THE REPERCUSSIONS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

Dr. B. Chandana [1], Dr.Shirisha Deshpande [2], Dr. Avula Vijayalakhsmi [3]

[1] Assistant Professor of English, Matrusri Engineering College, Saidabad, Hyderabad, TS., India. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6074-3880
2, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad. TS, India.
3 Assistant Professor, Department of English, Chaitnaya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, TS. India.
gantachandana@matrusri.edu.in,shirisha_english@cbit.ac.in,vijayalakshmi_english@cbit.ac.in

Abstract

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a fundamental shift in the way work is conducted across numerous sectors. One significant area that has been profoundly impacted is education, encompassing both the realms of teaching and learning. As a result of this shift, online learning has emerged as a predominant mode of education delivery. This transition to digital platforms has been made possible through the extensive use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which comprises a diverse range of tools, methodologies, and digital endeavors. The widespread adoption of ICT in education, including language learning, has become an accepted reality in this new educational landscape.

In this context, it is imperative to explore the role of ICT in language learning theory. Language acquisition, like other facets of education, has undergone significant transformation due to the integration of technology. This article aims to provide an insightful overview of how information and communication technology has become an integral component of language learning theory. It is through this lens that we can understand the profound implications of ICT on language education. Furthermore, the article delves into the crucial aspect of selecting appropriate tools and platforms to enhance language learning experiences. In this digitally driven educational environment, the choices made regarding the use of specific ICT tools and platforms can significantly influence the effectiveness of language instruction. Therefore, understanding the guiding principles for the selection of these tools becomes essential in ensuring that language learners have access to optimal resources that align with their educational objectives. This article seeks to shed light on these principles, offering valuable insights for educators and learners in the ever-evolving landscape of language education supported by information and communication technology. Additionally, this study emphasizes the various types of technologies that are accessible to both educators and students. Upon

perusing the article, readers would ideally acquire an understanding that information and communication technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing language acquisition. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of making informed choices when selecting suitable digital resources. Lastly, it underscores the feasibility of utilizing digital platforms for language learning purposes.

Key words: Information, digital tools, language classroom, digital communication and digital learning

Introduction

In contemporary times, locating a classroom devoid of learners' exposure to computer technology is likely to be a challenge. An individual has been raised in a society where the Internet and the World Wide Web have been present from their inception. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Whatsapp are frequently utilized on a daily basis for various personal, social, and media-related engagements. In addition, educators may employ electronic resources to facilitate English language acquisition both within and beyond the confines of the classroom. The utilization of technology within the realm of education has a lengthy and extensive historical trajectory.

During the 1960s, the audio input technologies utilized for listening and drill routines encompassed phonograph records and reel-to-reel recordings. During the subsequent decade, the portable cassette tape recorder gained popularity not just as a listening device but also as a tool for speech recording. The presence of a language lab equipped with multiple tape recorders connected to a control console serves as a tangible representation of a school's commitment to incorporating technological resources for language acquisition purposes.

The advent of computers in the 1980s, initially in the form of multi-component desktop units and later in the late 1990s as laptops connected to wireless networks, brought about a significant transformation in the utilization of technology inside the language classroom. The computers provide access to materials that were previously printed. Electronic documents might be utilized to send worksheets and handouts, while interactive quizzes could be generated. Emerging advancements have presented novel opportunities in the realm of audio and video playback and creation.

In recent years, there has been considerable expansion in the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), encompassing a diverse array of platforms, resources, and methodologies. Information and communication technology is a fundamental and essential element of a comprehensive educational curriculum. Educators possess the autonomy to select a program, application, or website that can effectively facilitate the acquisition of English language skills and various linguistic components among learners. Educators have the ability to design several activities that facilitate digital engagement among learners, such as reading, responding, and interacting with their peers. Furthermore, educational institutions have the capacity to create a series of instructional tasks or compilations of educational materials that

students can utilize beyond the confines of the classroom. In response to the global expansion of information and communication technology, governments in the majority of developing nations have undertaken national initiatives aimed at incorporating computer technology into educational systems. The measure of achievement for this initiative is the complete provision of electrical access in all junior high schools, enabling the implementation of TV-based learning. Additionally, it's noteworthy that the benchmark indicates that fifty percent of senior high schools had the capability to use ICT-based learning. According to Budiman and Ngadiso (2018), twelve universities in Indonesia have implemented information and communication technology-based learning and research. The government holds the belief that the integration of information and communication technology in education is closely linked to the implementation of a student-centered curriculum. Regrettably, the integration of technology in the educational sector in Indonesia appears to have been executed without sufficient regard for the responses of instructors towards the introduction of these novel technologies. Recent research has indicated that the effective integration of educational technologies is heavily influenced by the attitudes of educators, as they ultimately dictate the manner in which these technologies are utilized inside the classroom. The utilization of technology is limited due to the teachers' preference for conventional ways with which they are familiar. Teachers who are interested in incorporating digital learning into their classrooms often encounter challenges when it comes to choosing appropriate tools and resources for this purpose.

