

**HIGH TECH VS HIGH TOUCH: ARE LANGUAGE TEACHERS
LEADING THE WAY WITH EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY?****Asm SAYEM**

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Abstract

Technologies have the capacity to transform teaching and students' learning and different technologies can change the ways students learn and mediate the learning differently. But for many of the language teachers, the productive use of Information and Communication Technologies presents a challenge in their teaching practice. Students are usually very engaged with technology and have developed expertise outside the classroom which the teacher may not have. This expertise can, however, be constructed as a resource upon which the teacher can draw, while scaffolding the linguistic and cultural dimensions of the students' engagement with language and culture through technology. Languages educators must encompass these. Teachers are faced with selecting and using appropriate technologies from an ever-increasing range. We seek to make teachers use, and students' use, of technologies integral to the whole language learning process and not an add-on to teaching or a replacement for teaching. When we do this, teaching and learning pedagogies engage students, enhance achievement, create new learning possibilities and extend interaction with local and global communities.

Keywords: Audio-visual, Blogs, CALL, ESL, EFL, ICT, Internet, Language teacher, LMS, Podcasting, Pedagogy, Wiki**1. Introduction**

Today is the world of Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Google, Yahoo, I-pods, I-pads, Pendo pad, Eee pad, Tablet. Gadgets reign supreme in social and economic development and increasingly important in education. So technology is fused in every part of our lives, in fact, "technology is no longer a tool to create an alternative environment- it is THE environment" (Gupta, 2010). Academic institutions are, therefore, expected to prepare students for a technological era that awaits them. As an inevitable consequence, there is an expectation from administrators and students alike that a teacher will use technology to sophisticate teaching. Language teaching professionals' life is also intertwined with technology: for administrative purposes, materials development and storage, grading, professional communication, photocopies, scanning and so on. Technology, whether for the classroom or for official purpose, has to be implemented for its pedagogical value and relevance-not just to jump into the bandwagon. This article is a brief overview of technologies and tools considered necessary for the language teacher of today and also tries to summarize dominant emerging trends in the field of technology enhanced language learning.

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2. Identifying the Role of Technology in Education

For the past several decades, a great deal of debate has raged on about the pedagogical worth of computers in the classroom. On the one hand, computer and software companies often provide mostly anecdotal evidence as to the usefulness of technology in language instruction, stating heightened student motivation and more engaging learning. However, a number of researchers have suggested that while technology has grown by leaps and bounds, teachers' use of it often remains very antiquated, limited to simple writing assignments and Internet searches (Cuban, 2001; MacDonald, 2004; Oppenheimer, 1997, 2003). Some have suggested that this has been due, in part, to educators' limited vision of the role technology in language instruction. In fact, Garrett (1991) pointed this out when she stated that "the use of the computer does not constitute a method" and it is only a "medium in which a variety of methods, approaches, and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented." But in the field of language education, a great deal of emphasis now focuses on online learning, and it is touted as the great liberator by freeing students and teachers to accomplish learning in new and exciting ways.

Technologies help build learning communities by enabling teachers and students to join online collaborative projects and connecting with other students, teachers and experts. Digital technologies provide access to language and culture and also a means of self-expression through language (Debski, 1997). Students use contemporary technologies to create a language and communication unique to themselves and their subcultural group. For language teaching, information technologies provide access to a vast range of contemporary material in the target language and about target language communities. This material makes the target language and target language communities available both in and out of class and therefore much more present in students' lives. Communication technologies allow for direct participation in the target language culture in a range of ways and with a range of different levels of engagement. They also allow learners to pursue their own interest and agendas in the target language community outside the classroom.

First of all, the computer is a machine, not a method. The world of online communication is a vast new medium, comparable in some ways to books, print, or libraries. Secondly, and even more importantly, much of our reading, writing, and communicating is migrating from other environments (print, telephone, etc.) to the screen. In such a context, we can no longer think only about how we use technologies to teach language. We also must think about what types of language students need to learn in order to communicate effectively via computer. This realization has sparked an approach which emphasizes the importance of new information technologies as a legitimate medium of communication in their own right rather than simply as teaching tools.

