to Royce, as communication modes and conventions have changed in recent years, EFL courses must become more concerned with fostering students' multimodal communicative competency [17]. In this regard, teachers should begin to focus and improve students' abilities in visual literacy, as well as establish a pedagogical meta-language to promote these abilities when images co-occur with spoken and written forms. In this line of assumption, according to the definition given by Heberle multimodal communicative competence as the knowledge and use of language concerning the visual, gestural, audio

and spatial dimensions of communication, including computer mediated-communication [7, p.101-116]. The familiarization of EFL learners with different kinds of multimodal texts and semiotic meanings can help them be better prepared for different literacy practices in their professional and socio-cultural experiences with native. She suggests using task-based or content-based instruction with interpretive analysis and discussions of images in order to make EFL learners approach images as socio-cultural constructions and, ultimately, to expand students' skills in learning English as a foreign language.

Conclusion

Teachers at educational institutions make extensive use of ICT to teach English. However, pupils are limited in their use of ICT due to the instructional hours allocated for the semesters for students. It is strongly believed that the implementation of educational technology and communication into EFL context provides a flexible and diverse set of technological tools, promotes problem-solving skills of students, gives learners the opportunity to use higher order skills, develop critical thinking and effective information processing skills, encourages active independent, autonomous, and collaborative language learning, motivates and facilitates language learning, and can enhance teacher. On the contrary, it is clear that the incorporation of ICT into language teaching techniques has its limitations. Thus, we suggest that EFL classrooms should be filled with meaningful and intellectually stimulating activities, practices, and processes that enable students to not only effectively articulate thoughts and ideas through oral, written, and nonverbal communication, but also to understand complex perspectives, make judgments and decisions, and collaborate creatively with others. As a result, teachers must critically evaluate what the 21st century movement has to offer in order to expand their instructional practices.

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