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THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

In the early part of the 21st century the range of technologies available for use in language learning and teaching has become very diverse and the ways that they are being used in classrooms all over the world have become central to language practice. Technology in its various forms has long been used in ESP, whether in the form of a tape recorder or sophisticated digital technology. But maybe its impact on ESP has been more profound. ESP teachers have always used available tools to devise materials and create situations relevant to their students' needs. The present article focuses on the role of technologies in English language learning and teaching showing the benefits of technology use in ELT. It also deals with the challenges which the teachers and institutions that integrate technology in their ELT can face.

Keywords: *technology; computer assisted language learning; teaching; authenticity; multi-media.*

Introduction

Digital tools have long been a feature of the world of education and particularly language education. These digital tools are, of course, central in the established and recognised field of computer assisted language learning (CALL), but are also increasingly a core part of English language teaching (ELT) in general. Since computers started to be introduced in language learning (and in education in general) people have rightly asked whether the investment we are making in these technologies gives us value for money. As digital technologies have taken a hold in society in general, this particular question is not asked quite so often, but it is still important to make sure that the technologies that we have available are used effectively. People are always tempted to try to make an argument for technology having an impact on the development of pedagogy and in many cases we can see that the use of technology has enabled teachers to re-think what they are doing. If we leave compulsory education aside, people have always learned a language out of a special need and for a special purpose. This could be the need to communicate with someone who does not speak a shared language about something 'specific', for example, a tourist who needs to ask someone for directions, a hobbyist who wants to find out more about his favourite subject on the internet, an officer who needs to attend briefings with international partners, or a technician who needs to order parts from a catalogue that is only available in one specific language.

However, in many situations adult professionals know the terms related to their field much better than the teacher, who often does not know the field-specific terminology. What learners need is to learn how to use those words in sentences, how to understand authentic texts with certain field-specific expressions, or how to communicate effectively in typical situations that arise in their jobs. This is why the analysis of needs, discourse genre, and linguistic corpora has become so important in ESP. Just as in general English language teaching and learning, technology in its various forms has long been used in ESP, whether in the form of a

tape recorder or sophisticated digital technology. But maybe its impact on ESP has been more profound. ESP teachers have always used available tools to devise materials and create situations relevant to their students' needs.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Just as in general English language teaching and learning, technology in its various forms has long been used in ESP, whether in the form of a tape recorder or sophisticated digital technology. But maybe its impact on ESP has been more profound [1]. ESP teachers have always used available tools to devise materials and create situations relevant to their students' needs [2]. Technology-integrated English for Specific Purposes lessons Technology-integrated English for Specific Purposes lessons. However, technology's role in language learning in general, and in ESP in particular, has changed over time and significantly so in recent years [1]. Not only has the view of learning changed with time, from the behaviourist to communicative to an integrative view [5], but technology has also evolved and become more ubiquitous in everyday life, and particularly in the professional world. Both of these have affected how technology is employed in ESP lessons.

In the past, teachers had to book computer rooms or language labs to go with their learners and allow them to use CALL software with mostly drill-type exercises [1]. Today, technology has become integrated into the classroom physically and pedagogically rather than being an add on. Computers particularly have come to be seen and used as a tool to accomplish certain tasks or to communicate [6].

Therefore, defines CALL now as 'the full integration of technology into language learning' with its three elements of theory, pedagogy, and technology playing an equally important role [3].

Although technology has always played a role in ESP [2], the internet has had a particularly strong impact. As ESP puts emphasis on the needs of learners, and authentic materials and tasks, IT has become a very suitable tool for ESP [1], specifically, the 'second wave of online language learning' [1],

which Arnó-Macià describes as going ‘beyond language learning by focusing on culture and social discourses’ and allowing ESP learners to collaborate and engage in authentic communication in their professional discourse community, to access up-to-date information relevant to their profession, and to publish their ideas, which can all give them a sense of empowerment as learners. This is why Warschauer and Kern termed teaching using IT as ‘networked-based language teaching’.

Problem formulation. Today, technology has become integrated into the classroom physically and pedagogically rather than being an add on. Computers particularly have come to be seen and used as a tool to accomplish certain tasks or to communicate. CALL is now defined now “the full integration of technology into language learning” with its three elements of theory, pedagogy, and technology playing an equally important role. Although technology has always played a role in ESP, the internet has had a particularly strong impact. As ESP puts emphasis on the needs of learners, and authentic materials and tasks, IT has become a very suitable tool for ESP, specifically, the “second wave of online language learning” allowing ESP learners to collaborate and engage in authentic communication in their professional discourse community, to access up-to-date information relevant to their profession, and to publish their ideas, which can all give them a sense of empowerment as learners.

The internet has taken centre stage and allows, in an increasingly globalised world, fast and efficient communication and collaboration, information generation, exchange, and management. The professional world today would in most cases not be possible without information technology. This places a challenge on teachers who need to prepare their ESP students to ‘deal with global communicative practices online, in all their complexity’.