3. A Brief History of Technology and Language Learning

Virtually every type of language teaching has had its own technologies to support it. Language teachers who followed the grammar-translation method (in which the teacher explained grammatical rules and students performed translations) relied on one of the most ubiquitous technologies in education, the blackboard—a perfect vehicle for the one-way transmission of information that method implied. The blackboard was later supplemented by the overhead projector, another excellent medium for the teacher-dominated classroom, as well as by early computer software programs which provided what were known as "drill-and-practice" grammatical exercises.

In contrast, the audio-tape was the perfect medium for the audio-lingual method (which emphasized learning through oral repetition). University language classes in the 1970s and '80s usually included obligatory sessions at the audio lab where students would perform the dreaded repetition drills. By the late 1970s, the audio-lingual method fell into disrepute, at least in part due to poor results achieved from expensive language laboratories. Whether in the lab or in the classroom, repetitive drills which focused only on language form and ignored communicative meaning achieved poor results. The 1980s and 1990s have seen a shift toward communicative language teaching, which emphasizes student engagement in authentic, meaningful interaction. Within this general communicative trend, we can note two distinct perspectives, both of which have their implications in terms of how to best integrate technology into the classroom. These can roughly be divided into cognitive approaches and socio-cognitive approaches. Cognitive approaches to communicative language teaching are based on the view that learning a language is an individual psycholinguistic act. From this perspective, language learners construct a mental model of a language system, based not on habit formation but rather on innate cognitive knowledge in interaction with comprehensible, meaningful language (Chomsky, 1986). Socio-cognitive approaches, in contrast to cognitive approaches, emphasize the social aspect of language acquisition; learning a language is viewed as a process of apprenticeship or socialization into particular discourse communities (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Gee, 1996).

The key to successful use of technology in language teaching lies not in hardware or software but in "humanware". Our human capacity as teachers to plan, design, and implement effective educational activity. Language learning is an act of creativity, imagination, exploration, expression, construction, and profound social and cultural collaboration. Technology can make a difference to student's performance in many ways but if we use computers to fully humanize and enhance this act, rather than to try to automate it, we can help bring out the best that human and machine have to offer.

4. Technology: Educational Purposes

Literature on using technology in the language classroom has brought out advantages (Salaberry, 1999; Rost 2002; Lee 2000; Taylor & Gitsaki, 2003; Lai & Kritsonis, 2006) and disadvantages too in terms of cost, time and uncertain results, inability to deal with speaking, unexpected situations etc. (Warschauer & Meskill 2000). However, it is supported the use of technology despite all disadvantages: firstly, using computers for education is comparable to using books or print and if there is no debate on the prior, debate on using the latter is futile. And secondly, students need to learn the language of technology (e-mails, conducting web researches, netiquette) to survive in times awaiting them and so, technology has to be used "as a legitimate medium of communication in its own right". Studies carried out by Fischer Family trust (2002), Impa CT2 (Becta, 2001), Chong et.al (2005) have all brought out a remarkable influence of using technology in education. Case studies cited by Warschauer & Meskill (2000) on foreign language instruction, ESL (English as a second language) instruction & Bilingual instruction proved that "appropriate use of new technologies allows for a more thorough integration of language, content and culture than ever before and provide students with unprecedented opportunities for autonomous learning." Rost (2002) too has discussed how computer assisted learning allow learners more independence.

'Exposure to authentic materials' is another boon of being able to integrate technology efficiently in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. Sawhil (2008) comments on how blogs, wikis and even Voice-over-IP tools like Skype can help educators. Firstly, they allow students a means to continue to connect with the language outside the classroom and secondly, these tools offer students the possibility of authentic, dynamic contact with natives, and therefore, the challenge of putting classroom knowledge to the test in a context that mirrors the reality awaiting them outside the Academy. Lai and Kritsonis (2006) have pointed out how technology can promote experiential learning and practice learning. Experiential learning theory is about extracting meaning, making sense of information, relating it to real life & understanding the world through re-interpreting knowledge-which is exactly what the use of social connecting sites do. They also believe that shy or inhibited learners can be greatly benefited through the individualized learning environment while more able learners can proceed at their own rate.

