

ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Babaniyazova Nargiza Polatovna,
*PhD, docent at the foreign languages department,
 Nukus state pedagogical institute
 Nukus, Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan*
Sarsenbaev Ramazan Janabay uli
*Teacher at the foreign languages department,
 Nukus state pedagogical institute
 Nukus, Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan*

ВАЖНОСТЬ ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ КАК ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Бабаниязова Наргиза Полатовна,
*К.п.н., доцент кафедры иностранных языков,
 Нукусский государственный педагогический институт
 Нукус, Узбекистан, Каракалпакстан*
Сарсенбаев Рамазан Жанабай улы
*Преподаватель кафедры иностранных языков,
 Нукусский государственный педагогический институт
 Нукус, Узбекистан, Каракалпакстан*

ABSTRACT

The article describes the importance of using Information Technologies in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It deals with some problems in the process of teaching EFL for students. 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 Nukus state pedagogical institute in Nukus 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.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье описывается важность использования информационных технологий в обучении английскому языку как иностранному (EFL). В нем рассматриваются некоторые проблемы в процессе обучения студентов английскому языку как иностранному. В настоящее время важность включения информационных технологий в образование на иностранном языке (ИЯ) часто подчеркивается, особенно учеными, занимающимися педагогикой иностранного языка.

Целью статьи было обобщить результаты наблюдений, проведенных в Нукусском государственном педагогическом институте в Нукусе, с тем, чтобы наметить способы улучшения иностранного языка учащихся, которые были разработаны надлежащим образом и в достаточной степени на наблюдаемых уроках английского языка как иностранного. Анализ показал, что курсы английского языка как иностранного в учебном заведении, как правило, придают большое значение интеграции навыков с использованием ИКТ в образовании иностранного языка. В результате обсуждения и анализа мы пришли к выводу, что крайне важно использовать навыки 21 века в процессе обучения английскому языку.

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

Ключевые слова: Английский как иностранный язык (EFL), Информационные технологии (IT), Интегрированные навыки, преподавание, обучение, навыки 21 века, методы.

1. Introduction

Currently, learning foreign languages have become a widely spread phenomenon in the globalized world. We are living in such times when the rapid development of information and communication technologies generates a number of radical changes in our lives, including in the educational process. The position of the English language in the world as the

leading means of international communication is associated primarily with the rapid development of high technologies, economics, and technologies. This strengthens the motivation of students who want to learn English as foreign language of 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 important mediums of communication in the world, so it is important to learn the language. As a result, English language teaching has been one of the important subjects in education. In fact, there are more non-native than native speakers of the language. There is also the diversity of context in terms of learner’s age, nationality, and learning background that has become an important feature of English language teaching today. The need to teach in general and teach the English language effectively, in particular, is the challenge before all the teachers in Uzbekistan. In №4947 “Strategy of actions in five priority directions of development of Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021” from the 7th February 2017 stated that “We will continue to focus our attention on deeper teaching of English and other foreign languages as priority. At the same time, we will strengthen our work on training, and professional development in those specialties required for us and other regulatory-legal acts”. In depth knowledge of a foreign language means not only practical knowledge of the language, but also the study of its theoretical foundations. At the turn of the century has changed the socio-cultural context of learning foreign languages in Uzbekistan.

2. Literature review

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) refers to teaching the English language to students with different first languages, typically used to imply that the English Language Learner may have already learned more than one language, prior to learning English. TEFL can occur either within the state school system or more privately, at a language school or with a tutor. Students who are learning English as a second language are known as ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. More generally, these students are referred to as ELL (English Language Learner) students. The 21st century demands the explicit integration of learning strategies, digital competences and career abilities. Higher educational institutions in general and EFL classrooms in particular should provide students with practices and processes focused on acquiring and developing, among other things, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, self-direction, and cross-cultural skills.

According to Varis [21], governments and schools should focus on removing barriers to access and connectivity, supporting professional development, accelerating E-learning innovation, promoting digital literacy, and implementing lifelong learning. Also, Lotherington and Jenson [12] state that globalization and digitization have reshaped the communication landscape, affecting how and with whom we communicate, and deeply altering the terrain of education of language and literacy. On the other hand, English foreign language (EFL) students tend to have different backgrounds, a multiplicity of achievement levels, and diverse learning styles, which impact their ability to learn and use the foreign language [1]. These learners are not only interested in achieving a high

command of the different language skills needed in social situations but also concerned with the acquisition of the formal academic skills demanded in higher educational institution.

