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The Role of Multimedia in Language Teaching

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We live in an age of technology. New gadgets and devices are introduced into our life every day with the promise they will enrich our lives. Technologies have influenced every aspect of our lives. Multimedia is an advanced technology that facilitates integration of text, data, image, graphics, audio, video animation in digital form. Multimedia is information displayed in picture/sound form and it does not include plain text exclusively. Thus, Multimedia is a combination of text, graphics, audio and video. These components can contribute differently to the learning of material.

Therefore, new era has assigned new challenges and duties to modern teachers. There are a number of techniques applicable in language learning situation. These techniques can be used in learning process to make lectures more encouraging and interesting.

There are some ways in which multimedia can be used in language teaching to enhance the learning experience for students.

1. **Online language learning platforms:** Using online platforms like Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, or Babbel can provide interactive language lessons, a diversity of vocabulary exercises, and speaking practice.

2. **Language learning apps:** Mobile apps such as HelloTalk, or Tandem allow learners to practice their language skills through flashcards, audio exercises, and language exchange with native speakers.

3. **Video conferencing tools:** Platforms like Skype or Zoom enable remote language lessons with native-speakers.

4. **Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR):** technologies like VR and AR can create virtual environments where learners can practice language skills in simulated real-life contexts, such as ordering food at a restaurant or navigating through a city.

5. **Online language resources:** providing students with online resources like dictionaries, grammar websites, and language learning forums.

6. **Language learning games:** Using educational games, such as language puzzles, crossword puzzles, or word association apps, can make language learning more enjoyable and impressive.

7. **Digital storytelling tools:** certain platforms allow learners to create digital stories, promoting creativity, writing skills, and vocabulary acquisition.

8. Multimedia content: Utilizing authentic materials like YouTube videos, podcasts, or online news articles can expose students to real-world language usage and provide topics for discussion and comprehension exercises.

Many English teachers around the world consider English as a foreign language (EFL) model. In this case they teach their students the standard language norms of English that is common in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. In the era of globalization people from all over the world need more communication and the above-mentioned language norm isn't enough at all. Language learners need to know other variations of the language to be able to engage with other speakers of English as an additional language. So, a more suitable model is English as an International Language (EIL), which emphasizes users' ability to communicate with diverse global English users (Matsuda 2012).

Language learners need to adapt to new varieties and in this case the teacher's role is immense. They can provide students with a plethora of materials to enhance students' listening skills. Podcasts can be used with the students of diverse backgrounds.

What is podcast?

Podcasts are 'audio files that are published online'. They are recorded with the intent of informing, educating, entertaining purposes. Most podcasts are serialized and are made up of different episodes. This is especially the case when the podcaster is telling a story or covering a topic that requires several recordings.

There is no ideal length for a podcast but usually 30 to 60 minutes is what you should aim at if you want to create your own podcasts. Podcasts can include your own voice, royalty-free music, music you created yourself, or any other audio clips you see fit.

For podcasts to reach the intended audience they need to be distributed through a hosting platform such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, etc. People can subscribe to podcasts and start receiving automatic updates each time a new episode is released.

Why use podcasts in the classroom?

In the field of education, podcasts are used for a wide variety of purposes:

1. With podcasts, you can choose the content and form that fits your particular lesson, and the possibilities are endless: fictional stories, educational and inspirational TED talks, current events/world news, history, sports, pop culture/entertainment, and investigative journalism. Using an array of forms keeps your class fresh and engaging, and podcasts expose students to a wide variety of methods of communication, including narration, casual dialogue, scripted dialogue, and interviews.

2. Teachers can record audio podcasts to provide additional and revision material to students to download and review at their own pace.

3. Empower students' voice and encourage them to create their own podcasts and share their learning experiences with each other (e.g., peer learning).

4. Podcasts can hugely benefit auditory learners and help them in their learning.

5. Creating podcasts allows students to develop several important skills including research skills, writing skills, communication skills, problem solving and time management skills, among others.

6. As for educational podcasts, they are attractive and can encourage students who don't like reading, or may struggle with reading through mental impairments, such as Dyslexia. Another benefit of educational podcasts is the chance to learn through listening. To some students learning through listening is appealing and less tedious than reading. Furthermore, any podcast listener can quickly get a grasp of any language they want to learn by finding a show that is teaching it.

The use of podcasts has some challenges. As podcasts come from different global settings, the speaker may use unfamiliar vocabulary and reference concepts for the students. Also, the language level may be too high for intermediate and advanced learners. A skillful educator can deal with this problem by well-designed lesson to overcome these challenges.