The integration of technology is stressed repeatedly to prepare students for a world in which they will be redundant without such knowledge. According to Sawhil (2008), "Our emerging role as teachers and technologists in the 21st century is to prepare ourselves, our colleagues, our schools and our classrooms for the linguistic and cultural realities of the teaching in a world where everyone and everything is connected, or "intertwined". Duderstadt et al. (2002), while describing the current state of technology in higher education wrote: "the traditional classroom paradigm is being challenged today, not so much by professors... but by our students." Importance placed on intercultural communication is higher than ever before. Technologies facilitate participation in the target language and with its communities and increasingly provide students with personalised, flexible, asynchronous and networked learning opportunities. In Warschauer & Meskill's (2000) words: The internet is a great opportunity to harness such skills by opening up new worlds. New communication technologies are part of the broader ecology of life, at the turn of the century. Much of our reading, writing and communicating is migrating from the other environments (print, telephone etc.) to the screen. In such a context, we can no longer think only about how we use technology in the classroom but also the types of language (e-mails, conducting web research etc) students need to learn in order to communicate effectively via computer.

The following trends have started to emerge in language classrooms all over the world-

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL): Advantages of CALL have been spelled out in terms of high motivation, authentic communication, learner autonomy, cooperative learning, neutrality and so on. CALL embraces a wide range of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages. They are:

- **CALL drill-and-practice:** Drill and practice courseware is based on the model of computer as tutor (Taylor 1980). The computer serves as a vehicle for delivering instructional materials to the student.
- **Web-based distance learning:** A type of education where students work on their own at home or at the office and communicate with faculty and other students via e-mail, electronic forums, videoconferencing, chat rooms, bulletin boards, instant messaging and other forms of computer-based communication.
- **Use of corpora:** Corpora, plural term of a 'corpus', refer to electronic authentic language databases. Language corpora can be either collections of written or spoken texts and as such students can search and learn not only words but also the appropriate context in which the words might appear. Learners, therefore, are involved in a more speedy and efficient language learning experience in an educational setting.

- **Concordancing software:** It helps teachers/ students to search through texts or corpora to look for actual usage of a word rather than just definition. For example, collocational meanings like “large box” vs. “big box” or grammatical features like “was going” vs “used to go”.
- **Multimedia Simulation software:** Learners enter computerized micro-worlds with exposure to language and culture in a meaningful audio visual context.
- **Interactive whiteboards:** An interactive whiteboard (IWB) is a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector. The software supplied with the interactive whiteboard will usually allow the teacher to keep notes and annotations as an electronic file for later distribution either on paper or through a number of electronic formats. In addition, some interactive whiteboards allow teachers to record their instruction as digital video files and post the material for review by students at a later time.
- **Computer Mediated Communication** (e.g. Daedalus interchange): Writing programs where students communicate with tools like instant messaging in the class e-mails/conferencing in small groups out of class. Long distance projects have been organized for joint exploration of culture, social conditions, film or literature which have often resulted in collaborative publication (Cummins & Sayers, 1997 and Warschauer & Meskill, 2000).
- **Text- reconstruction software:** Teachers can easily and quickly create re-arranged texts or cloze exercises from any word processed passage. Students can use hints provided by the computer.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL): Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) describes an approach to language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of mobile devices such as mobile phones (cell phones), MP3 and MP4 players, and devices such as the iPhone or iPad. With MALL, students are able to access language learning materials and to communicate with their teachers at anytime, anywhere.

Electronic Whiteboards: The recent teacher favourite is the electronic whiteboard or the smart-board. The electronic whiteboard can be linked with student laptops. The teacher’s writings on the whiteboard can be directly downloaded by the students and the students can project their computer screen on the board interact. Although it is a very interesting add on to the classroom, implementation is costly and as such is not feasible.

Accessing resources and publishing on the World Wide Web: Students use web pages as authentic materials for conducting research on culture and current events (Osuna & Meskill, 1998), or for gathering materials for class projects and simulations. Students can publish their writings on the web and thus write for the real audience. Teachers can create in- class online newsletters or help students contribute to international web magazines which include articles from students around the world (Shetzer, 1995).

Web 2.0: Web 2.0 refers to the emergence of a set of applications on the web which facilitate a more socially connected web where everyone is able to add to and edit information online (Anderson, 2007). Whereas Web 1.0 was dominated by content provided in static pages, Web 2.0 applications have democratized the web by prioritizing user-generated content, ownership and social connectivity. The following sections will explore how these technologies can be used to enhance the language-learning process:

- **Blogs:** A blog is a web application that displays a series of entries in reverse chronological order, with a time and date stamp for each entry. Blogs also include a facility to respond to blog posts using comments. Research by Thorne et al (2005) suggests that language students prefer blogging to traditional essays. Students also reported frequently looking back over their own and other students' earlier blog postings, and majority noticed significant progress in their writing over time. Campbell (2003) identifies three potential uses for the blog in the language classroom:
 - a. The tutor blog: daily reading practice for learners, online verbal exchange using comments, class information, resource for self-study.
 - b. The learner blog: Students get writing practice, develop a sense of ownership, and whatever they write can instantly be read by anyone else and, due to the comment features of the software, further exchange of ideas is promoted.
 - c. The class blog: Students can create a free-form bulletin board, interact in an international classroom language exchange, or a project-based language learning exercise, where students can develop writing and research skills by creating an online resource.

