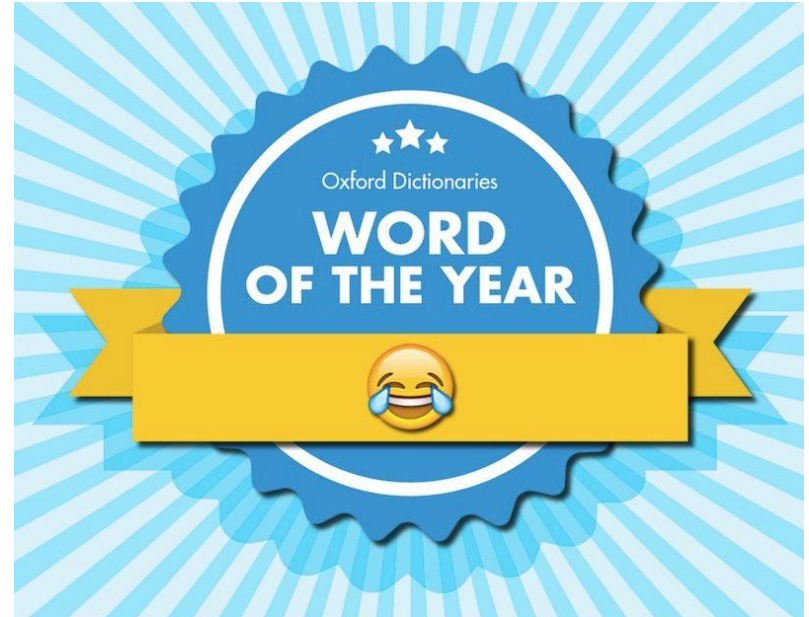# Language Development and Technology

Bryan Arnold

Technology is Ruining Language!

- This ideology has been developing more and more as technology becomes more entrenched in our daily lives.
  - Social medias, new industry terms, device utilizing communication in general (i.e, LOL)
- Internet slang and new tech related words are being added to the dictionary constantly.
  - Bitcoin, Selfie, Emojis, TL;DR, etc... are very recent additions to the Oxford English Dictionary
- The use of some of these words has left a sour taste in the mouths of English traditionalists, and many want technology out of the equation for language use and development.
  - Some individuals let online slang out as casual, verbal conversation, which is a big deal to traditionalists
  - But how influential is tech really on language competence and are these new developments negative?

Not at All!

- Technology has little to no negative impact on how the younger generations develop their language, and in some cases it can be beneficial.
  - Seen through observation and data collection of young adults' and teens' communication using technology.
  - Positive mindsets and resulting positive consequences of technology use in language learning in multiple age groups.
  - New concepts and implementations of technology in teaching are already being put into practice with high amounts of success.
    - With a few caveats of course...

What Kind of Language Communication Is Taking Place?

OMG! LMAO! LOL! ROFL!

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

GEMMA CORRELL

- Study conducted by Sali A. Tagliamonte and Derek Denis sought to see exactly what type of language was being used by teens and young adults with technology.
  - Focused on instant messaging, as almost everyone with a phone uses these.
- Analyzed the message logs of over 200 volunteers ages 17-20 in casual, online communication.
  - Many of which had been using technology to communication from a much earlier age
- Millions of words were amassed to see what language is like through technology to set a strong representation of how younger generations communicate with technology.

Results

- Most common language used that isn't used verbally outside of technology were ones expressing emotion or abbreviations for phrases.
  - Includes things such as haha, omg, ttyl
  - Roughly 26,000 cases of these types of words, yet was only 2.4% of the words gathered.
- Next most common type of language used was spelling errors, grammar, or variable versions of other words.
  - Includes things such as not capitalizing correctly, punctuation errors, and replacing 'you' with 'u'
  - Grammar and spelling are commonplace in writing anyways, and variable forms make up only roughly 9% of the uses of the word
- Other complaints of language used in technology only made up 3% of the data.
  - Interesting that the 'like' phenomena isn't present in digital speak, so a nasty speaking habit is eliminated.
  - Media tends to misrepresent and misinterpret how much we use these and assumes they are extremely commonplace.

How Do Language Educators and Students Feel About Technology?

