MULTIMEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY: A GATEWAY TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

Computer technology and Internet are inevitable new media in education methodology. Still, the central role in teaching belongs to humans. The power of Internet is viewed as a platform offering authentic materials, software, education plans, list of exams, literature, etc. to various schools, universities, and institutions all over the world. Next to its commercial importance, it is seen as pedagogical tool for either the independent research or teamwork.

The most innovative endeavor the teachers of English have undertaken so far is to integrate media technology in ELT classroom, in order to improve learners' motivation, integrated language skills and self-learning environment. Technology enables teachers to adapt classroom activities, thus enhancing the language learning process.

The study highlights on the role of using new technologies in learning English as a second/foreign language. It explores different attitudes which support English language learners to increase their learning skills through the use of latest technologies. It is also important to understand how students acquire a new language in order to appreciate the significance that technology can have in ensuring success for English language learners. Utilizing and combining graphics, video, and audio can address varied styles of learning in a more effective way and be a tremendous support to English language learners. Finding a way to infuse technology into instruction not only helps English language learners acquire a second language, but also enhances motivation and confidence.

This paper will focus on as how we as an educators, we are in the unique position to embrace new technologies and use them to enhance curriculum while better engaging each of our students. It also aims to make non-native speakers of English as language teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner and significant role of multimedia in motivating learner's interest in English language learning.

Keywords*: English Language Teaching, Language Learning, Multimedia Technology, Interaction, Language Skills

Computer technology and Internet are inevitable new media in education methodology which is booming to unpredictable extent. Still, the central role in teaching belongs to humans. The power of Internet is viewed as a platform offering authentic materials, software, education plans, list of exams, literature, etc. to various schools, universities, and institutions all over the world. Next to its commercial importance, it is seen as pedagogical tool for either the independent research or teamwork. The most innovative endeavor the teachers of English have undertaken so far is to integrate media technology in ELT classroom, in order to improve learners' motivation, integrated language skills and self-learning environment enhancing the language learning process.
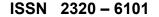
English has become the most dominate language in the world. As David and Dan (2002) asserted, it is the language of travel, tourism, science, and technology. This universal acceptance and the need for good communication skill in English have created a vast requirement for teaching English around the world. This fact has put a tremendous pressure on educationalists to cope with this demand and to attempt to equip teachers with modern teaching methods and approaches. As society advances, science and technology develop and the Internet emerges, the traditional teaching of English has been greatly challenged by many new ways.

Mayer (2001) suggests that learners are able to create a deeper understanding of words when they establish connections between words and pictures than from words or pictures alone. Multimedia has broken through the traditional "blackboard and chalk" teaching style and has conquered the drawbacks of traditional teaching changing abstract, boring contents into funny, visual, audible, and dynamic ones. Multimedia English teaching combines text, images, audio and video together making English teaching colorful and interesting so as to attract the attention of students and stimulate students' interest in English learning.

Multimedia plays a fundamental role in teaching English. Lin & Chen (2007) and Siddiqi (2007) argued that multimedia is beneficial for FL learners. It is widely accepted among educationalists that multimedia instructional settings and animated models influence the way that students learn (Mayer, 2001). In multimedia instructional settings, materials are displayed in a verbal (such as on-screen text or narration) module with a pictorial form. Computer animation and cartoons can act as potential tools for creating multimedia instructional settings. Teachers can use computer animation and cartoons to present learning materials visually as they want and can control every aspect of them.

There is no doubt, with the global economic development and strong social competition, the State Ministry of Education pays much attention to quality education. How to follow the step of development of quality education in English teaching? The answer is that multimedia is one of the ways to promote the development of quality education. Multimedia English language teaching can enable students to be involved in a variety of sensory organ in the learning process and stimulate the students in the corresponding cortical function area. This stimulation is favor of understanding and memorizing knowledge, produces better learning outcomes, and improves classroom efficiency, thus breaking the traditional English teaching. Multimedia English teaching provides a good educational platform and adds vigor for quality education, enabling students to change and update their thinking from the traditional teaching, thereby enhancing the quality of all aspects.

