

Lecture № 10

Computer-based technologies. Online reference tools.

Plan

1. The use of computers in FLT
2. Computer-based presentation technologies;
3. Ways of finding out: electronic dictionaries, concordances, searching the Internet;
4. Computer based testing;
5. Electronic portfolios;
6. Other Internet based tools;

Technology in language teaching is not new. Indeed, technology has been around in language teaching or decades- one might argue or centuries, if we classify the blackboard as a form of technology. The recorders, language laboratories and video have been in use since the 1960s and 1970s, and are still used in classrooms round the world. In the eighties, the application of technology in language classrooms included the use of film, radio, television, language labs with audio/video tapes, computers, and interactive video (Cunningham, 1998). Various types of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) also began to become more common place (Iandoli, 1990).

As the technology advanced, we began to see more interactive uses of CALL as well as an increase in the integration of various media into the computer system (Pusack & Otto, 1990). Computer technology became more accessible to both individuals and schools. Moreover, our growing understanding of its potentials has encouraged a shift in emphasis from computer technology itself to its applications. That is, finding ways to use computers for enhancing teaching and learning has gained prominence in the research. Today, the use of multimedia, the Internet (especially the World Wide Web), and various forms of distance learning are wide spread. Interest in using them as tools to support language learning is growing, both from the perspective of a language educator and that of a language learner.

An alternative term, Technology-enhanced language learning (TELL),^[6] also emerged around the early 1990s: e.g. the TELL Consortium project, University of Hull.

The current philosophy of CALL puts a strong emphasis on student-centred materials that allow learners to work on their own. Such materials may be structured or unstructured, but they normally embody two important features: interactive learning and individualised learning. CALL is essentially a tool that helps teachers to facilitate the language learning process. It can be used to reinforce what has been already been learned in the classroom or as a remedial tool to help learners who require additional support.

The design of CALL materials generally takes into consideration principles of language pedagogy and methodology, which may be derived from different learning theories (e.g. behaviourist, cognitive, constructivist) and second language learning theories such as Stephen Krashen's [monitor hypothesis](#).

A combination of face-to-face teaching and CALL is usually referred to as [blended learning](#). Blended learning is designed to increase learning potential and is more commonly found than pure CALL (Pegrum 2009: p. 27).

Computer-based materials for language teaching, often referred to as CALI (Computer Assisted Language Learning), appeared in the early 1980s. Early CALL programs typically required learners to respond to stimuli on the computer screen and to carry out tasks such as filling in gapped texts, matching sentence halves and doing multiple-choice activities.

Probably one of the best-known early CALL activities is that of text reconstruction, where an entire text is blanked out and the learner recreates it by typing in words. For all of these activities the computer then offers the learner feedback, ranging from simply pointing out whether the answer is correct or incorrect to providing more sophisticated feedback, such as showing why the learner is mistaken and offering remedial activities. The CALL approach is one that is still found on many published CD-ROMs for language teaching.

As access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has become more widespread, so CALL has moved beyond the use of computer programs to embrace the use of the Internet and web-based tools. The term TELI (Technology Enhanced Language Learning) appeared in the 1990s, in response to the growing possibilities offered by the Internet and communications technology.

Although the use of ICT by language teachers is still not widespread, the use of technology in the classroom is becoming increasingly important, and it will become a normal part of ELT practice in the coming years.

Dictionaries and thesauruses. Whether our students are using bilingual, semi-bilingual or monolingual learners dictionaries in paper or electronic form, there is no denying that there is a far greater range of dictionary reference tools available than was the case even ten years ago. It is not the intention of this section to advise on the use of dictionaries in the classroom, but rather to outline some of the features that electronic dictionaries include and to show how they have developed beyond the printed page. Here we will be focusing on monolingual dictionaries. Traditionally these have been used by higher-level learners, but increasingly there is a wide range of monolingual dictionaries that have been written for students with a lower level of language proficiency. Of course, you may well have the experience of students bringing into class small hand-held electronic dictionaries, which have translation features and audio recordings of the sounds of the words, alongside pocket-sized bilingual dictionaries in book form. The one thing we would say about these hand-held electronic dictionaries is that their content is often inaccurate and that, if you can, you should advise your students on the range of products before they purchase, as you probably have done in

the past with paper dictionaries. Virtually all of the major monolingual learners' dictionaries are sold with a CD-ROM.

These CD-ROMs often have some or all of these features:

- Search ability (which is not alphabetically based).

Audio recordings of the words, often in both British and American English.

- Games and exercises.
- Information on typical errors.
- The ability to bookmark and personalize.
- thesaurus functionality.
- Corpus informed information on frequency.

Using **websites** is one of the easiest and least stressful ways of getting started with technology in the classroom. There is a large and constantly expanding collection of resources on the web, at a variety of levels and covering an amazing array of topics. You can choose from authentic (written for Internet surfers in general) sources or ELL-specific sites (made by, and for, teachers), monolingual or multilingual sites, sites with multimedia, or just simple text, for those on slower connections.

The **web** is a source of content which can be used as a window on the wider world outside your class, and is - of course - a readily available collection of authentic material. As such, it is a much larger repository of content than would previously have been readily available to you and your students.

Perhaps one of the best tips we can give you at this point is to work as a team with other teachers in your centre. Everybody has their favorite websites, and plenty of teachers will, at some point, have used websites in class, or taken material from the web and adapted it for teaching purposes. Take the time to share sources of content with other teachers and organize regular get-togethers where you sit down and discuss what you have found on the Internet and how you have used it in class. Collaboration like this can help to reduce the time you spend searching for good materials and the time spent preparing activities or making worksheets. First as the Internet is becoming more of a collaborative medium, so should your use of it in your teaching.

Problematic questions:

1. How do we use computers?
2. Define computer-based presentation technologies;
3. What are the ways of finding out (electronic dictionaries, concordances, searching the Internet)?
4. What is computer based testing?
5. Define electronic portfolios;
6. What other Internet based tools do you know?

Literature:

Bauman, J. (2013). Extend class discussion activities via cyberspace. In K. Ryan (Ed.), *Recipes for Wired Teachers*, Tokyo: Japan Association of Language Teaching.

Gavin Dudeney, Nicky Hockly. How to teach English with technology. – Pearson Longman, 2012

Patrikis, P. (2015, winter). Where is computer technology taking us? ADFL Bulletin.

Ramazani, J. (2008). Student writing by e-mail: connecting classmates, texts, instructors. Retrieved from the WWW at <http://www.virginia.edu/~trc/tcemail.htm>

Roakes, S. (2010). The Internet: A goldmine for foreign language resources. Retrieved from the WWW at <http://www.call.gov/resource/essays/internet.htm>