- **Wiki:** Wiki is an online software for creating simple websites which support collaborative writing, the most well-known of which is Wikipedia. While blogs tend to be written by an individual, and are therefore personal in nature, wikis are more likely to be the result of a collaborative effort. Students build a sense of community by collaborating on a shared goal, and they learn from observing the communal work being drafted, refined, and finalized. Accountability is increased through exposure to peers or the wider internet audience (Newstead, 2007). Wikis enable students to compose an essay together at a distance, making them a suitable medium for collaborative writing. However, not all learners wish to learn from each other, and prefer only the teacher to correct their work, rather than a peer. Wikis now have "free linking" using brackets, and some disable CamelCase by default.

- **Podcasting:** A broadcast available on the Internet anytime for downloading to a portable media player, computer, mobile etc. Podcasting can be very motivating, especially if the students are aware of an audience. The attention to detail then is much greater (Stanley, 2006). Podcasting can be used in the following ways by the language learners or teachers:
 - a. to listen to varied sources of authentic input — radio broadcasts (BBC radio podcasts)
 - b. to make students create their own podcasts in the foreign language
 - c. to listen to 'semi-authentic' language (Robin 2007) created specifically for language learners, who would find authentic text too stretching (e.g. BBC World English 'Real English' podcast)
 - d. to subscribe to language courses (e.g. Chinese Pod, Spanish Pod), which can conveniently be listened to at any point in the day (e.g. in the car, on the train)

- **Social Networking:** Students spend most of their free time on social networking sites (Myspace, Twitter, Facebook etc.). Therefore, these sites can be a very good platform for extensive writing, reading and interaction. Moreover, they are enjoyable, highly motivating and lower anxiety generators than the formal classrooms (Kern 1995, cited in Thorne and Payne 2005). Integration of social network based activities with regular classes will provide optimum results.

- **Virtual learning environments (VLE):** In 3D Virtual worlds (e.g. second life) users assume an online identity - an "avatar" - to represent themselves. The avatar can walk, run, fly, shop, own virtual pets, communicate with other avatars through chat, instant messaging and actually talking online. It can be used for authentic interaction with target language speakers. Second Life claims to offer limitless academic possibilities (MIT virtual classrooms, Notre Dame distance learning). A study on language learning in VLE's by Peterson (2006) found that use of avatars made the students feel more involved in the interaction, was more stimulating and enjoyable.
- **Learning Management System or LMS:** A learning management system (LMS) is software for delivering, tracking and managing training/education. A learning management system (Nicenet, Blackboard, Moodle) is a step ahead the static classroom website providing students options to download/upload files, participate in chat/discussion boards, take assessments and contact the teacher/classmates. If the instructor posts samples of student work, students and parents can see how other classmate performances and have a clearer idea of academic expectations. The use of an LMS gives the teacher the opportunity to promote classroom activities (by placing reusable learning documents, video, and practice exercises on the system) and course expectations (Waters, 2007).

5. Technology: Professional Purposes

Today's technical workplace is quite a different picture from even 20 years ago. Teachers now not only need pedagogical knowledge but also an elementary understanding of the workings of computers, use word processing program, understand the concept of a file and storage media, use a web browser effectively, know how to make PowerPoint slides and on goes the list. According to Jones (2002), "Today, such skills are normally a pre-requisite for success in higher education. Even for accessing resources on the internet and publishing". However, there may be a wash-back effect due to the expectations imposed by some teachers' workplace. Allan (2009) discusses the technological overload on teachers nowadays and adds that "This circumstance is exacerbated by the absence of a comprehensive training scheme, lack of practice time, and deficiencies in educational technology support, staffing and planning. Instructors are often left to their own devices, and are expected to identify technology skill deficiencies, as well as troubleshoot software problems".