English Language Teaching has tremendously changed over the centuries. When English entered in the curriculum of the students as a compulsory subject, it was a challenge for the English language teachers to teach as they taught English as a 'Know-ledge' subject not as a 'Skill' subject. So they adopted 'Grammar-Translation Method' in which the teacher used to

explain every word to students in the native language to make them understand and learn English. So many other methods were also used such as bilingual method, direct method, the structural approach and the situational teaching, communicative language teaching etc. but no method was said to be a perfect method. Later on, overhead projectors, acted as another medium for the teacher dominated class room where teachers believed in the dictum of drill and practice. Audio-lingual method was another popular method but in the later years of 1970's, audio lingual method fell into disregard.

During 1980's and 1990's, there was a sweeping change over the existing trends then, and more emphasis was laid on authentic and meaningful contextualized discourse. Since then English Language Teaching seems to be swinging like a pendulum between the extremes of method as language teachers have ever been in search of better and more effective method of teaching. Moreover, the English Language Teaching trends that were very popular in the past have vanished today and have been substituted by innovative methods due to the all-pervading technology into all spheres of life.

Multimedia assisted English teaching requires teachers with multimedia computer operating experience. It is a challenge for teachers using multimedia because of heavy preparation work and increasing workload. In the light of the problems the teachers should be trained with the use of modern equipments. They should be familiar with the operation. They should be expert in one thing and good at many. They should know well about modern educational theories and techniques.

The Principles of Multimedia-Assisted Teaching

- ➢ Scientific principles: Namely, courseware design cannot appear any errors
- ➢ Subsidiary principle: We must always adhere to: Although multi-media teaching has many advantages, it is only a supplementary means, and does not substitute for the role of people
- ➢ Interactivity principle: More interactivity between teachers and students, students and multimedia, more effective results we will have
- ➢ Combination principle: Combine the advantages of modern teaching and the traditional teaching organically

It is hard to achieve the goal of learning English language through the traditional teaching because it hampers the students' capacity to understand the structure, meaning and function of the language. Such teaching method makes the students passive recipients of knowledge. But, now, multimedia technology has been a great help to integrate teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives, carrying for "students' future competitiveness at the workplace" (Healey et. al. 11).

The primary purpose of multimedia is to enhance learning. Hence, multimedia presentation needs to support contemporary approaches to learning and teaching where learners are viewed as active constructors of knowledge and teachers are facilitators of that learning process (Fenstermacher, 1986). Constructivism theory and cognitive psychology are two theoretical frameworks of multimedia in English language teaching.

Tomlison (2009) and Genç lter (2015) say that computer-based activities provide learners rapid information and appropriate materials. They continue that internet materials motivate learners to learn more. In addition, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) supported the view that technology provides teaching resources and brings learning experience to the learners' world. Through using technology, many authentic materials can be provided to learners and they can be motivated in learning language.

The application of technology has considerably changed English teaching methods. It provides so many alternatives as making teaching interesting and more productive in terms of advancement (Patel, 2013). In traditional classrooms, teachers stand in front of learners and give lecture, explanation, and instruction through using blackboard or whiteboard. These methods must be changed concerning the development of technology. The usage of multimedia texts in classroom assists learners in become familiar with vocabulary and language structures. The application of multimedia also makes use of print texts, film, and internet to enhance learners' linguistic knowledge. The use of print, film, and internet gives learners the chance to collect information and offers them different materials for the analysis and interpretation of both language and contexts (Arifah, 2014).

Warschauer (2000a) described two different views about how to integrate technology into the class. First, in the cognitive approach, learners get the opportunity to increase their exposure to language meaningfully and make their own knowledge. Second, in the social approach, learners must be given opportunities for authentic social interactions to practice real life skills. This objective can be obtained through the collaboration of learners in real activities.

