
THE POWER OF MULTIMEDIA TO ENHANCE LEARNERS' LANGUAGE SKILLS IN MULTILINGUAL CLASS

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Abstract

The aim of language teaching is to enable learners to be fluency in the language being learned. Some efforts have been done by the teachers in the process of teaching and learning in language class such as using various methods and strategy of teaching to make the students learn in the class but the results are still far from the expectation. Multimedia, that can be found easily nowadays, can be used to enhance the learners' language skills. The use of silent story, picture cued, TV news, comic strips are among the multimedia that can be used by teachers as the solution to make the learning process more motivated for the learners to practice their language skills orally and in written form. Multimedia has a power to motivate learners practice their language in a contextual situation then they acquire the language.

Keywords: *multimedia, language skills, multilingual class*

1. INTRODUCTION

Instructional systems and educational technology have been gaining great attention by educators in order to enhance students' learning. Educators are always looking for ways to make their educational initiative more effective. Therefore, the learning experience has shifted paradigms from an instructor-focus approach to learner centered pedagogical approach. Educators have been adapting their curricular to take advantage of new instructional methods. Educational technologies such as multimedia presentation, simulation methods, online courses, and computer assisted learning are becoming commonplace (Yamauchi, 2008).

At the beginning, learning was done in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students, as Plato's dialogues with his student Aristoteles, that solely used of teacher's voice in implementing the learning process. When the teacher's voice alone is not sufficient to explain something, then teaching aids was used by writing or drawing something on a flat area, which was known as the chalkboard or blackboard. Chalkboard did not simply write a words, phrases, and sentences, but it is also used to draw objects or graphs that need to be explained. Technological developments, changing blackboard increasingly diverse both in terms of form, quality, and function, but remain solely serve as a visual learning.

In foreign language learning, the first visual media used using a blackboard media is a simple image in the form of stick figure, to explain object, action, or idea. For a talented persons, they can make a better picture for the provoking productive and receptive language skills. Blackboard can be used to write newvocabularyies, phrases, or sentences, and to practice in writing sentences by language learners. Blackboard is solely the medium of instruction used by teachers in the classroom.

Some methods of teaching originally used by teachers are grammar translation method, direct methods, total physical response, and audio-lingual (Larsen-Freeman, 1986), where the interaction of teachers and students was done through voice of teachers to explain learning materials, conduct drills to practice the language learned, practice the language being studied, and test the ability of oral and written language to communicate with others. The emergence of communicative language learning and communicative approach gives a new nuance in the importance of learning in order to improve the understanding and skills in the language learners to master the language learned. Instructional media are used to help teachers explain and practice the language.

The development of gadget technology has changed the role of teaching media. Everyone now has one or more gadget that can access texts, pictures, videos and music. All of them can be used as a medium of learning a foreign language. Foreign-language text can be read by language learners to practice reading. Video, in the form of YouTube, can be accessed any time to listen how information and entertainment in a foreign language can be understood. The students can learn not only from teachers but from any sources that be accessed easily through internet.

Learning is defined as the process of creating an environment that enables the process of getting knowledges or skills. Learning is the mental activity of students in interacting with the environment that produces behavioral changes that are relatively constant. Thus, the environment is an important aspect in learning activities. The environment is created by rearranging the elements that can change the behavior of students. Multimedia is one of the elements that can affect students' learning environment. Multimedia can stimulate the mind, feelings, concerns and willingness to learn so that the learning process takes place to achieve the objectives. If the selected instructional multimedia developed and used appropriately and well, it will provide enormous benefits to the implementation of instructional process (Arialdi, 2008).

About teaching and learning, Brown (1994) mentions that “learning is acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction. Learning is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practice”. He, then, continues that “teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning”. Similarly, teaching may be defined as “showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand.” So, teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning.

To set the conditions for learning, the use of media is very useful in teaching. Research at Harvard Business School shows that the learning outcomes of students taught using audio-visual media is 38.5% better than the group that was taught with traditional methods. Further research indicates that the information received by the human brain comes from the five senses, in comparison can be expressed as follows: sense of taste 1%, sense of touch 1.5%, sense of smell 3.5%, sense listening 11%, and senses seeing 83%. The last report explained that what we can remember on average through the five senses are: 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we hear and see, 80% of what we say, and 90% of what we say and do. This suggests that the best conditions for teaching students are participating, namely reading, listening, seeing, saying and doing (Zaim, 1990). Instructional media can help teachers to activate as many senses as possible in learning.