The main material research

As learners’ needs and authentic tasks are paramount in ESP courses, many language teachers have integrated the same kinds of technology into their courses which their learners use in their profession, whether it is the word processor and email, the internet as a source for authentic material and place for authentic communication, virtual conferencing platforms, simulation software, or, in recent years, mobile technologies.

While each type of technology has its own specific advantages, it is worth listing some of the general benefits of using it in ESP. Some benefits of technology in language learning are the same for ESP learners as for general English learners. For example, finding native speakers as learning or communication partners or reading or watching the news in the target language for those who do not have easy access to these locally. In lessons, teachers can bring the outside world into the classroom, provide authentic contexts in which English is used, expose students to different varieties and accents of English, and give students listening practice. But, whereas in general English lessons even the teachers themselves can be a valuable resource for listening, speaking and authentic language use, in many cases technology, whether, for

example, in the form of videos or on the internet, is the only means for ESP students to access the specific language they need in order to communicate appropriately. Although it is not usually the case that teachers also have to teach the content, especially when teaching adult professionals, they do need to teach the field-specific language, which they might not always know, and which changes and develops over time.

The advantages of technology use in ELT are that it:

1. Provides interaction and communicative activities representative of specific professional or academic environments.
2. Fosters understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of the language as practised in various fields and professions.
3. Provides comprehensible field-specific input and facilitates student production.
4. Provides sheltering strategies for language development and content-specific understanding (modelling, bridging to students’ background experiences, contextualising, metacognitive activities, etc.).
5. Supplies authentic audiences, including outside experts in specific fields.
6. Supports cognitive abilities and critical thinking skills required in the disciplines.
7. Uses collaborative learning.
8. Facilitates focused practice for the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills across the curriculum and disciplines.
9. Is student-centred and addresses specific needs of students.
10. Uses multiple modalities to support different learning styles.
11. Meets affective needs of students: motivation, self-esteem, and autonomy.
12. Provides appropriate feedback and assessment of content knowledge and English skills.

Technologies for ESP

There are many different technologies that are successfully used in ESP courses from the traditional tape recorder or CD player, to interactive whiteboards, mobile technologies and 3D virtual environments. It is impossible to list them all. I will look at some more widely used ones in greater detail.

Skype/online conferencing tools

There are many online voice-over internet protocol (VoIP) services that allow users to make telephone or video calls and conduct group conferences using their computer, and Skype is one of the better known and is widely used. In its basic form, the application is freely downloadable and calls made between computers are without charge. Audio and video conferences can be made between participants, however, free video calls are restricted to two participants. The new version of Skype also allows screen sharing, which means that the teacher or students can show Word documents, slide presentations, or websites on their screen to the other participants in a Skype session, to talk about them or explain something.

There are free and paid add-ons and services and third-party applications that can extend Skype’s functionality such as whiteboards and software that allow the recording of voice or video conversations on

Skype. Text chat can be used concurrently with voice and video and is recorded automatically. Skype is used in many different ways for formal and informal language learning and teaching. A search on the Skype community platform shows how many language courses, language chat groups or conversation clubs there are. Many teachers also offer online courses via Skype, which are often individually bookable lessons.

There is also a special social media language course and materials integrating Skype called English Out There (<http://englishoutthere.com/>), which can be used by online teachers or as self-study material by learners. Other teachers invite guest speakers via Skype into their classrooms thus breaking down distance barriers. Skype is also used for tandem language learning either on a one-to-one basis or arranged by teachers for whole classes to bring them together with classes in other countries or regions in order to practise the target languages.

The convenience of learning from a distance from the comfort of one's home or from any location where one happens to be, in the case of frequent travellers, and having access to teachers and native speakers around the world are some reasons for the popularity of Skype for language learning. Other reasons might be the mostly free service, availability for major computer platforms, the reliability of the service, the relatively good quality of audio and video if used with a broadband connection, and also its ease of use. Many language learners are also already familiar with the tool from their professional work and use it to communicate with colleagues or business partners.

However, just because a particular technology is widely used does not mean it will automatically enhance language learning. Skype, like any other technology, is just a tool, and it needs to be used in a pedagogically sound way to have a value for language learning.

The internet

Technology, especially the internet with its abundance of authentic material (texts, audio, videos, etc.) and information on many topics, the tools and possibilities for communication, and platforms that allow sharing of ideas and knowledge, is particularly important in ESP.

Many English teachers now use the internet in their courses, set online homework, and use it to find materials and ideas for their lessons, even if only occasionally. Some have become online teachers. Others also use it for their own professional development as a 'virtual staffroom' to connect with colleagues around the world, share ideas, participate in webinars or conferences, or write and read blog. This extended staffroom is particularly important for ESP teachers, whose multiple roles, for example as teacher, materials designer, collaborator, assessor, and researcher have expanded and evolved through IT, allowing collaborations with field-specific experts and other colleagues around the world, and giving them more easy access to an abundance of multimedia materials for even the most specialised of fields in order to design materials and courses that meet their learners' needs. Today's technology makes it further possible for teachers to create more sophisticated and professional looking (multimedia) materials and online or blended courses. The three main areas that the internet is used for in ESP are namely as a source for authentic,