Eaton (2010) told that computer-based communication is a useful feature for language learning. Computer-assisted discussion features more equal participation than face to-face discussion. Zhao (2013) supported the above view and said that access to authentic materials in the target language is critical for successful language learning. Baytak, Tarman, and Ayas (2011) performed a research towards the effect of technology on learning. The findings obtained from this study revealed that learners increased their learning through incorporating technology into their classes. The researchers emphasized that technology made learners' learning interesting and interactive and increased their motivation, social interactions, and engagement.

Based on the linguistic theory of systematic functions of Halliday and Hasan (1989), the purpose of English teaching is the development of students' *Meaning Potential*, which uses the cultural significance of the target language to raise the English communicative competence. Students not only learn the vocabulary, grammar, and text systems, but also the principles of cross-cultural communication and practices of special meaning systems, behavior, and choices in the language according to the context. The aim of English teaching is to provide students with such a learning environment and conditions. Multimedia and network teaching also provide a more advantageous condition for the development of *Meaning Potential* to students. For example, when we set the English curriculum for multimedia English teaching, we should consider the establishment of different systems of language teaching for the target language and then divide the learning process into different phases.

Multimedia language teaching is not simply a "means of introducing multimedia" rather attention should be paid to coordination between teachers and students, teaching materials and methods, theory and practice and multimedia teaching and the real learning environment. Students learn to take the initiative to promote exchanges with teachers, and vice versa; it is not appropriate to apply too many teaching methods or provide too much courseware to students. It is important to choose the most suitable teaching method for creating a real teaching and learning environment to help students gain the most intuitive and cultural information using various functions and forms of multimedia presentation. In this way, students can develop self-confidence in communication and improve their overall English skills.

The MIT Open Course Ware (OCW) (http://ocw.mit.edu/) of America and the National Program of Web-Delivery for Elaborate Course (NPWDEC) of China can be used as the projects based on the integration of the Internet and multimedia Information Technology (IT), and are

also open and sharable projects with wide influence. The NPWDEC integrates texts, pictures, videos, and students' self-evaluation. Through sharing information and course resources on the Internet, some basic public required courses such as "computer" and "College English" have brought about teaching reform and course construction, as well as optimizing the context of the multimedia teaching of English.

Currently, software such as *PowerPoint*, *Authorware*, *Flash*, *Director*, and *Founder Author Tool* can all be used to make multimedia courseware. We believe that it is quite important for English teachers to learn, master, and create interactive courseware to optimize the context creation of ELT. It is also important that English teachers fulfill the aim of multimedia English teaching for the purpose of context creation through meeting certain requirements such as *Intuition with Association.* Multimedia is composed of various components: text, graphics, animation, sound, and video. These components can contribute differentially to the learning of material-

Text: It is fundamental element in all multimedia applications. It conveys most information (Vanghan, 2004). We can use ordinary text or various typographic effects for emphasis or clarification in English teaching. In order to catch the reader's attention, teachers can use different font size, color, and style to present information; emphasize a certain word or phrase.

Graphics. It refers to images and pictures, such as chart, diagram, and photograph, which contain no movement. According to Andrew Wright's Book Picture for Language Learning, graphics can stimulate interesting and motivation, improve understanding ability of language, and offer especial reference object and topic (Wright, 2003). Graphics plays a very important role in language teaching process.

Animation: Animation is the rapid display of a sequence of images of 2-D or 3-D artwork or model positions in order to create an illusion of movement. Simply speaking, it ranges scope from the basic graph with a simple motion to a detailed image with complex movements. Assisted by the use of animation, teachers can highlight key knowledge points and heighten students' motivation (Vanghan, 2004).

Sound: It is speech, music, or any other sound that is stored and produced by computers. It has more advantages than tape recorder. In multimedia, teacher can use more vivid and fruitful sound to help students' English learning.

Video: It is the visible part of a television transmission and broadcasts visual images of stationary or moving objects. Compared with animation, video can offer more vivid information. But it will consume more storage space than animation (Vanghan, 2004).