Stevens (2010) has refuted this debate by saying, "All professionals suffer from technology overload. This load is not as heavy for teachers as it is in other professions, e.g. medical, engineering, chemistry, physics etc. Yet, teachers of students going into these professions are responsible for training students how to learn" and as such educators need to face the changes technology has brought to the workplace and not shy away. Academic institutions in most emerging countries are not overloaded with technology and there are no training schemes for language teachers to learn the use of whatever technology there might be. Teachers are expected to know these already or get help from their colleagues. Fortunately, teachers are lifelong learners and training courses on technology are abundant. Following is an inventory of technological options teachers may take advantage of at the workplace:

Internet: In this world, it is a sin not to explore the possibilities of the internet. The internet provides instant access to journals, calls for papers, information on higher education and jobs, professional organizations/networks (LinkedIn), prepared lesson plans, PowerPoints, up to date theory and trends. The list is endless with just one click away. Teachers should be equipped with the necessary skills to track and sort out these resources.

Multimedia Presentation: PowerPoint presentations can be used by teachers to present organized lectures, aid 'visual' and inattentive learners and prepare students for their professional life. According to Jones (2002), "using presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint generally needs little training in its use. Templates make it very easy to develop a good looking slide show. Media incorporation is straightforward as well; graphics, audio, and video can be added from pull-down menus".

Audio-visual Equipment: These days most classrooms are equipped with an audio-visual component system which can be linked to a laptop/ USB device. Educationists should aim to master the basic operational systems. This component system requires high technical skills to alter or restore settings or regain connection after power supply cut out. Waiting for staff to come and waiting for the system to be reset can considerably disrupt the pace of the lecture.

Images and soundtracks: Sometimes teachers may want to add visuals, soundtracks, videos and animations to materials/worksheets. These materials are not always available in perfect form and therefore, require adapting, editing, cutting-pasting, resizing files, altering resolutions, touch ups with tools etc. This is yet another sector in itself and teachers have to acquire skills for the achievement of optimum results.

Office Applications: Creating worksheets, handouts, posters, newsletters, reports, official correspondence, spelling and grammar checking, concordancing, collaborative writing, referencing, presenting research data etc. can all be done efficiently with these programs. "Most teachers are proficient with the word processor but spreadsheets, databases and mastery in advanced software like Microsoft Excel requires concerted effort on the part of the educator" (Allan, 2010) "

Shared Drives: In a setting, where a computer is shared by different teachers each person is usually allotted a personal account. Personal data are stored and retrieved in personal accounts as well as "Z-Drives" or "shared drives" or "common-drives". Teachers have to master these pathways. Academics should also familiarize themselves with the institutional website in order to access administrative information like student withdrawals, drop outs, class schedules, exam schedules, rescheduled classes, submitting grades etc.

Backing up and protecting data: Storing all data in only one place may give rise to complexities in the long run. First, running out of space and then a possibility of losing the device or simply a virus attack can take away all that hard work with nothing left to do. We have to make at least one backup copy. Protecting data on computers is done with Norton, AVG or MacAfee. Teachers also have to be able to detect threats and delete, quarantine or uninstall virus affected files.

Communication: E-mail communication is a most common practice and, therefore, it is an absolute necessity to learn operating features as opening and sending personal/ group mails, adding/deleting/finding contacts from the contact list, attaching/downloading files at a minimum.

Replicators: Photocopiers can make all handouts cheaply available to students while printers are indispensable for printing downloaded materials. Although photocopy is usually done by the office staff, printing and scanning jobs are left on the teacher. Using these are not that complicated.

6. Limitations of ICT in language teaching and learning

The computerized classroom is not the utopian environment for language learning to take place. Skeele (1999), Harrington (1993), and Sharma (2009) see that there are restrictions concerning the implementation of technology in the classroom. Herbert and Nobel assured that “for the computer to bring about a revolution in higher education, its introduction must be accompanied by improvements in our understanding of learning and teaching”. A number of teachers and students are resistant to change; thus, using technology in teaching and learning creates gaps among practitioners of language teaching and language learners. Harrington (1993) in his turn supports the same idea by assuming that the use of technology in the classroom puts techno-pals at a disadvantage. Among the restrictions of using technology in the classroom is the need for the technical know-how; in a different way, teacher’s limited knowledge about technology affects the effectiveness of their teaching when they choose to use technology. Other than that, for a good learning to take place, the affective support for learners is highly essential. It is agreed that technology in all its forms can never replace the teacher, that is to say, no one can deny the truth that the immediate mechanical feedback offered in word processing does not satisfy learners’ curiosity as it may happen with teacher’s explanations and humanized feedback.