Information technology is the use of computers to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data or information. IT is typically used within the context of business operations as opposed to personal or entertainment technologies. IT is considered to be a subset of information and communications technology (ICT). An information technology system is generally an information system, a communications system or, more specifically speaking, a computer system – including all hardware, software and peripheral equipment – operated by a limited group of users. Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage and audiovisual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

3. Method

Before discussing the relationship between the 21st century skills and EFL learning and teaching, we are going to talk about briefly characterizing the EFL context today. Rogers [16] stated that the 20th century saw an immense amount of activity in language teaching methods and approaches. The method Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is still one of the most effective methods. With its emphasis on communicative competence, learner-centeredness and interaction not only has CLT influenced syllabus design and methodology; it

has also paved the way for new methodologies such as content based instruction (CBI), task-based instruction (TBI) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Armstrong and Warlick [3] state that an increasingly digital and networked world requires students to be able to demonstrate knowledge, employ information and express ideas compellingly.

The use of that literacy involves, among other things, being able to read deeply for meaning in multimedia content, handle appropriate software tools to process information, use practical and technical skills to communicate knowledge with multimedia, and know the ethical use of the information highway.

The EFL classroom needs to move away from traditional methods focused on language mastery in order to start incorporating new approaches aimed at integrating content, culture, technology, and lifelong skills [19].

As Ledward and Hirata states that [10] 21st century skills are a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies necessary to succeed in work and life. Ledward and Hirata point out that these skills are more than technological literacy and include proficiency in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and team work. These skills allow people to thrive in the new economy since they

help people: a) access, synthesize, and communicate information; b) work collaboratively across differences to solve complex problems; and c) create new knowledge through the innovative use of multiple technologies.

Theoretical differences between interpersonal-communication technologies and mass-communication technologies have been identified by the philosopher Piyush Mathur [13, p.200-2020]. Skills Framework for the Information Age is one of many models for describing and managing competencies for ICT professionals for the 21st century. Without a doubt, ICT is a valuable and an innovative teaching tool enhancing EFL learning. The rapid growth of ICT has naturally influenced the every aspects of language teaching process. Using technology has positive effects on teaching and learning English. Technology can be applied to teaching practices to enhance and facilitate foreign language learning. Computer, internet, smart boards, cell phones are used in the target language learning process to raise students' motivation and language awareness [2, p.22-27].

When the pandemic started, as teachers we all began to use online platforms such as Moodle, Zoom conferences, Telegram groups and other social networks. The research participants were the students of the fifth semester at the institution from various education departments. The research conducted in two groups of students the fifth semester, 3rd year English for specific purposes (ESP) students. The data was taken through two kinds of tests, especially, midcourse assessment and exam. Vocabulary and reading tests were created by ESP teachers on the platform Moodle, at the foreign language department by the CEFR system. At the beginning, the students thought that this way of acquiring learning skills challenging but useful. At first, they felt nervous about online classes and examinations; however, as they progress, they soon got used to that integrated learning approach. In the end, participants said that the course materials on the platform created by teachers are used during English lessons but also to improve their independent study skills as well.

4. Results

The implementation of ICT will lead to variety in English content, contexts and pedagogical methods in teaching environment. ICT makes English language environment interactive, flexible and innovative. The application of computer technologies in language instruction provides a student-centered learning environment. It enables course administrators and teachers to vary lesson presentation styles to motivate students of varying interests, provides learning opportunities outside the classroom, and is perceived to cater more for individual differences. Integrating technology into language instruction reduces teacher-centered understanding and students' language learning anxiety, but encourages them to be risk takers to practice target language as they are digital natives. Jayanthi and Kumar [9, p.34-38] explain the positive impacts of ICT on ELT under the basic headings such as: availability of materials, students' attitudes, learner autonomy, authenticity, helping teachers, student-

centered, and self-assessment. The availability of large body of authentic materials such as images, animation, audio and video clips facilitate presenting and practicing language. As for students' attitudes, ICTs increase motivation. The students feel highly motivated to learn a language as they displayed positive attitudes towards language learning as they use computer and learn in stress-free learning environment. In addition, ICT fosters learner autonomy as ICT tools provide learners to take responsibilities for their own learning. Students are free to choose the material convenient for their learning styles.

Furthermore, ICT provides authentic situations and real life learning environment. As ICTs offer different types of facilities and availability of teaching materials, EFL teachers only suggest and design these tools as complementary teaching materials. Contrary to traditional learning environment, ICT supports student-centred learning together with teacher-student interaction.

