Integration of ICT Tools for Teaching Speaking Skills for Adult Learners

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Abstract

In the process of teaching and learning foreign language technologies and technological platforms play a vitally important role, especially in our modernized digital era. It is crystal clear that in an information age every sphere has, at least, partially covered with technologies. The study aims to analyze the use of ICT tools among adult foreign language learners, as well as, the challenges many youngsters face nowadays together with some clear explanations regarding how to solve them. Since technologies are able to facilitate the process of both learning and teaching, it is highly advisable to combine traditional teaching methods with ICT tools. Using authentic materials by the Internet can assist students to excel at communication and reach the proficiency in the target language.

Key Words: *ICT, learning, teaching, technologies, foreign language.*

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Arizona, USA

Introduction. Indeed, English has become a global language spoken by a significant portion of the world's population. As a result, the importance of learning English extends beyond just children to include adults as well. Adults, typically defined as individuals aged over 16 years, often seek to improve their English language skills for various reasons, such as career advancement, travel, or personal enrichment. Therefore, teaching English to adult learners is a crucial aspect of language education, and designing materials that cater to their specific needs and interests is essential for effective instruction. By incorporating ICT tools and resources into language teaching for adults, educators can create engaging and interactive materials that enhance the learning experience and support the development of oral discourse skills. Having studied the challenges students are facing today and a normal regime of a student's learning process, it might be available to help students master speaking skills with a clear direction.

Literature review. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in learning a foreign language by providing various tools and resources that enhance the learning experience. Several studies have examined the involvement of ICT tools into teaching and learning a foreign language. One study by Stockwell (2010) researched the use of technologies in language teaching and learning and discovered that they can enhance learner autonomy and motivation. Similarly, Warschauer and Healey (1998) explored the use of e-mail exchanges and came to a conclusion that it can enhance students' writing skills and intercultural communication. There are a myriad of key points highlighting the importance of ICT in language learning, firstly, having an access to authentic language materials: ICT enables learners to access authentic language materials such as videos, podcasts, online articles, and interactive exercises, allowing them to engage with real-life language usage. Liaw (2006) researched on the use of multimedia in teaching a foreign language concluding that students could better their vocabulary and listening comprehension. The second benefit of using technologies in teaching is the availability of interactive learning platforms: ICT provides interactive learning platforms and software that offer personalized learning experiences, instant feedback, and opportunities for practice and reinforcement of language skills. There is no denying that it fosters the quality of communication and collaboration: ICT tools such as email, messaging apps, video conferencing, and social media platforms facilitate communication and collaboration with native speakers and other language learners, providing opportunities for authentic language practice and cultural exchange. The scientists Wang and Vacquez (2012) identified that the availability of online learning can help learns facilitate their learning process and boost collaboration as well as a great access to authentic language and naturality. Instead of satisfying with traditional methods and teaching styles, it is

Arizona, USA

advisable to make use of multimedia resources: ICT allows for the integration of multimedia resources such as audio, video, images, and animations into language lessons, making learning more engaging, interactive, and effective. Furthermore, integrating technologies in teaching atmosphere does not only enhance the teacher-student relationship, but also self-paced learning: ICT enables learners to study at their own pace and schedule, providing flexibility and autonomy in their language learning journey. take language learning apps and software as an example: There are numerous language learning apps and software available that offer a wide range of features such as vocabulary drills, grammar exercises, pronunciation practice, and language games to support language acquisition. Online resources and courses, as well, might be an optimal solution to overcome some troubles related to speaking like shyness or the shortage of speaking materials and partners to do more practice in order to make English speaking as a native one. In other words, ICT provides access to a wealth of online resources, courses, tutorials, and virtual classrooms that cater to different learning styles and preferences, making language learning more accessible and convenient. Overall, ICT enhances the effectiveness, efficiency, and enjoyment of learning a foreign language by providing diverse tools and resources that cater to the individual needs and goals of learners.

New cultural context of teaching. As time goes by, everything tends to change going with time and modernization. Traditional ways and methods in any field should be altered to gain massive achievements in the field. Taking it into consideration, I should claim that the field of education is no exception. The mindset and opportunities of students are totally changing at an alarming rate and some of the methods created in the past can no longer meet the needs. Referring to Mark Prensky (2001) "our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" it can be said that educators are advised to modify and enhance their teaching styles and methods. It would be much better if that was accomplished with the help of ICT tools. As N.N.Normatova states, "The process of developing the oral speech skills of foreign language for linguistic departments of Higher Education is different from the process of developing it for non-philological departments. The process has its own peculiarities. The quality of education, which is a bilateral process between the teacher and student, depends on the didactic perfection of teacher's mastery, and on the other hand, on the students' motivational activity. Meanwhile, if the high scientific potential and methodological skills of the teacher are integrated with the educational activity of students' high results can be achieved in the short-term period.

