

Foreign Language Education and Internet — Advantages and Disadvantages

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Анотація

Дана стаття розглядає переваги і недоліки викладання іноземної мови з використанням нових мультимедійних технологій. Аудіо і візуальні засоби навчання допомагають трансформувати вивчення англійської мови в потужний розвиток продуктивності і вивчати мову швидше та ефективніше. З іншого боку розвиток комп'ютерів може зробити викладача залежним від мультимедійної технології і він більше не зможе відігравати ключову роль помічника у вивченні іноземної мови.

Ключові слова: перевага, недолік, мультимедійні технології, викладати, вивчати, іноземна мова.

Abstract

This paper deals with some advantages and disadvantages of foreign language education with implementation of a new multimedia technology. Audio and visual effects help transform English learning into capacity cultivation and help students learn the language more quickly and effectively. However, the computer development may also turn teachers into slaves of a multimedia technology and they can no longer play the key role as a facilitator to students.

Keywords: advantage, disadvantage, multimedia technology, to teach, to learn, foreign language.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the implementation of a multimedia technology in foreign language teaching/learning, the internet being the latest in a series of technological innovations for second language education. At present enormous attention is concentrated on motivation in foreign language teaching/learning and foreign language acquisition. In such a process the computer plays a central role, e.g. such applications as a browser, a word processor and a presentation software. New media are also important in communication, e.g. e-mail, WWW, satellite and mobile phones.

Advantages of New Media

There are some advantages of new media in foreign language education —

- they develop students' communicative competence;
- they improve teaching efficiency;
- they provide faster access to teaching materials;
- they develop all language skills — reading, speaking, listening and writing;
- they widen students' knowledge about the English culture;
- they enhance interaction among students and between a teacher and students;
- they create interactive and authentic environments;
- they provide direct feedback;
- they offer opportunities for English teaching outside the classrooms.

Multimedia technology goes beyond time and space and creates more real-life environment for English teaching. There is a real reason for using it that gives support both teachers and students. It breaks the monotony of traditional class teaching. Its technique makes the language class lively and interesting; motivate the students to participate in the classroom activities. Foreign language teaching is more effective when it is realized in practical, meaningful context. The teacher plays rather a tutor role for the learners. His/her support consists of encouraging and stimulating the creative thinking of students and collaborative learning. But language teachers working in a media rich environment need to recognize the individual learning problems of learners, make a careful choice concerning the use of the media, develop efficient search techniques. The information units which are the elements of a such technology could have the character of a static image, dynamic image, spoken word (sound), music, etc. However, a number of factors influencing educational processes and their results are enormous.

Multimedia technology encourages students' positive thinking and communication skills in learning the language, it stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time providing more information to students. It improves the traditional classroom teaching model. Teachers in the classrooms no longer force students to receive the information passively. Teaching should be done by teachers but it should be student centered, which is one of the principle of good language teaching.

Disadvantages of the Use

There are some disadvantages of using multimedia technology in the English language teaching especially in the context of non-native speaking countries —

- when the Internet lines are busy due to many users, it may take time to access information or browse the Net and technical malfunctions themselves can lead to frustration;
- multimedia technology is a supplementary test;
- lack of communication between a teacher and students;
- lack of real-time teaching;
- loss of students logical thinking;
- expensive way of language classes;
- lack of qualified developers.

Teachers should understand that the multimedia technology must be used as a supplementary instrument rather than a target. Electronic communication within a single class might be viewed as an artificial substitute for face-to-face communication. Some benefits of traditional teaching should not be forgotten. Teachers should teach the students on how to pronounce certain words, comprehend sentences, and improve thought patterns. Language teaching requires lots of discussion formed through question and answers. While using a multimedia technology students become unable to give feedback to their teachers. The spontaneity in students' thinking, strengthening their learning capacity and solving problems are ignored. Teachers can improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the language. Therefore, if students only perceive the images and imagination shown on the screen, their abstract thinking would be restricted and logical thinking would fade away. Using a multimedia technology in the English language teaching is an expensive way of lecturing language classes. This requires University administrators to budget for training in this area. The expenses entail hardware, software, staffing and training for at least one networked computer laboratory and maintenance.

Conclusion

The innovative technologies significantly enrich and diversify the teaching of foreign languages. In general, if the monotonous work comes as an intelligent creative search, during which a new type of personality is formed, active and purposeful teaching is focused on constant self-education and development. However, multimedia technology is a source of fears and insecurity for many teachers. To improve the situation and make language teachers aware of the function of a multimedia technology in teaching the following advices can be given —

- teachers should play the leading role in teaching;
- teachers should not consider the computer screen as a blackboard or whiteboard;
- teachers should encourage students to use their own mind and speak more;
- teachers should use all possible teaching aids and techniques;
- teachers should not overuse a multimedia technology.

The main purpose of using a multimedia technology in language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest in the English language. Language teachers should maintain students' communicative competence through a multimedia technology. The utilization of such a technology can improve the students' thinking.

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