The Interactive White Board offers multiple opportunities in foreign language teaching, and it provides exciting ways of acquiring the knowledge that go beyond the possibilities of traditional chalkboards. The Interactive White Board consists of the combination of plain whiteboard, chalkboard, video, television, overhead projector, CD player and classroom computer. It is a big, touch-sensitive board which is connected to a digital projector and a computer, therefore, enabling transmitting the contents from the computer and displaying it by the projector on the board. The user can control the board, either by touching it directly or with a specially intended pen (Dudney 2007: 39).

The Interactive White Board can be applied in a laboratory class for language learning for the following purposes:

➢ using resources from the websites in whole-class teaching
➢ showing video clips to help students get a better understanding of a certain concept
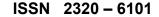➢ demonstrating a piece of software packages

- making presentations by students and showing the results of their work
- creating digital flipcharts
- manipulating text
- practicing handwriting
- saving notes for the future use
- revising material (Dudney 2007: 39)

Thus, the IWB serves as the tool enabling the access to and use of digital resources, it is suppose to benefit the whole class while the teacher remain the guide and monitors the learning (Hall and Higgins 2005: 104). The IWB also enables the access to the internet where it is possible for the teachers to find plenty of educational websites, video and audio clips, photos and materials to enrich the language teaching. There are also available educational software packages for the IWB that offer interactive and electronic texts and games. They are specifically designed for teaching curricular content and can be purchased for classroom use. Moreover, the IWB is the mean that enables showing information in multimedia format, and it is possible to save student's work on the computer which can be displayed later on the board. It still has the features of a traditional chalkboard, teachers can write and erase what they wrote as it has been done in such way for years. Using the IWB in the classroom brings a lot of advantages for both students and teachers. The big benefit can be seen in maximizing time for language learning, as the materials are stored and can be reused again and again, teachers no longer need to spend so much time on planning and developing resources. Posters, flashcards, CD players, and sometimes even textbooks can be substituted by suitable images and texts chosen by instructors, and can be easily stored for future reference. Relevant quality of the IWB is that multimedia enables teachers to have the access to materials and prepared lessons quickly and efficiently from a vast range of resources. It's multisensory feature enables moving between visual and oral input easily, thus supporting language practice. The another quality which engages and holds student's attention is that software designed specifically for the IWB contains interactive texts, and activities with colorful graphics and sound effects. All these benefits from using the IWB in the classroom are especially useful for young learners, as they are best to learn through the senses such as: hearing, seeing, touching, as well as through the verbal interaction (Dudney 2007: 39). Young learners find very attractive and appealing the characteristic elements of the IWB:

- visual elements as color and movement,
- auditory elements as music, voce, and sound effects,
- tactile elements (Dudney 2007: 39).

Further teachers can also used Tech-based tools for language learning which are basically known as educational websites-

- *Quizlet* is a powerful and flexible online learning platform based on a tried-and-true memorization tool: the flash card. The "sets" of digital cards can be used to drill vocabulary, but also work well for grammar topics like gender or verb conjugation. Teachers can create and organize sets for their classes and monitor students' activity and progress on a given set. Students in turn have access to a huge archive of sets and can easily search for topics required.
- *FluentU* teaches language using strictly authentic materials such as news, music videos and movie trailers. This has the major advantage of ensuring that all material is up-to-date and culturally relevant. In a word: meaningful. This is just the thing students have been missing during hours of regurgitating fabricated textbook conversations about what they like to buy in the supermarket. It's designed to get students familiar with
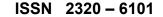
foreign vocabulary in a fun, friendly, totally approachable way. *FluentU* makes it possible to learn languages from music videos, commercials, news, inspiring talks, cartoons and more**.** The activities are fun, with plenty of opportunities for working in pairs. All in all, a great tool for homework and in-class playfulness.

'Videos, like other theme-based materials, are effective springboards for other content-based classroom activities. They provide background information and proper stimuli for subsequent reading, writing, speaking and listening activities' (Stoller, 1993, p.3).

