

## SOME CHALLENGES OF USING TECHNOLOGY IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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**Abstract.** The article gives some insight about the use of technology in both EFL and ESL environment. It discusses positive and negative sides of using technology in the classroom. The author considers distraction as one of the demerits of technology among youth.

**Keywords:** technology, ESL, EFL, ICT, learning tool, motivation, computer assisted language learning, technology-driven generation.

### Introduction

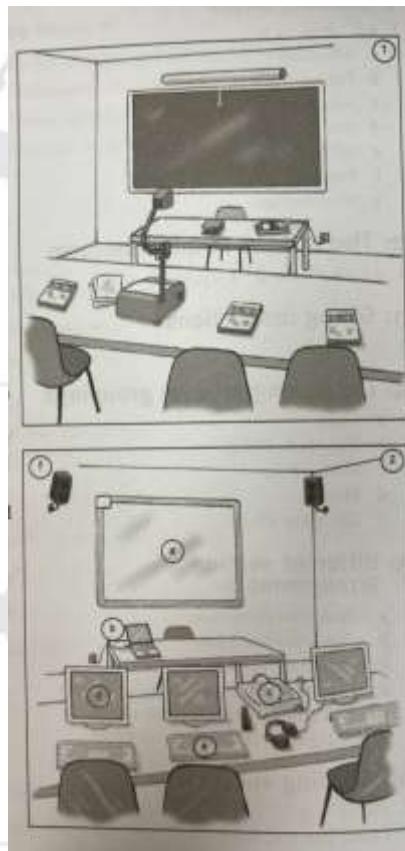
We all know that technology is no longer something new for everyone. It has been playing one of the major roles in many spheres, and in the field of teaching foreign languages as well. We will not be deep diving into foreign language teaching, but focus on English language teaching. According to Ahmed & Naser (2015), during the last two decades, the implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language education has become a real topic of interest. The constant use of different types of technology has become an important part in the teaching and learning process both in the class and outside of teaching

realia. Technology allows teachers to enhance classroom activities and language learning process (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018; Hashim, 2018). With the arrival of tech teaching in ESL, the traditional teaching method has been changed drastically with extraordinary access to technology (Pazilah, Hashim, Yunus, 2019). Using technology in your classes gives you an ample opportunity to make your class interesting and communicative. The implementation of technology has provided options for a more interesting and productive teaching and learning sessions predominantly in language learning.

Rosicka and Mayerova (2014) stated that the purpose of the new era of education is to make the current and upcoming generation active participants in society with the implementation of technology. Using computers as learning tools can promote efficient learning when learners are engaged in knowledge construction, collaboration, and reflection. For the young technology-driven generation, the application of technology in teaching and learning sessions can bring more interest and motivation to learn. (Pazilah, Hashim, Yunus, 2019)

### **Defining Technology in ESL Classroom**

What was technology in ESL classroom 15 years ago is different than what is happening in 2024 in the classrooms. Jeremy Harmer (2007), in his book (p.252) “How to teach English” wrote that twenty first century classrooms around the world have a wide range of equipment and technology available to them. He brought to pictures.



Picture 1 shows an arrangement which is still the norm in many countries, and which has not changed much for many years. In this classroom there is a board which the teacher and the students can write on using chalk, and the students have books to work with. The teacher has a tape recorder to play conversations and songs. There is also an overhead projector which the teacher can use to project images and text (Harmer 2007).

Picture 2 shows a classroom equipped with modern technology. Here, the board is an interactive whiteboard (IWP) which has a number of special features. In the first place, anything the teacher or the students write can be saved or printed, because the board acts as a large computer monitor. There are also speakers mounted on the wall and they are hooked to the computer (Harmer 2007)

Pic 1. Modern classrooms. J. Harmer 2007

As we see above, the books have been changed to laptops, and tape recorders have been changed to speakers and other technology. And now let's take a look at the modern tech class in Australia. We used Programmed Australia webpage. As we see the notion of ESL classroom has changed significantly in 2016 (Pic 3.).



