# Using Computers as a Learning Tool in English Language Teaching

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**Abstract- The popularity of information technology (IT) over the past decade hasbrought about the innovative use of the Internet in English language learning andteaching process. The Internet has the potential to provide a new learning environment that hasrich digital textual, graphic, audio, video and other interactive features for thelearning approach as well as for culture. While learning English, computers can support and facilitate the roles of the teacher in order to enhance students' skills to perform well in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. Using computers and Internet can improve EFL learners' language abilities, and they also reach real learning experiences. In addition, computers contribute beneficially to learners' learning and development. They gain the opportunity to access useful language resources and communicate with native English speakers through computers and Internet. Moreover, students can learn listening, speaking, reading and writing English through real-world situations. In addition, computers are important in language learning because they help students to think critically in their learning process and make them have active and stable knowledge. That is, they are provided with more creative activities through using computers. In this paper we concur with researchers who consider computers as a very innovative and creative tool in teaching language process.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of information technology (IT) over the past decade hasbrought about the innovative use of the Internet in English language learning andteaching process. The Internet has the potential to provide a new learning environment that hasrich digital textual, graphic, audio, video and other interactive features for thelearning approach as well as for culture. [1](2) pointed out that "technology is changing the jobs of language teachers through the changes it prompts in the language itself, the opportunities for studying language, and the options available for teaching language". Current computer technology provides new opportunities to increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching especially in the field of teaching and learning foreign languages.[2](3) wrote: There are at least two important aspects ofliteracy-technology integration: (1) using technology to teach more effectively andenhance the learning of skills and strategies that currently make up a strong reading/language arts curriculum, and (2) effectively teaching and enhancing the learning skills and strategies that

make up the strong reading / language arts curriculum of the future.In this paper we concur with researchers who consider computers as a very innovative and creative tool in teaching language process.

## II. USE OF COMPUTERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Recent years have revealed a growing interest in using computers for language teaching and learning. A decade ago, only a small number of specialists was concerned with the use of computers in the language classroom.[3]However, the role of computers in language instruction has now become an important issue facing large numbers of language teachers throughout the world. For the teachers, the question now is not of whether but how computers can aid in the language learning process [4]. The rapid technological advances of the 1980s and 1990s have raised both the expectations and the demands placed on the computer as a potential learning tool. With recent advances in multimedia technology, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has emerged as a tempting alternative to earlier modes of supplementing or replacing direct student-teacher interaction, such as the language laboratory or audio-tape-based self-study. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) came into view in the 1960s '[5]. The rapid growth in computer technology and the frequent use of computers among the linguists and literary researchers opened up the way for the introduction of computers in language teaching and learning.In the early stages, CALL, according to [6]was little more than an imitation of older, morefamiliar media. As put by [7] the tendency was rather to try to push and squeeze current language learning materials to it the computer, to "computerize" our lab exercises, or imitate unabashedly the teaching machines or programmed instruction of the recent past.

Early attempts with computers often emphasized drill-and practice grammar exercises [8] and it was found that students were not very interested in using such software [9]. However, since the mid-1970s, CALL has changed. It has been developed on the context and communication based approaches supported by current educators

[10]. When the goal is communication in language learning, then language drills fit into only a small part of language learning. However, drills are required particularly in the first stages of vocabulary acquisition where giving the same information in multiple modes, such as visual plus aural plus textual, enhances recognition and recall [11].However, it is still too early to claim that the design and implementation of CALL software has satisfied the needs of the learners and teachers because there are many interrelated factors that have to be considered such as the learning theory and the current approach used in language teaching.[12], ICT usage is classified to tutor, tool and tutee. Tutorial programmes lead learners step-by-stepthrough a programme such as drill and practice. Using technology as a tool can help other types of problems, for example, technology as a tool is frequently seen in tutorial or explanatory programmes[13]. ICT acts as a tutee where students programme the computers in order to gain more understanding.A number of different ICT tools and applications may be integrated in teaching and learning [14]. Some of these tools and applications may be designed specifically for educational purposes and some others for more general use. The choices of resources, and the way they are used, can be linked to different learning theories which may be invoked to explain or predict learningbenefits from the use of ICT [15].Besides, based on [16], computers are seen as a tool which can make "worthwhilecontribution to the teaching of English as second language".English language teachers' perception is very vital as it will determine the usage level of ICT in English classesand its impact on the students. The above statement is supported by [17]. as they say thatteachers' believe and perception of technology can determine the usage of it in the classroom. Perception is being emphasized because if Englishteachers have a negative perception on the use of ICT, then the dissemination of computer knowledge and effortof government in encouraging ICT integrated language teaching will be in vain. Therefore English teachers'perception about the usage of ICT in teaching English language is one of the key drivers which will determinethe effectiveness of using ICT in English language classes.