In my case, the students were able to listen a podcast sharing the experience of participants from different regions about their addictions. The content of the podcast episodes was new in terms of both vocabulary and contextual information. The language used in the podcasts was above students' independent listening level. But the teaching strategies allowed us to successfully use podcasts despite these challenges.

Teaching strategies to support the use of podcasts. We designed listening lessons by using the traditional sequence – pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening strategies. The students were instructed what to do during pre-listening and while-listening activities. After that they could share their responses and completed the post-listening activities together.

While listening podcasts students can make connections between new and previous knowledge. For that reason we prepared discussion questions about the addictive things in their community. In this way we tried to activate our students' established background knowledge by allowing them to reflect on their past experience and prior knowledge.

Reflective writing activities let the students consider some complex questions and respond them. Students can be encouraged by some prompts. For instance: “when I imagine myself addicted to phone

Reading a text related to the podcasts offers students an opportunity to gain new knowledge related to the context. In this way they get clear idea what the podcast might be about. Scenarios are excellent ways of activating students' knowledge and imagination. They can be given some situations to deal with new challenges, for example how to behave in a store in a foreign country, or, how to communicate with locals when you arrive in a new surrounding and many others.

Before listening podcasts, we provided the students with suitable vocabulary that might seem attractive for them. They could look up the words that were new to them. After that activity we asked them to make up their own sentences.

Many podcasts might seem longer and boring for some students who struggle with their language listening skills. For that reason we decided to shorten the podcast and allowed our students to listen to short portions of the podcast. Sometimes we even let them listen twice or three times. While listening they could take notes and later, retell it to the partner. Another activity is” true/false”. In this case, the students are more focused to get specific information. Some teachers give students guiding questions that are specifically focused on linguistic variations. For example: How does the speaker's vocabulary use reflect their cultural background? What is unique about the speaker's accent? Podcasts not only help students raise their awareness of global language varieties, but also gain insight into a wide variety of global cultures. Podcasts exposed them to authentic language use by global English users.

According to the survey learning designs in university education, using flipped or blended learning models, can improve student attitudes to the learning process, performance and critical analysis skills and develop their cognitive skills.

For many university lecturers, educational technologies are becoming available at such a rapid pace that lecturers often feel incompetent in dealing with these new technologies.

In response to this several strategies have been identified to support professional development for university lecturers in the implementation of learning technologies:

1. Development of a common understanding of the theoretical frame works of the approach;
2. Development of understanding of the affordances of the technologies at hand, and developing these skills before using them with students;
3. Participation in authentic tasks which model the practices to assist the transformation from theory to practice.

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თამარ ალფაიძე

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მულტიმედიის როლი უცხო ენის სწავლების პროცესში რეზიუმე

გლობალიზაციის და ტექნოლოგიური განვითარების ეპოქა ბევრი საინტერესო და რთული გამოწვევის წინაშე აღმოჩნდა, რამაც ასახვა ჰპოვა საგანმანათლებლო სფეროზეც. თანამედროვე მასწავლებელი ვალდებული გახდა მრავალფეროვანი ონლაინ აქტივობების გამოყენებით ეფექტიანად წარმართოს სწავლა-სწავლების პროცესი. ამასთანავე, მოახდინოს სტუდენტთა მოტივაციის ამაღლება და საკომუნიკაციო კომპეტენციების გაუმჯობესება. აღნიშნულ ნაშრომში ხაზგასმულია მულტიმედიის აუცილებლობა და მისი შემდგომი შედეგების როლი სტუდენტთა კოგნიტური და მეტაკოგნიტური უნარების გაუმჯობესებისთვის. მოცემულია პოდეკასტების გამოყენების მეთოდები და აქტივობები, რაც უფრო შთამბეჭდავს და საინტერესოს ხდის სალექციო პროცესს. ტექნოლოგიების გამოყენებამ სწავლების პროცესში რადიკალურად შეცვალა ტრადიციული სწავლების ბევრი მიდგომა და ამით ხელი შეუწყო სტუდენტთა მოტივაციის ამაღლებას, რაც უმრავლეს შემთხვევაში აისახება მათ მზადყოფნაში რომ უფრო მეტი და საჭირო ინფორმაცია და ცოდნა მიიღონ აღნიშნულ საკითხთან დაკავშირებით.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: მულტიმედია, უცხო ენის სწავლება, ტექნოლოგიური განვითარების ეპოქა