Materials and methods. This study is being conducted based on the assumption of utilizing technologies, incorporating ICT and exploring the advantages and obstacles encountered

Arizona, USA

by students in foreign language education. This research includes the use of questionnaires, surveys and interviews with students in Samarkand state institute of foreign languages. A questionnaire was administered to students to gather their perspectives on the integration of ICT in foreign language teaching and learning. Various resources related to the use of ICT in teaching foreign languages were consulted to inform the study.
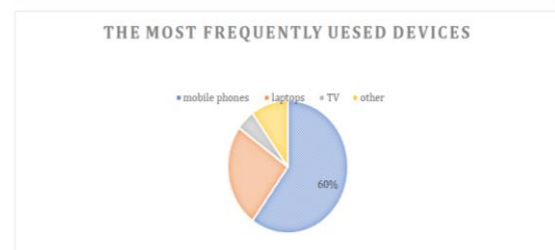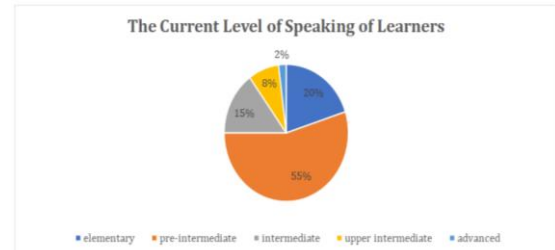
Findings and results.

Students answered all the questions illustrated in the questionnaire. The age of participants in the survey was 19-25 years old. They were informed that the anonymity of them will be safeguarded during the study.

Questions and answers.

1. Could you point out the current level of your speaking?

2. What technological devices do you think carry more benefits in learning a foreign language?

3. Have you ever used any ICT tools or platforms to practice your speaking?

4. What is the biggest problem in your speaking?

5. Do you think ICT has a significant impact on the quality of learning a foreign language?

6. How much time do you spend to practice speaking every day?

7. Which one do you prefer, learning with the help of a teacher offline or ICT tools?

8. Where do you usually try to find authentic materials in English?

Question 1. For the question asking the current level of speaking

for students, 55% of students admitted that their speaking level is worth for pre-intermediate whereas merely 8% of students evaluated their speaking for upper-intermediate.

The Current Level of Speaking of Learners

■ elementary ■ pre-intermediate ■ intermediate ■ upper intermediate ■ advanced

THE MOST FREQUENTLY UESED DEVICES

■ mobile phones ■ laptops ■ TV ■ other

Question 2. According to the answers gathered with the help of the survey, I concluded that mobile phones dominated among others with the figure of 60% for the process of learning a foreign language.


The Percentage of Students Who Use ICT Tools
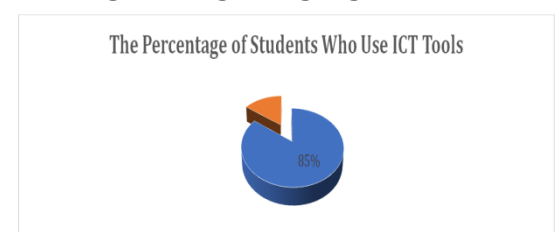
Question 3. The proportion of ICT tool users comprises 85% while other 15% prefers not using technologies, because of the lack of their technology literacy.

The Major Obstacle in Speaking

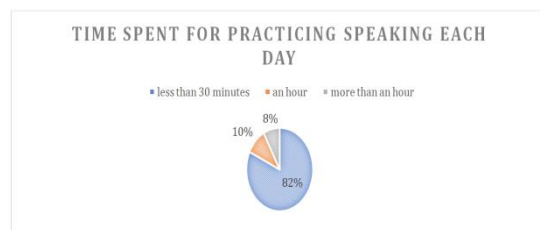■ grammar ■ vocabulary ■ pronunciation ■ fluency ■ other

Question 4. The findings have shown that the main challenge for learners is the lack of vocabulary

range, followed by grammatical point. Very few participants paid attention to fluency, which is a great contributor in high quality speech, actually.

The Significance of ICT Tools in Learning a Foreign Language

- yes
- no
- to some extent
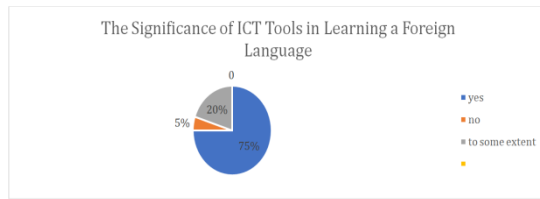
Question 5. About 75% of students stayed positively, 5% negatively. 20% of students thought it has its own place in learning if used properly.

TIME SPENT FOR PRACTICING SPEAKING EACH DAY

- less than 30 minutes
- an hour
- more than an hour

Question 6. Unfortunately, only 8% of students allocate more than an hour for speaking practice. The rest 82% of learners practice for less than 30 minutes on a daily basis.