The influence of technology on the productive skills of speaking and writing is, arguably, less. If you wish to improve fluency, many students would argue that nothing is better than a face-to-face language lesson, a discussion class with the teacher. Can the same be said about taking a fluency class using Skype, a web-based program such as Illuminate or a class in the virtual world, Second Life? What value does ‘Voice recognition’ have? The role of teachers is to ensure that the use of technologies adds value to the intended learning. With sound educational direction, technologies support conceptual learning and enable the construction and creation of knowledge. Teachers can use technologies to achieve this by:

- a. requiring students to choose activities, applications and modes of communication
- b. selecting and using learning objects to create learning tasks and sequences
- c. exploring the use of games and programs that contextualize concepts
- d. exploring how texts may be constructed
- e. discussing how students are positioned in virtual spaces
- f. engaging students in language and culture simulations, modelling and creative tasks.

ICT should be understood as a mean of learning capabilities rather than a mode of learning. More thinking into ICT theories should be taken and language teaching should be aligned to instruction and learning in order to have a meaningful education.

7. Utopia or Chaos: Problems to implement technology

Using technology in the classroom is not without difficulties. In most of the developing countries English teachers and instructors may face various problems such as:

- A major barrier a teacher may face while attempting to use technology in the classroom or workplace is lack of effective training. Without thorough understanding of the technology at hand it will be impossible to bring out optimum results.
- Issues such as tracking down appropriate information, misspelt addresses, slow connections, blocked access, system crashes, loose wires, out-of-date plug-ins, out of date websites, lack of administrative privilege and antiquated hardware can ensure that many EFL and ESL instructors avoid using the Web.
- Sharma (2009) points out the deficiency of theoretical basis for using technology in the following words: The innovators innovate, and later, pedagogy plays catch-up, as teachers try things out. The world of theory (of evidence and research) is, arguably, lagging behind what is happening in the classrooms. For example, Twitter will probably have an improved version by the time case studies have justified whether or not the present version has value.
- Implementing new technologies require financial expenses for hardware, software, training and staffing. Not all students have technology at home so they may not be able to submit homework. It is not always possible to fund language programs with such high cost, especially in the underdeveloped countries. Therefore, most of the technologies remain 'distant dreams' to a good number of teachers in our country. Availability of high quality software and hardware can also be a pressing problem for willing professionals.
- The educator needs to invest time to learn how to master the technology, think about how to implement it in the classroom and also evaluate whether all the hassle is worth it at all. This is a potential disadvantage as there is often uncertainty as to whether a new technology will actually prove to be a blessing or a curse.
- Arguments are raging about electronic translators and synonym generators. According to Sharma (2009), "These provide many benefits, yet, when used for production, they seem to encourage the selection of the wrong word in English."
- With thousands of academic essays available online there has been a great rise in plagiarism.
- The problem with Internet-based multimedia is that images, sounds, and videos need relatively large files that take a long time to download. This waiting period slows down the interactions between the student and the materials, wastes time, and creates an uncomfortable impression.
- Technology always has the possibility of malfunctioning. Moreover, in some Asian and African countries there are the constant threat of power failure posing the question of whether or not a plan can be smoothly carried out.

8. The digital divide: Some Suggestions

The advantages of using new technologies in the language classroom can only be interpreted in light of the changing goals of language education and the changing conditions in post-industrial society. Language educators now seek not only (or even principally) to teach students the rules of grammar, but rather to help them gain apprenticeship into new discourse communities. This is accomplished through creating opportunities for authentic and meaningful interaction both within and outside the classroom, and providing students the tools for their own social, cultural, and linguistic exploration. The computer is a powerful tool for this process as it allows students access to online environments of international communication. By using new technologies in the language classroom, we can better prepare students for the kinds of international cross-cultural interactions which are increasingly required for success in academic, vocational, or personal life.