specialised material, a place for authentic communication, and a collection of tools that allow for the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and student- or teacher-created materials. With the availability of a wealth of information and materials on all kinds of topics and in various forms on the internet, finding relevant and up-to-date material has become much easier. Besides company websites, there are websites with user-generated content such as How Stuff Works (www.howstuffworks.com) or E-How (www.ehow.co.uk), where lay people or professionals can share videos and text showing and describing how certain things are done (from repairing an airplane, to blogging, to how to give a presentation), and websites dedicated to certain professions or fields of knowledge where teachers or learners can read, watch, or download materials. Sometimes, however, it is very difficult and time-consuming to find exactly the kind of material a teacher needs for a certain level or context and to prepare lessons based on these. This is where websites like Macmillan's www.onestopenglish.com or <http://breakingnewsenglish.com> come into play, and which can be seen as a middle way between following a coursebook or entirely creating one's own materials. They can help teachers make use of website resources without having to spend hours searching for materials and designing tasks for them. They also allow teachers to download a limited number of units or pages from coursebooks.

By using such internet and communication technologies to collaborate internationally and communicate with fellow students around the world, and engage in genuine conversations with experts in their field, teachers and learners can bridge the gap between the LSP classroom and workplace. In order for this to happen effectively, however, teachers need to understand the characteristics of internet communication so that they can help their ESP students to deal with specific aspects or features of this type of communication and environment. The internet is authentic not only because of the authenticity of the language that can be found there but also authentic as a place, which is very important in the situated learning approach according to which the socio-cultural setting has an influence on the learning and its outcome. The more the learning situation and activities resemble the students real-life situation and tasks, the more the students will be motivated to learn, and the more relevant the learning will be.

Challenges of technology use in ESP

Teachers and institutions that integrate technology into their ESP courses can face multiple other challenges such as:

- issues of accessibility, availability and reliability of the technology;
- the need for one-off and ongoing teacher and learner training;
- varying levels of tech-savviness of teachers and learners;
- time and resources needed to create technology-integrated courses;
- the need for new ways of managing classes in which technology is used, including:
 - how to deal with technical problems during lessons;
 - having to adapt to the changing roles of teachers as well as learners, particularly in online courses, etc.

These issues need to be thought through carefully to enable a smooth and successful integration of technology and ensure that teachers as well as students will accept the use of the technology as a valuable addition to their ESP course, rather than a distraction from the real purpose, which is learning the target language.

Conclusion

Whether they like technology or not, ESP teachers today cannot afford not to integrate technology into their courses, because technology plays an essential role in their learners' everyday professional lives, in which they need digital and electronic literacy skills to communicate internationally across cultural borders using different media, and to become autonomous

learners who can keep up with the fast-paced professional world.

Teachers who like technology and feel comfortable using it, will keep up with the latest developments and often readily adopt and experiment with various technologies in their teaching, whether offline or online. Sometimes, they are criticised by more techno-critical educators for unnecessarily using technology without having a proof for their effectiveness in helping students learn better or faster. In ESP the reason for using technology is not only or always because it makes learning the language more effective or efficient, but also because it can offer tools that simulate real life work situations, while giving students the opportunity to acquire and practise essential 21st century professional skills.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ В ОБЛАСТІ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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На початку 21-го століття спектр технологій, доступних для використання в галузі вивчення і викладання англійської мови став дуже різноманітним і способи, які використовуються на заняттях по всьому світу, стали грати центральну роль у мовній практиці. Цифрові технології вже давно стали частиною і ефективно використовуються в процесі викладання англійської мови (чи то у вигляді магнітофона або більш складної цифрової техніки). Але, можливо, їх вплив на цей процес був більш глибоким. Викладачі англійської мови завжди використовували наявні інструменти для розробки матеріалів і створення ситуацій, які відповідають потребам своїх студентів. Дана стаття присвячена ролі технологій в області навчання англійській мові. Показує переваги використання технологій для викладача англійської мови. Також розглядає проблеми, з якими вчителі та ВНЗ, які інтегрують технології в свою практику, можуть зіткнутися.

Ключові слова: технології; вивчення мови за допомогою комп'ютера; навчання; автентичність; мультимедіа.

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ОБЛАСТИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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В начале 21-го века спектр технологий, доступных для использования в области изучения и преподавания английского языка стал очень разнообразным и способы, которые используются на занятиях по всему миру, стали играть центральную роль в языковой практике. Цифровые технологии уже давно стали частью и эффективно используются в процессе преподавания английского языка (то ли в виде магнітофона или более сложной цифровой техники). Но, возможно, их влияние на этот процесс было более глубоким. Преподаватели английского языка всегда использовали имеющиеся инструменты для разработки материалов и создания ситуаций, соответствующих потребностям своих студентов. Данная статья посвящена роли технологий в области обучения английскому языку. Показывает преимущества использования технологий для преподавателя английского языка. Также рассматривает проблемы, с которыми учителя и ВУЗ, которые интегрируют технологии в свою практику, могут столкнуться.

Ключевые слова: технологии; изучение языка с помощью компьютера; преподавание; автентичность; мультимедиа.

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