So, the goal of this article is to provide a comprehensive understanding of three key aspects: (1) how information and communication technology supports the theory of learning a foreign language, (2) how to select the right digital learning tools and activities, and (3) a list of digital tools and activities that make learning English as a foreign language (EFL) easier both in and out of the classroom.

Discussion

ICT's Impact on Foreign Language Skill Development

One prevalent hypothesis in the field of language acquisition suggests that immersion in a linguistic environment can greatly facilitate the development of language skills. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has emerged as a crucial factor in promoting language acquisition by providing an environment conducive to language learning. In the context of foreign language education, the traditional elements of the classroom include teachers, learners, and the language itself. However, it is increasingly acknowledged that computers can serve as a fourth component, serving as a valuable tool for educators to deepen their understanding of the learning process and effectively support their students (Jamieson and Chapelle, 2010). According to Yunus et al. (2010), computers and courseware are now recognized as significant educational tools in academic institutions.

Advancements in technology have played a pivotal role in shaping various foreign language teaching methodologies since the 1950s. For instance, the introduction of the chalkboard supported the grammar-translation technique, while the advent of audio tapes facilitated the

audio-lingual approach (Warschauer and Healey, 1998). As highlighted by Budiman (2017), the use of computer technology has notably improved the effectiveness of drill and practice activities. In the 1980s, the adoption of communicative techniques in language learning was further enhanced by technological progress, offering students greater opportunities for engagement (Warschauer and Healey, 1998).

Several noteworthy examples illustrate these advancements. Firstly, the incorporation of new input types, such as hyperlinked text, allows for the integration of multimedia elements. Secondly, the visual aspects of computer-assisted language learning applications, including features enhancing input, such as typographic or phonological qualities, have been observed to heighten awareness of language features and errors. The theory of foreign language acquisition gains substantial reinforcement from computer-assisted language learning, as it offers opportunities beyond those found in traditional face-to-face classroom settings. Take, for instance, the use of discussion boards. Firstly, they provide a platform for open discussions not controlled by specific individuals. Secondly, they offer learners a greater amount of linguistic input that they can absorb and incorporate into their own output. Lastly, the output generated through a discussion board tends to be more comprehensive compared to oral language. A computer-mediated environment enhances the availability of feedback in contrast to a traditional classroom setting. In addition to receiving input from their teachers in the classroom, learners have the opportunity to receive feedback from other online communicators.

According to Røkenes and Krumsvik (2016), empirical evidence indicates that the integration of information and communication technology in education can effectively assist teachers in achieving their educational objectives. Furthermore, it has been shown that implementation can yield favorable outcomes in students' language proficiency, namely in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and vocabulary development.

The role of ICT in Literacy development

The intersection of information and communication technology (ICT) with literacy development is a subject of significant academic interest and research. The incorporation of ICT tools and resources into educational settings has the potential to enhance literacy skills and promote literacy. Traditionally, literacy was defined as the ability to read and write. However, in contemporary times, the concept of literacy has expanded to encompass additional dimensions. According to Ohler (2009), there are four fundamental forms of literacy that contribute to overall success: digital literacy, art literacy, oral literacy, and written literacy. Proficiency in expressing one's thoughts and ideas to a real-world audience through spoken and written digital mediums is a fundamental requirement in academic settings and the pursuit of employment responsibilities. Foreign language activities can encompass contemporary literacy-enhancing endeavours such as digital storytelling, engagement with written material, composing and responding to blog entries, providing guidance on writing professional emails, conducting searches and evaluating credible sources, preventing plagiarism, and creating an electronic portfolio. Over time, students have the potential to achieve their goals of becoming

content creators, thereby fostering their literacy skills. The subject of interest in this context relates to the comparison between synchronous and asynchronous learning methods.

Synchronous, or "real-time," learning refers to educational activities that occur simultaneously for all participants. In the context of distance learning, students have the opportunity to engage in a virtual classroom setting, such as a CoLearn group, which facilitates synchronous communication. To enable audio-visual interaction, a connection can be established through a videoconference platform like Zoom Meeting or Google Meet. In this educational context, students must access a designated learning platform at a particular time to take part in the prearranged learning activities. In an educational setting, such as a writing class, a diverse group of students located in various regions can engage in collaborative writing activities. One approach involves using Google Docs as a platform for collectively composing a draft of an essay. Subsequently, students can share their work on Edmodo, an online learning management system, where their instructor can review and provide feedback on the written piece. Students can also review the practice essays shared by other groups within the class and provide their own comments, in conjunction with the teacher. The collective efforts of the entire class contribute to the educational progress of all students, and this collaborative work is typically completed within a predetermined timeframe.

Testing in Digital work

Digital language learning projects can be assessed in various ways, with a focus on language elements and skills. Teachers evaluate aspects such as grammar accuracy, vocabulary breadth, clear pronunciation, well-paced delivery, acceptable sentence rhythms, and the overall coherence of written content, among other factors. This comprehensive assessment helps ensure the effectiveness of language learning projects. Moreover, teachers can test the multimodality of the product, as outlined by Towndrow (2007). Towndrow describes four conceivable exchanges between modes: Decoration: This involves visually appealing elements in a project, though not essential to the content. For example, a captivating image at the beginning of a video may serve a decorative purpose. Also, labels applied in one mode may provide additional information when used in captioning, such as identifying interviewees in journalistic videos.