### Pic 3. Changing Technology in the Modern Educational Environment.

#### Programmed Australia

Website: [Changing Technology in the Modern Educational Environment](#)

With the introduction of AV technology, teaching has become naturally more interactive and visually stimulating. Course material is now developed with the intention of being easily viewed on screen. Interactive LCD screens are perhaps the most major additions towards modern day classroom technology, as they stimulate their ability to socially construct knowledge with immediate feedback. LCD screens are more inclusive: a greater number of touch points allow users to scroll, zoom, move and enlarge objects –leading to an innovative system that operates through fingers and interactive pens. Students are now able to have more control of how and what they learn as they motivate each other to change their methods of interaction and instruction ([Changing Technology in the Modern Educational Environment](#), Feb 8, 2016)

The technology implementation is defined as “the process of determining which electronic tools and which methods from implementing them are the most appropriate responses to give classroom situations and problems” (Roblyer & Doering, 2010, p. 8). Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has become normalized in the educational process (Bax, 2012). The key to a successful use of technology in teaching and learning session not only lies in hardware or software but also in our human ability as teachers have to plan, design and implement effective educational activities (Abunowara, 2016).

#### **Challenges, distraction and misuse**

But as we know, nothing comes without flaws. Every new technology has its own merits and demerits. According to Pazilah, Hashim and Yunus (2019), it is obvious to say that technology has proven its effectiveness in language learning. However, along with other manmade teaching methods, it still has its flaws. In the common traditional method of teaching, teachers would usually raise an impromptu

question and guide the students on how to answer the questions. However, with the implementation of technology, students would rather find the answer online.

According to Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Hun, and Embi (2013), the concept of ICT in education is that ICT enables information gathering, management, manipulation, access and communication in various forms. This shows that information is at the tip of our finger without having to think. It also disregards the emphasis and the importance of teaching. It disdains the students' thinking, inspiring their paths to think, and contemplating problems solving. Shyamlee and Phil (2012) continue by stating that students should be able to think innovatively and exploring questions and possible answers without having to have a know-it-all assistant. Multimedia should not be taking students' time for thinking (Pazilah, Hashim and Yunus, 2019).

Simin and Heidari (2013) posit, the integration of technology can also limit other skills such as speaking communication. Technology may be a great medium for online interacting; however, it will decrease the speaking communication among students and teachers. The introduction of technology may include audio, visual, textual effect which fully meets the audio and visual requirements of the students and can increase their interest. However, it also results in poor communication among students and teachers (Shyamlee & Phil, 2012).

There are countless things people can use when they are online. Students particularly can get distracted with the entertaining side technology has to offer. Surfing the internet without parental supervision can be harmful and dangerous for the students who are minors. Students who are digital natives tend to spend their upmost time on social media. Social media such as Facebook and Instagram can distract students from doing what they are supposed to do. When online, students can get easily distracted with the entertainment technology what computers have to offer. Other than that, technology provides the easiness of online plagiarism (Pazilah, F. , Hashim, H. and Yunus, M. (2019)

Besides the above distractions, we can also point social media usage, email and messaging, online gaming, internet browsing, use of Telegram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or any other Social Media apps.

### Conclusion

Well, what can be said about the technology. It has proven its importance to the education and other fields. With the immersion or integration of technology, students can be motivated and dive deeper in their studies and careers. Technology gives us immense and paramount opportunities to make our classroom lively and interactive. But with all these new flashy technological gadgets we should not forget that it brings some disadvantages and distractions. Younger generations tend to get easily distracted. As Pazilah, Hashim and Yunus (2019) note, students may get distracted with the entertainment the technology has to offer. Other than that, they might misuse while using technology. Hence, the use of technology should be limited and students should be under supervision while using computers. This paper implies to all teachers who are planning to integrate technology in an ESL classroom. Future research can look into how technology affects students' attitude.

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