## III. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE BENEFITS OF COMPUTERS IN IMPROVING LANGUAGE SKILLS

In recent years, language teachers have been exploring ways in which the computer can be employed to make language learning more effective and motivating for students [18]. [19]defined the computer as a catalyst in motivating teachers andlearners to work in new ways. The researcher understood that as learners become moreautonomous, teachers feel that they should support their learners to act and thinkindependently.

The application of computer has changed the methods from teacher-centered to learner-centered ones.Teachers should guide their learners' learning and this change is very useful forlearners to increase their learning [20]. According to [21] theuse of computer increases learners' cooperation in learning tasks. It helps them in gatheringinformation and interacting with resources such as videos.

There are two different views about how to integrate the computer into theclass. The first one is the cognitive approach where learners get the opportunity to increase their exposure tolanguage meaningfully and make their own knowledge. The second one, the social approach, where learnersmust be given opportunities for authentic social interactions to practice real life skills. Thisobjective can be obtained through the collaboration of learners in real activities[22].

The researcher [23]investigated the role of technology in language learning. Theresults revealed learners' learning was improved by integrating technology into the classroom.Learners stated that the use of computer in school makes learning enjoyable and helps them learnmore. Learners also said that technology makes learning interesting and interactive as well as increases their motivation,social interactions, learning and engagement.

[24] performed a study on using technology in improving learners' writing andreading skills. The results of this study indicated that technology tools enhanced learners' readingand writing skills because they are user-friendly, and learners can learn at a moreeffective way. Also, learners learn more effectively because the Internet provided afavorable learning environment for learners' learning, facilitated a new platform for learners whocan have a convenient access to learning lessons.

[25] carrieda study on whether Wiki technology would improvelearners' writing skills. Learners had a task to join a Wiki page where they would write passagesand then read and answer the passages of their fellow classmates. Learners indicated that theimmediate feedback they received was a benefit of using this kind of technology. Another findingof this study was that learners learned spelling, vocabulary and sentence structure by reading the work of their classmates.

## IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Recommendations for learners to improvetheir language skills through using computers:

1. Teachers should provide more visually stimulating course material

2. Teachers should attempt to address a wider variety of leaning styles

3. Teachers should urge their learners to use technology in developing their languageskills

4. Teachers should encourage their learners to use technology in increasing their language abilities

5. Training should be provided for teachers to learn how to use and teach it effectively

6. Universities should regard technology as a significant part of teaching and learning programs

7. In order to facilitate the integration of technology, enough support and technical assistanceshould be provided for teachers

## V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the literature review indicated that computers can improve EFL learners' language abilities, and reach real learning experiences. In addition, computers contribute beneficially to learners' learning and development. They gain the opportunity to access useful language resources and communicate with native English speakers through computers and Internet.Moreover, students can learn listening, speaking, reading and writing English through real-world situations.

In addition, computers are important in language learning because they help students to think critically in their learning process and make them have active and stable knowledge. That is, they are provided with more creative activities through using computers. To sum up, the findings of this literaturereview showed that technology provides more visually stimulating course material, attempts to address a wider variety of learning styles, helps learners to develop thinking skills, promotes learners' autonomy, and increases learners' motivation to effectively learn a foreign language.

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