

Problems and Prospects of Using Ict in Teaching Foreign Languages

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Annotation: The introduction of information technology into real life is more important today than ever before, as it is caused by the changing learning environment. Over the past few months, especially during the pandemic, there has been an increased interest in modern information tools to help in language teaching.

Keywords: language skills, strategies, ICT tools, laptop, interactive whiteboard, LCD projector, Internet, social media.

English is one of the most important languages that has played a significant role in the process of globalization. It is the most widely used means of communication throughout the world.

The integration of information technology into real life is more important today than ever before, as it is caused by the changing learning environment. Over the past few months, especially during the pandemic, there has been an increased interest in modern information tools to assist in language teaching. Research has repeatedly confirmed that information and communication technology (ICT) plays an important role in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. The use of ICT requires specific language skills and strategies. The integration of ICT in teaching and learning a foreign language entails a change in the curriculum and a change in the learning process itself. Therefore, the integration of new ICT tools such as laptop, interactive whiteboard, LCD projector, Internet and social media in the educational environment will help students use English in a very natural, real communicative and stress-free language learning environment.

What does information and communication technology (ICT) mean?

In this article, ICT is used to cover computer and Internet technologies. Many sources define ICT as the tools, facilities, processes and equipment that provide the necessary environment with physical infrastructure and services for the generation, transmission, processing, storage and distribution of information in all forms, including voice, text, data, graphics and video [1].

Some examples of ICT are: Interactive whiteboards, computers, computer-assisted language learning software, office applications (e.g. Word, PowerPoint, drawing tools, etc.), Internet websites and downloadable software, CD-ROMs with commercial textbooks, DVD players, mobile phones, electronic dictionaries, digital cameras and videos, data projectors [3].

Integration of ICT into language teaching.

Without a doubt, ICT is a valuable and innovative teaching tool that improves foreign language teaching. The rapid growth of ICT has naturally affected all aspects of the learning process. The use of technology has a positive effect on the teaching and learning of English. Computer, Internet, smart boards, cell phones, video games, music players, etc. – all of these can be used in the language learning process to increase students' motivation and improve language awareness [2]. The introduction of ICT has already led to the diversity of lesson content and the modernization of teaching methods. ICT makes English lessons more interactive, flexible and innovative. The integration of information technology in English lessons allows for a comprehensive motivation of students, extends learning beyond the classroom and takes into account the individual differences of students. The availability of a large number of authentic materials such as images, animation, audio and video clips facilitates the presentation and practice of the language.

For students, ICT increases motivation. ICT is a powerful factor in providing a more interesting learning environment, which in turn helps motivate students to express themselves and encourages them to improve their results. In addition, ICT promotes student autonomy. The tools provide students with the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Students can choose materials that suit their learning style [4].

Unlike traditional learning environments, ICT offers more and more opportunities to practice knowledge in a real environment – for example, video conferencing, calls and correspondence.

To summarize the above, ICT has the following advantages:

- Ability to easily adapt teaching materials to circumstances, student needs and responses;
- ICT allows us to respond to and use fresh news, offers access to reliable materials on the network;
- Possibility to combine/use alternately (basic) skills (text and images, audio and video);
- Novelty and creativity. Lessons become more interesting and less routine, which contributes to the improvement of students' academic performance.
- The teacher can use different materials for each [6].

However, in many educational institutions of the country the use of ICT in foreign language lessons is limited. This is due to the lack of experienced teachers and, for the most part, the lack of technical equipment.

There are three main problems that students face:

1. Lack of effective training [6].

Students are not trained to use information platforms. Even in today's reality, we see limited use of ICT in the classroom. Ignorance leads to loss of motivation and, consequently, to a deterioration in the quality of knowledge.

2. Use of uniform teaching styles [6].

Many teachers cannot cope with individual differences between students. Using the same type of tasks, students lose interest in the subject.

3. Limited technical equipment [6].

Most students do not have access to ICT materials because most of them are also needed by other family members (if we are talking about home schooling). Poor quality of the Internet connection or its absence at all. All this hinders progress in learning, demotivates and creates obstacles in learning.

In conclusion, it can be said that the introduction of educational technologies and communication in the context of English language teaching provides a flexible and diverse set of technological tools, promotes the development of students' problem-solving skills, enables students to use higher-order skills, develop critical thinking and effective information processing skills. Encourages active and independent, autonomous and collaborative language learning, motivates and facilitates language learning, improves teachers' qualifications. However, the integration of ICT into language teaching practice has its limitations. ICT should be integrated into foreign language teaching as an effective supplement to traditional teaching.

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