As Tomalin (1991) observes, the use of video in the classroom is highly motivational for young students. They are stimulated to acquire new words and phrases, while they are learning about the target culture and they are receiving renewed input of the target language. Other authors highlight the importance of the video as a facilitator of the mental processing, thanks to the images on TV screen that are lifelike, such as representations of people or objects. (Salomon as cited in Arcano). A great advantage of the digital video technology is the chance that teachers have to produce their own videos or search for those which match in the best way with the students' needs and interests (Shrosbree 2008).

One of the most common worries among teachers when using technology is the cost of it, economically speaking, and the amount of time and skills that it requires (Brinton, 2001). But YouTube has offered a new way of accessing to a rank of information and video resources in a simple way, which does not require any special skills and is free (Snelson and Perkins, 2009). As it is a global online delivery system, current events, new and cultures can be brought to the classroom with a simple click. Teachers navigate directly to a short focused video segment and in this way the attributes of the video can be exploited without losing students attention, a problem that rises during long-playing presentations (Snelson and Perkins, 2009). Thanks to YouTube special features, teachers can collect several related videos together in a playlist in order to illustrate the concepts of a lesson or spark discussions about a topic (Snelson and Perkins, 2009). In YouTube the possibilities are almost infinite; teachers can find from videos of real life to trailers or movie scenes.

The Internet is certainly a modern technological way for persons hope to develop their English language skills. There are many Internet web sites prepared solely to enhance the reading abilities of English language learners. There are also a huge number of resources available in the form of newspapers, magazines, journals, electronic libraries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and newsletters (Kenworthy, 2004)**.** Browsing these resources and sites will obviously enhance the learner's vocabulary and reading ability. Twenty-first century readers must be able to comprehend many different types of texts, such as comic strips, fairy tales, news, informational documents, and many more. Some texts are similar in digital and print forms, but others are available only through the use of technology. For example, tweeting and blogging are texts that now play a role in many of our daily lives. Digital texts greatly facilitate the task of differentiating instruction. Students are able to use accessibility functions to customize their settings (font size, spacing, color contrast, bolding, etc.), which frees up cognitive load for comprehension. Furthermore, most digital texts include features that help students to better understand the texts. For example, many sites have a menu or table of contents that remains visible on the screen, which helps readers understand the structure and main ideas of the text. Finally, hyperlinked text helps students compensate for a weak vocabulary and access further information on concepts for which they have little prior knowledge. Visual learning software, such as graphic organizers and mind maps, is another indispensable tool to develop students' reading comprehension skills. It can be used to illustrate different text structures (narrative,

descriptive, argumentative, etc.), and it helps students identify the most important elements of the text they are reading, as well as see an overview of the entire text.

Another modern way for improving the vocabulary of the learner focuses on the utilization of electronic dictionaries designed specifically for English language learners. These dictionaries have several built-in functions and tools that are not provided in book dictionaries (Constantinescu, 2007). Electronic dictionaries are also easy to use and represent quick tools for vocabulary acquisition. An eVoc strategy is an electronic or technology-based strategy that teachers can use to develop students' vocabulary learning and interest in words. We use the term eVoc both to highlight that the strategies rely on digital tools and resources and to suggest the evoking of learning potential that is possible when technology and media are part of the instructional mix. Wordle is a free Web application that allows you to create a word cloud based on the frequency of words in a particular text. It can be used to stimulate students' thinking about the meaning, importance, and relationship of words as they analyze, create, and publish Wordles. To create a word cloud, you paste text into the applet and then manipulate the visual display by selecting the color scheme, layout, and font. Word clouds can be used to highlight keywords and themes to prepare students for reading, as well as prompt discussion after reading.