- a teacher offline
- online learning
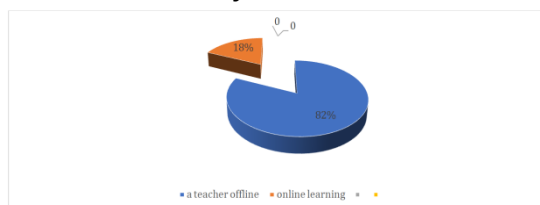
Question 7. For some reasons, many preferred (82%) the choice of learning with the help of a teacher offline, which seemed more controlled and beneficial whereas 18% of adult learners believed that it is possible to do self-study thanks to today's modern technologies.

The Source of Authentic Materials
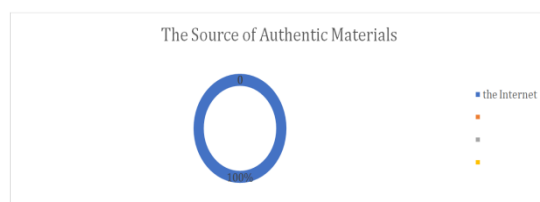
- the Internet

Question 8. In today's digital age, any type of materials can be found on

the internet, that is why, all students just opted for it.

Main part. The results of the questionnaire based on the feedback of the students studying at the Samarkand state institute of foreign languages show preferences for technology and particularly the usage of the Internet. Incorporating technology into education can produce certain positive results not only for learners, but also teachers. According to Salaberry, "new technologies promote a new approach in which the student takes an important role; he turns in an active participant in the construction of knowledge". With the help of smartphones, laptops and the Internet, students in the 21st century have a wide range of opportunities to facilitate the learning process. While they enjoy from having an enormous amount of data regarding any subjects in their hands, the visual graphic effects in videos also provide a more interesting and understandable learning experience. Regardless of the geographical location, learners can now receive education via the Internet at almost no cost. If it were not for technological improvements, these opportunities would not be present. Even though most students prefer learning a foreign language with the help of a teacher offline, they feel positive about the integration of technologies into education. The availability of technologies can unlock the door of a world of opportunities to ease and beautify the process of learning and teaching both independently and relying on the aid of tutors. By collecting data with the help of the survey, it is concluded that:

- a vast majority of learners do not take speaking competence so seriously and they just have lack of knowledge or idea about how to practice or enhance their speaking.

- Secondly, they feel demotivated when their pronunciation sounds full of mistakes or incorrect spelling. As a consequence, they just tend to ignore the matter focusing on other competences which do not require students to speak.

-as for the time allocated to speaking by students, it is a pity that more than 80% students do not practice their speaking as much as they should.

-last but not the least, many people learning a foreign language are not aware of powerful and promising capabilities of technologies and ICT tools, which results in the situation in which students highly rely on their teachers. Although teachers have their own invaluable place in education, a learner should be able to study independently.

By understanding these mentioned above, I can recommend some potential solutions using ICT tools in the field of learning and teaching a foreign language:

-motivate students to work on their speaking: apart from creating a supportive and positive learning environment, providing opportunities for authentic communication as well as offering constructive feedback can urge students to be keen on practicing speaking.

-emphasize the importance of pronunciation: providing with feedback and correction with the accurate guidelines containing visual and understandable resources might help students to overcome mispronunciation.

-set clear goals and expectations: breaking down larger speaking tasks into manageable steps to help students build confidence and motivation can work.

-incorporate ICT tools into lessons: introducing and demonstrating ICT tools to students can unlock the new opportunities fostering autonomy and self-directed learning

Conclusion. The integration of ICT tools in teaching a foreign language has indicated that great promise in improving language learning process. These tools provide opportunities for interactive and engaging learning experiences, personalized instruction, immediate feedback and access to authentic language resources. Teachers can change the traditional teacher-centred class into more dynamic and effective learning atmosphere by incorporating ICT tools effectively into language teaching. By listening to students' learning experiences and difficulties they are encountering, it has become more clear that a majority of learners find speaking difficult to enhance and more appropriate method or strategy is in need. This research aims to find out different views as to learning a foreign language with the help of the survey carried out and uncover more things for improvement to create more effective and motivating method to boost the speaking level. The competence of speaking is vitally important in language acquisition as it helps us to express our opinions or feelings in a target language. That is

Arizona, USA

why, it should be mentioned that encouraging students to work on improving their speaking can also contribute positively for their overallknowledge. the study investigates how adult learners perceive the use of ICT tools in improving their speaking skills in a foreign language. Findings suggest that integrating ICT tools, such as online platforms, interactive activities and video conferencing can enhance speaking proficiency by providing opportunities for practice, feedback and engagement. Overall, the research highlights the positive impact of ICT tools on adultlearners' oral skills and advocates for their continued integration in language teaching.

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Arizona, USA