Duplication: In this interaction, information is repeated or paraphrased across different modes. For instance, in digital storytelling, footage of a street with small stores might be accompanied by a voiceover that describes the areas of interest, providing an additional layer of information.: An extension occurs when one mode enhances or provides complementary information to what is delivered in another. For instance, in a video about a shopping street, a voiceover can offer details about the owners' history, backgrounds, and the speaker's shopping experiences, enriching the content beyond what is visible in the video alone.

Towndrow emphasizes the importance of language teachers clarifying their objectives for students in digital language learning projects. In language education, teachers oftenaim to assess not only language abilities but also students' proficiency in utilizing multimodal

interactions. Multimodal literacy involves the effective use of various modes of communication, such as text, images, audio, and video, to convey meaning and engage the audience. This approach recognizes the diverse ways in which information is communicated in today's digital world. It encourages students to not only develop their linguistic skills but also become adept at employing different communication methods. One valuable tool for assessing multimodal literacy in language learning is the use of rubrics. These rubrics serve as structured assessment criteria that guide both teachers and students in evaluating the quality of digital projects like digital storytelling. The University of Houston, for instance, developed a rubric in 2010 that provides a framework for assessing digital storytelling projects. This rubric goes beyond traditional literacy assessment and includes descriptors that encompass both traditional and digital literacies. Within this rubric, various aspects are considered. For instance, "story purpose" assesses the clarity and effectiveness of the narrative's objective. "Point of view" evaluates how well students choose and utilize the perspective from which they present their digital story. "Dramatic question" looks at the engagement and intrigue of the narrative, ensuring that it captures the audience's interest. "Content choice" delves into the appropriateness and relevance of the materials included in the digital storytelling project. Incorporating these aspects into the rubric ensures that students are not only honing their language skills but also becoming proficient in creating and evaluating digital content. This approach aligns with the evolving demands of digital communication, where the ability to convey messages effectively across multiple modes is increasingly important. It underscores the importance of equipping students with the skills and knowledge to navigate the complex landscape of digital communication in the 21st century.

Conclusion

In the realm of language teaching and learning, a variety of digital tools and resources are available for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments. These resources, both free and commercial, offer opportunities for learners to practice and improve language skills in areas such as writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Flexible, adaptable programs allow for personalized learning with the aid of information and communication technology (ICT). Furthermore, Morris and Stommel (2015) identify several skills that top digital teachers exhibit. Among them are the ability to adapt or "hack" digital tools to suit specific learning needs and the willingness to allow for discoveries and surprises, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

In conclusion, teachers should have clear reasons for incorporating ICT into their language teaching and learning processes. Understanding how various tools and tactics enhance learning is essential. By creating meaningful language learning activities and encouraging students to make valuable contributions, teachers can enhance both student satisfaction and learning outcomes. This discussion encompasses foreign language learning theory, the role of ICT, criteria for selecting ICT tools, and the importance of digital projects in language learning. Technology can assist teachers in achieving educational goals, but it should be seen as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for effective teaching.

References

1. Albirini, Abdulkafi. (2006). "Teachers' Attitudes toward Information and Communication Technologies: The Case of Syrian EFL Teachers." Computers and Education 47(4):373–98.
2. Awada, Ghada, Jack Burston, and Rosie Ghannage. (2020). "Effect of Student Team Achievement Division through WebQuest on EFL Students' Argumentative Writing Skills and Their Instructors' Perceptions." Computer Assisted Language Learning 33(3):275–300.
3. Bax, Stephen. (2003). "CALL - Past, Present and Future." System.
4. Budiman, Asep; Ngadiso. (2018). "EFL Teacher's Belief and Practice on Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Classroom." Asian EFL Journal 20(4):261.
5. Budiman, Asep. (2017). "Behaviorism and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology." ENGLISH FRANCA : Academic Journal of English
6. Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. From www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_
and_practice.pdfleadership/mar09/vol66/num06/Orchestrating-theMedia-Collage.aspx
7. Ohler, J. (2009). Orchestrating the media collage. Educational Leadership, 66 (6), 8–13. From www.ascd.org/publications/educational-oreilly/ tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html?page=1
8. Morris, Sean Michael, and Jesse Stommel. (2015). "The Course as Container: Distributed Learning and the MOOC." in Global Innovation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Transgressing Boundaries.
9. Towndrow, P. A. (2007). Task design, implementation and assessment: Integrating information and communication technology in English language teaching and learning. Singapore: McGraw-Hill
10. Wilkinson, Mark. (2016a). "English Language Teaching Today." English Language Teaching Today.
11. Røkenes, Fredrik Mørk, and Rune Johan Krumsvik. (2016). "Prepared to Teach ESL with ICT? A Study of Digital Competence in Norwegian Teacher Education." Computers and Education 97:1–20
12. Warschauer, Mark, and Deborah Healey. (1998). "Computers and Language Learning: An Overview." Language Teaching 31(2):57–71
13. Chapelle, Carol A. (2007). "Technology and Second Language Acquisition." Annual Review of Applied Linguistics.