- Binnur Genc İlter did research into how teachers and students of the English language felt about putting technology in their classrooms as well as how students use their technology as a learning tool.
- Interviewed various English language teachers as well as students in the fourth grade.
  - Asked questions such as "how can technology help language learning", "how are students using technology to supplement what they learn", and "is using technology to teach language in the classroom a good idea?"
  - Students also gauged on their linguistic abilities when responding to see if what they say matches reality
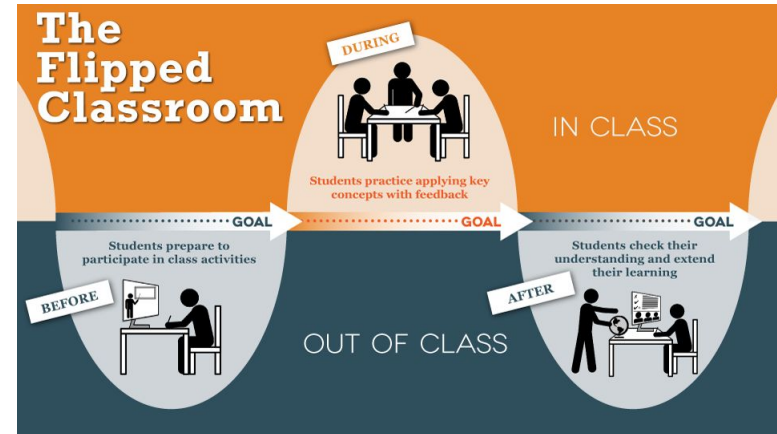
Results

- Overall, overwhelmingly positive feedback and student linguistic ability in responses.
- Teachers saw technology as a way to help grab the attention of their students and offer alternatives to those who struggle to learn through certain mediums.
  - Teachers saw technology as inevitable part of a child's life, so there is no point in trying to reject it. Using it in a positive way is good for the students and should be encouraged.
- Students agreed with teachers that using technology for language inside and outside of the classroom is beneficial.
  - Many used it to search vocabulary they didn't know, improved pronunciation through hearing it in film or music, as well as grammar and syntax clarity.

Technology for Language Learning: Flipped Classroom

- One approach to the idea of using technology in the classroom to aid in language learning is the idea of a flipped classroom.
- Theoretical and abstract material of a lesson is learned by the students through online means, such as videos provided online of lectures or lessons. Then, during class time, the instructor leads students through examples and homework.
- The idea is students have no time constraints and a limitless pool of references to learn abstracts on their own, and apply it with guidance in a classroom.
  - How effective is this?
  - Arina Evseeba and Anton Solozhenko got a college (non-native English college) class to try this model for a semester to learn the English language, and gauged English abilities against a control group

The Flipped Classroom

DURING
Students practice applying key concepts with feedback

IN CLASS

GOAL — Students prepare to participate in class activities

GOAL

GOAL — Students check their understanding and extend their learning

BEFORE

OUT OF CLASS

AFTER

Results

- Control group showed poorer academic English abilities both oral and written than the flipped classroom students.
- Students commented on the abundant amount of resources to aid learning as well as being able to have a more flexible timeline in their schedules to learn effectively.
  - Collaborations, no time constraints, online references, etc.
- As a consequence, showed more motivation to learn the material and positive attitudes towards the material.

Those Earlier Caveats I Mentioned…

- When speech used in technology leaks into verbal conversations, sometimes negative things can occur.
  - Incorrect or inappropriate term to use as well as barriers from those who are not so digitally linguistic.
  - Can lead to confusion or sometimes even conflict
- Another problem with technology in learning language is the availability and some students' capacity to utilize it positively.
  - Internet issues/availability for some students, tons of possible distractions to deviate from learning, as well as some not being tech savvy enough to use technology as a learning medium.
- All of these are of concern, but the vast majority of results make these out to be not very severe at all.
  - Verbal use of digital speech is VERY rare for the most part
  - The positive versus negative effects of technology in language learning are roughly 90-10 in favor of usage and can be improved upon.

Conclusions

- Language and technology are an inevitable pairing in our ever growing world, so there's no use in trying to prevent the two from interacting.
- The way media and language traditionalists portray the negative aspects of technology speech is usually misinterpreted as well as blown out of proportion.
- New ways to implement technology with learning languages are being practiced today and show promising results.
- All of the possible negative connotations of technology lingo are very minimal, uncommon, and can easily be improved upon with time.

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