Instructor : Mr BOUNADJA Semestre: 3

Level : Second Year / Master degree

Module : ICC

Course : Five / Integration of ICTs into Language Learning / Teaching

Introduction

Technology involvement in education is nowadays undeniable starting from kindergarten and reaching to higher education. It serves for effective language learning/teaching . Current language education policies show tendency toward using different forms of technology to support instructional processes, involve language learners in the learning process, and provide authentic patterns of the target culture. Language teachers can differentiate instruction (Tomlinson, 2001) and adapt classroom activities and homework assignments according to different needs and expectations of the language learners so as to foster language learning experience. ICT use assist instruction of foreign languages in facilitating and mediating language learning to adequately meet the students’ needs and expectations.

Contemporary education has become very advanced with the use of ICT. It has allowed quick access to information not only in classrooms, but at home and in every field of daily life (Dang,2011). In ICT’s rich environment, learners are exposed to a multitude of learning opportunities that they may experience to develop their skills without being required to attend in classrooms. The application of ICT is also beneficial in the provision of a wealth of resources to enable them become active learners and creating content for a worldwide audience. The role ICT can best be seen when embeded in school curricular for its importance in the sense that teachers and learners can anywhere and anytime be in touch through the development of classroom based tele-conference (Divaharan and Koh, 2010). It is a way to emphacise the shift from very teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered ones (Richards, 1985).

ICT and Language Learning

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education is a phenomenon which has attracted attention of the educational researchers for years. ELT projects have been introduced throughout different parts of the world (Markee, 1997; Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998) and innovations have brought changes in materials (supplementary, self-study, authentic, etc) and technology devices (language laboratories, tape recorders, video recorders, computers, etc). More recently, the use of technology

as a tool for the development of language skills has received great attention (Dudenney, 2000; Chapelle, 2001; Young, 2003; Melor Md Yunus, 2007) so as to help ELT teachers adapt to new teaching practices. Frequent subject innovations require them to be more resourceful or open to new ideas. They involve curricular changes directly from the Ministry of Education in each country workshops and short trainings that introduce new techniques and activities or promote new materials.

The integration of ICT in teaching and learning is not a method ; but a medium in which a variety of methods, approaches and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented (Garret, 1991). The effectiveness of ICT depends on how and why it is used and integrated in language programmes, leading learners step-by-step to strengthen their knowledge of language through gradable improvement. Several studies and papers have been carried out on ICT integration in teaching in general. ICT-based activity enhances students learning (Motshegwe, 2005 p.10). Other scholars likeYunus *et al* (2009) mentioned that surfing the internet to get information”, and “searching for words’ meaning and pronunciation” (Yunus *et al* 2009 p.1456) by learners indicates how important English language teachers should include ICT use in the teaching and learning process of the English Language.

Language instruction will be driven by new advances in computers, the internet, and mobile technologies. The shift from a “read” Web to a “read/write” Web, encourages teachers to discover new ways in which they may engage their students in computer-based educational activities. The work onto the World Wide Web is a means of providing an authentic global audience for classroom productions. Easy access to new technologies in writing or speaking for a broader and more international audience, gives the ability to pay more attention to ICT use by learners who not only polish their work, but think more deeply about the content they produce, and consider cultural norms more thoughtfully. Such access to information develops the process of learning a second language that may be structured in different ways – in a classroom or at home, with or without a teacher, emphasizing or minimizing grammar, gradually exposing the student to native speakers.

Advantages of ICT in foreign language teaching

The use of ICT has positive effects on foreign language teaching/learning. Its impact depends highly on the way it is used, the teachers’ motivation and his “savoir-faire”. For Houcine (2011).The following impacts seem to be the most obvious ones when using ICT to support foreign language teaching:

- Easy adaptation of the teaching materials with to circumstances, learner’s needs and response;

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

- Combine/use alternately (basic) skills (text and images, audio and video clip...);

- Lectures become more interesting and less ordinary which boosts learners’ engagement;

- he focus on one specific aspect of the lesson (pronunciation, vocabulary...).

According to Padurean and Margan(2009),the advantages of ICT usage in foreign language teaching can be listed as:

*1. Presentation Conrol*:It shows the difference between computers and books. Books have a fixed presentation, unlike computers, which can combine visual with listening materials, text with graphics and pictures.

*2. Novelty and creativity*: Unlike old teaching methods using textbooks where all classes presenting a certain topic are the same, with ICT a teacher can use different materials for each lesson.

*3. Feedback*: Computers provide a fast feedback to students` answers through error correction. It not

only spots the mistake but also corrects it, sometimes even giving the appropriate advice.

*4. Adaptability*: Computer programmes can be adapted by teachers to suit their students` needs and

level of language knowledge. Unlike books, which are produced in a single uniform format and need to

be taught irrespectively of students` problems, computer programmes are more learner- friendly.

First and foremost, the use of ICT and the internet particularly offer language learners the opportunity to use appropriately the language that they are learning in authentic contexts. A second important benefit is cooperation and collaboration with one’s peers that is usually practised in language classroom. A third major benefit in blended language learning classrooms is effective tutorial of learners that ICT-based tools give to language teachers. With the help of ICT-based tools and the constantly growing number of available educational resources language teachers can give individual and personalized guidance to their learners (Kumar and Tammelin,2008).

The internet and language learning

The internet can be the best way to learn language other than immersion in an English speaking environment.The advantages of online learning, can be summarized under the following headings (McLuhan,2012):

1) Access to interact in English without the need of travel.

2) Flexibility of language learning for users( when and where they want).

3) Response as instant feedback to learners that greatly enhances the learning experience.

4) Repeatability of encountering the target language until mastery is achieved.

5) Durability of the internet at 24/7.

6) Modality as a learning tool. A multi modal that fertilizes language acquisition successfully.

7) Specificityof learning. The learner is free to choose a variety in both what and with whom he/she will be learned. Learning is tailored to learner’s precise makeup and needs.

8) Cost in that it offer services for pennies.

The internet-mediated communication allows users to share not only brief messages, but also creates lengthy documents which facilitates collaborative writing (learning). Furthermore, learners can share graphics, sounds and video. Thus, the internet helps create an environment where authentic and creative communication is integrated into all aspects of the course (Rozgiene, Medvedeva and Straková,2008).

The application of ICT in foreign language teaching

The integration of ICT in teaching and learning is a medium in which a variety of approaches and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented. However, ICT as a teaching aid is more complicated in that it demands more specific skills from the teachers (Salehi, H and Salehi Z,2012). This teaching aid is prerequisite in modern and contemporary learning environment (Kalnina and Kangro, ,2007). The electronic mail, internet, multi media, collaborative platforms, undoubtedly, influence the process of everyday classroom teaching and learning. On the other hand, using ICT allows peer communication outside classroom.They exchange information in real time, participate in blog discussions, work in teams on different projects, exchange emails, search for information, etc. The increasing availability of authentic material offers a better insight into the culture, country and people of the target language (Padurean and Margan,2009 ; Rozgiene, Medvedeva and Straková, Z. (2008).

Conclusion

Information and CommunicationTechnologies provide powerful learning environment for learners in the classroom. A lot of countries investment in ICT integration as an effective tool for new educational practices in many fields. Therefore, language teachers have to be well trained on manipulating ICT in educational contexts. Only a click away of those tools maintains language learning and supports authentic communication, yet an appropriate planning and guidance from the teacher can make a balance for effective use of information Technologies to see the real effect of such materials in the learning process. Since today’s learners are tomorrow’s leaders of their countries, it is preferable to adapt ICT use and integration in an expanded access for raising quality of education for language learners.

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