As for assessment, with the ICTs both receptive and productive skills are effectively assessed. The teacher may decide and design relevant materials to test students' achievement in all skills. Additionally, the following impacts seemed to be the most obvious ones when using ICT to support foreign language teaching:

- 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. Capacity to control presentation. This capacity marks 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. A teacher may use different materials for each lesson, not like in teaching with textbooks, where all classes presenting a certain topic are the same.

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 [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; ICT improves independent learning; Learners' collaboration and

communication are more important; Learners' attainment and outcomes are improved [8].

On the other hand, the integration of ICT in classrooms can also bring certain disadvantages. Teachers may have difficulty in relation to the integration and implementation of technological tools into course syllabus and curriculum. There are necessities to bear in mind before to use ICTs in EFL classrooms. Therefore, Livingstone [11, p.12] asserts 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 state the drawbacks of using ICTs in classrooms as follows: difficulties in using software/hardware, need more technical support, not enough time to use ICT, too expensive to use regularly, insufficient access to the resources, restrictions the content of the lessons, counter-productive due to insufficient technical resources [5]. It is vital to effectively integrate technology into the classroom that an on-site technical assistant be recruited to assist teachers when needed [4, p.203].

It seems reasonable to assume that education teaching and learning should satisfy the needs and interests that people have as a result of new work and technological demands. However, there are aspects of such discourse that need to be carefully considered. In this regard, Van Dijk [20] argues for the relevance of studying how power, domination and social order are imposed, reproduced, and controlled through discourse. He points out that education tends to enact institutional and professional practices associated with power abuse and discursive reproduction; in particular, such abuse and reproduction are present when particular topics, actions and rules are standardized and formalized according to the interests and needs of a specific set of actors. Furthermore, Rogers claims that educators need to analyze discourse critically to be able to describe, interpret, and explain the current relationship among the economy, national policies, and educational practices [16].

Royce states that the changes in communication modes and conventions in recent years, EFL classrooms need to be increasingly concerned with developing students' multimodal communicative competence [17]. In this regard, teachers should begin to focus on and develop students' abilities in visual literacy, and to develop a pedagogical meta-language to facilitate these abilities when images co-occur with spoken and written modes. 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

In Karakalpakstan, teachers at educational institutions use of ICT in teaching English widely. However, students have a limitation in using of ICT due to the academic hours scheduled for the semesters for Karakalpak students. It is strongly believed that the implementation of educational technology and communication into EFL context provides flexible and diverse set of technological tools, promotes problem solving skills of students, gives chance learners 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, can enhance teacher training. On the contrary, it is clearly evident that the integration of ICT into language teaching practices has its own limits. ICTs should be integrated to foreign language teaching as an effective supplementary and a valuable complementary teaching tool in order to get better results. According to Hamilton, not only can such innovation keep the education service flexible, responsive, and self-renewing, but it can also promote a sense of well-being in the teaching profession [6].

Thus, we assume that EFL classrooms need to be filled with meaningful and intellectually stimulating activities, practices, and processes that allow students to not just articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication, but to also understand complex perspectives, make judgments and decisions, and work creatively with others. As a result, teachers need to analyze critically what the 21st century movement offers in order to enrich their pedagogical processes.

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INVESTIGATING THE ACCEPTANCE OF MOBILE E-PORTFOLIO AS AN E-LEARNING TOOL BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS

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Urazbaev Khikmatullo

Lecturer, Global Education Department
Westminster International University in Tashkent
12 Istiqbol Street, 100047, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

ПРИНЯТИЯ МОБИЛЬНОГО ЭЛЕКТРОННОГО ПОРТФЕЛЯ В КАЧЕСТВЕ ЭЛЕКТРОННОГО УЧЕБНОГО ПОСОБИЯ СТУДЕНТАМИ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИХ ВУЗОВ

Хикматулло Уразбаев

Преподаватель кафедры глобального образования
Международный Вестминстерский Университет в г. Ташкент

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to conduct quantitative analysis of mobile e-portfolio acceptance by pre-service teacher education program students. Technology Acceptance Model developed by Davis was used in the study to identify the influence of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards the use of e-portfolio on the intention to use it. 136 respondents from three different higher education institutions took part in the survey. The data obtained in the survey was analyzed by applying linear regression analysis. Findings of the research suggest that perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and attitude to the use of e-portfolio have a significant impact on