Human communication can be taken place between the speaker and the listener if only they understand each other. Both speaker and listener have a positive function to perform in simple terms. The speaker has to convert his message into spoken language, while the listener has to understand the language of the speaker. Inserting technology in learning English language speaking can take several forms. Chatting is the process of voice communication between the speaker and the listener through the internet. This process may be very beneficial to the learner if the other side speaker is a native language talker. Modern computer programs can generate voice signals and decode human sound. These types of programs are defined as artificial intelligence computer programs and can be a very useful tool for improving the speaking capability. Practicing with such programs will strengthen vocabulary and pronunciation abilities as well. When it comes to speaking practice via the internet, there are cheap, useful and wise solutions available. For example, Skype, MSN Messenger, GoogleTalk and similar VoIP applications can be used to connect a native speaker on the internet and realize a real-time conversation for free. Volle (2005) in her research notes that using MSN Messenger to conduct her online lessons, she observed the development in oral proficiency of her students. Even though VoIP conversations cannot make up for some features of a real & face-to-face conversation, it is a precious opportunity for an L2 learner to use VoIP applications considering the hardships of finding a native speaker in the place where the learner lives. Labayen et. al. (2005) indicates that face to face communication has many advantages, so video-audio devices in CALL and on the internet are essential to teach oral skills.

The writing process can be very difficult for learners of English language as they must do tasks like generating ideas, organization, and perfect use of grammar and vocabulary. Computers can be used to develop the writing skills of English language learners. Writing statements and paragraphs in a foreign language can be very challenging for the students. However, the use of computers and graphics-based programs can make the writing task much easier and enjoyable, and can make them express their thoughts more clearly. Grammar skills can also be improved with the aid of word processing programs. The learner can highlight a specific part of the written text through underlining, bolding, italicizing, or changing the font size and color of the text with the aid of these programs which have the capability of automatically checking the spelling and grammar. So, the use of the computer as a tool in studying grammar is much more motivating for

the student than the process of traditional writing with a paper and a pencil (Ybarra & Green, 2003). Electronic mail is a modern way for writing and transferring messages through the internet. Using e-mail can be a very effective means for improving writing skills. Students can use E-mails to learn how to respond to the incoming messages using some formal statements and meaningful language (Singhal, 1997). Text chatting is another important technical method for developing writing ability. It provides an on-line and quick tool for writing and expressing thoughts, transferring ideas, and responding instantaneously with the other side writer. The Writing Challenge App allows students to enjoy writing in the guide of a fun, interactive game. The app provides a prompt to get student writing started…then, every minute, the app supplies another prompt to add new ideas, words, characters, sentences, places or actions to the plot. Students who have a hard time getting started with creative writing assignments will enjoy the fast-paced, game-like setup of this app. And in the end, they'll have been inspired to write an entire story. Storyrobe allows writers to write, share their work, and receive feedback from others. This is a great way to integrate student editing and revision as well as teaching how to incorporate positive feedback to writers. With this app, you can easily save and upload your story to social media platforms as well.

Thus the main purpose of using multimedia technology in language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest in the English language. In the non-native English speaking context, this can be a practical way to get them involved in the language learning. To achieve this goal, the language teachers should create a favorable environment for English language teaching, which should be based on the availability of information and teaching materials. The process of English learning should be more student-centered and less time-consuming. The language teachers should maintain the students' communicative competence through multimedia technology. It is true that one of the ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the language learning. Context creation of ELT should be based on the openness and Accessibility of the teaching materials and information. During the process of optimizing the multimedia English teaching, students are not too dependent on their mother tongue, but will be motivated and guided to communicate with each other. English skill scan be effectively cultivated, meaning that students' communicative competence will be further developed. We therefore, believe that this process can fully improve students' ideation and practical language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfill an effective result of teaching and learning. Barring a few problem areas multimedia technology can be used effectively in classrooms of ElT with proper computer knowledge on the part of teachers, overcoming the finance problems in setting up the infrastructure and not allowing the teachers to become technophobes.

Using technology in learning a second language has become a real necessity nowadays. This paper has reviewed briefly the importance of multimedia, its contemporary scenario, tools used in language teaching and learning and how technology can be utilized in developing the language skills of the learner. In conclusion, the utilization of multimedia technology can fully improve the students' thinking and practical language skills. This will ensure and fulfill an effective result of English language teaching. Despite some disadvantages of using multimedia technology in teaching, multimedia technology can be used effectively in the English language teaching classrooms. Overall, the non-native speakers of English as language teachers can teach English more efficiently if they use multimedia technology effectively understanding and catering the needs of the learners.

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