Communication and information technologies are integral to teaching and learning as technologies enable teachers and students to access contemporary materials and globalized communication interactions. Suggestions for successfully integrating technology in the language classroom are as follows:

- Sharma (2009) discusses the importance of going beyond the ‘wow’ factor and thinking about pedagogical reasons for using any technology. So it is not the ‘video’ per se which could enhance learning, but how it is used.
- For teachers needing training in the use of general purpose software, electronic tutorials (tutorial CDs, Websites such as Smartforce) have become widely available.
- According to Jones (2002), The MP3 file format has moved from the darling of teenage Napster users to being a widely used format in education. Media sites often supply audio files in a variety of formats including MP3. Using MP3 files, rather than cassettes to play audio in the classroom offers the advantage of instant replay and fast searching.
- The number of websites available on the internet and the amount of information may be overwhelming. Jarvis (2011) suggests the following criteria to evaluate any website/material for possible usage: Language learning potential, Meaning focus, Learner fit, Authenticity, Positive impact and Practicality.
- Jarvis also (2011) suggests that the websites containing “edu” or “ac” in their addresses suggest they are academic institutions and hence are reliable. Addresses with the word “org” are of organizations and therefore, are quite reliable. The addresses ending in “com” are commercial websites and as a result necessitate evaluation on the teacher’s side before downloading information.
- Plagiarism detectors (turn-it-in, iThenticate, googling up) can detect plagiarized essays for teachers.
- Teachers always need a plan B to back up power failure or malfunction. PowerPoint slides or examination question papers should be printed and photocopied well in advance. Important material should not be stored in the C- drive (or desktop) which is the most perishable drive.

9. Conclusion

Without a doubt, technology has revolutionized society in many places around the globe, including how language instruction is taught and delivered. In particular, the Internet has become a conduit where people can learn, share, and collaborate in ways not possible years before. However, a great deal of the success comes from preparing students to interact and learn in this online environment. Therefore, if we try to integrate technology in teaching as presented in this article, our new, refocused approach to teaching will propel us a long way to making technology and the Internet a more rewarding partner in the teaching and learning process.

So, where lies the praise or blame for the success or failure of technology? Will a Utopian view of pedagogically-sound teaching prevail in our classrooms, or will teachers soon abandon high-tech gadgets and return more to traditional materials? Technology is here to make our lives simplified not complicated. Meyer (2009) commented that “Technology is here to stay- nobody can deny this... and blind resistance will take us nowhere. On the other hand, uncritical adoption of technology might lead to unprincipled teaching- which in my opinion is the greatest sin of all.” Proper training combined with in-depth evaluation of the specific technology is desirable in one’s own context to spell out an appropriate technological environment. Only then can we keep pace with this ever changing ever evolving aspect of teaching and be prepared for future implications.

10. Appendix: Theory vs Practice

This is a world which is driven by technology. The innovators innovate, and later, pedagogy plays catch-up, as teachers try things out. Those with access to the technology are currently exploring how best to exploit it in the classroom; detractors suggest it can be a way of going back to ‘teacher-centred’ approaches. In some parts of the world, especially developing countries using all technologies outlined in this study are distant dream.

Some useful sites for Language learners and teachers

- <http://www.teflclips.com> (readymade video lessons with worksheets)
- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk> (view the blogs and participate in discussions)
- <http://www.tesolacademic.org> (for webcasts on latest research) (from Jarvis, 2011)
- Materials:
 - Online writing: <http://www.owl.englis.purdue.edu>
 - Younger learners: <http://www.linguistics-funland>
 - ESL: <http://www.esolcourses.com/>
<http://www.manythings.org/>
 - Grammar: <http://www.ego4u.com/>
 - Pronunciation: http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/Phonetics_Focus/
 - Listening: <http://www.esl-lab.com/index.htm>
 - Lessons: <http://www.tefl.net>

- Organizations:
 - IATEFL: www.iatefl.org
 - TESOL: www.tesol.edu
 - British Council: www.britcoun.org/english/index.htm
- Journals:
 - TESOL quarterly: www.tesol.org/pubs/magz/tq.html
 - Language & Technology: <http://llt.msu.edu>
 - Asian EFL Journal: <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/>
 - Journal of Asia TEFL: <http://www.asiatefl.org/journal/journal1.html>
 - British journal of educational technology
 - Education and Information Technologies
- PowerPoints and ideas:
 - Pete's PowerPoint station: www.pppst.com (free PowerPoints)
 - Dave's ESL Café: www.eslcafe.com (ESL games, international jobs)
- Upcoming Conferences: <http://www.conferencealerts.com/language.htm>

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