Zaim (1989) says that instructional media can help to simplify the learning process, allow the students to better understand the content of what being taught, help to shape the learning process, and can stimulate interest in the language program and thus provide for a motivational impulse. The media can serve as a source of linguistic information, models of linguistic, cultural resources, and cultural model. A picture is worth a thousand words. With a picture, the teacher can instill concepts, uncover ideas, making a conversation, and write an essay (Zaim, 1991). Instructional media can be single media (audio or visual) and multimedia.

2. WHAT IS MULTIMEDIA?

Multimedia is media that connects two or more media elements consisting of text, graphics, images, photographs, audio, video and animation integratedly. Multimedia can be divided into two categories, namely linear multimedia and interactive multimedia. Linear multimedia is multimedia that is not equipped with any control device that can be operated by users. This multimedia is running sequential, for example, TV and Film. Interactive multimedia is a multimedia which is equipped with a controller that can be operated by the user, so that the user can choose what he wants for the next process, for example, gaming applications, and interactive learning multimedia (Arialdi, 2008).

Mayer (2001) defines multimedia as the combination of various digital media types, such as text, images, sounds, and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey a message or information to an audience. Multimedia allows to convey the understanding of a topic

in a variety of ways, provide the students with opportunity to explain their ideas to others (Ivers and Baron, 2010). Multimedia is the presentation of instructional content to certain target population via some instructional materials such as graphics, audios, and videos (Eristi, Haseski, Uluuysal, and Karakoyun, 2012). So, multimedia is media that utilizes a combination of different content forms displayed or accessed using computerized or electronic devices. In education, multimedia resources allow the user to go through a series of presentations, text and associated illustrations about a particular topic in various information formats.

Moreover, Ivers & Baron (2010) and Nunes & Guba (2011) state that there are some main elements which make up a typical multimedia program, they are text, image, video, animation, sound, interactivity, and user control. *Text* is the on-screen display of words. They should be easy to read. The use of different styles, fonts and colour can be used to emphasize specific points. *Image* is a picture of an object. It has more impact than merely reading about the words. *Video* can help make learning more meaningful to students. *Animations* are a series of graphic images that are shown in rapid succession and fool the eye into seeing motion. *Sound* can be used in strategic parts of the program or during a movie to emphasize certain points. This may include speech, audio effects, and music. *Interactivity* refers to the action that occurs as two or more objects have an effect upon one another. *User control* is to provide students with the option to use or leave certain parts of the application. Besides the criteria above, Ampa et al. (2013) add that the contents of multimedia materials should be very interesting and engage the students in learning. The design should display particular skill relevant with the students and the language should be appropriate, understandable, and very accurate. Multimedia allows teachers to integrate text, graphics, animation, and other media into one package to present comprehensive information for their students and to guide students to achieve specified course outcomes (Yamauchi, 2008). Multimedia permits the demonstration of complicated process in a highly interactive, animated fashion and that instructional material can be interconnected with other related topics in a more natural and intuitive ways (Crosby & Stelovsky, 1995).

3. THE ROLE OF MULTIMEDIA IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Multimedia has a variety of roles in the language learning process, such as aid of learning, materials of learning, instruments of assessment, and generating ideas.

a. *Multimedia as aid of learning*

Multimedia can be used as a teaching aid, which helps teachers explain the concept of knowledge or help learners practice skills that are taught using instructional media prepared by the teacher. There is a growing body of evidence that the use of ICT in the classroom can enhance learning (Meiers, 2009). However, all multimedia resources are not equally effective, so the challenge teachers' face is how to assess and select multimedia resources that best promote meaningful learning. Computer-based multimedia learning environments - consisting of images, text and sound - offer a potentially powerful setting for improving student understanding. Mayer and Moreno (2002) discuss the cognitive theory of how learners process multimedia information. This theory can be used to guide teachers to assess and select the most effective multimedia resources for learning in the classroom.

b. *Multimedia as material of learning*

Multimedia can also be used as learning materials, which describe the content of learning taught. Multimedia learning occurs when students build mental representations from words and pictures that are presented to them. The promise of multimedia learning is that students can learn more deeply from well-designed multimedia messages consisting of words and pictures than from more traditional modes of communication involving words alone (Mayer, 2003).

c. *Multimedia as instrument of assessment*

Multimedia can be used as a tool to determine the extent of the knowledge and skills taught has been mastered by the learner. Pisters, Baxk, and Lodewijks (2003) did a research on the effectiveness of multimedia assessment of social communicative competence. A series of multimedia test was developed and put on the internet, enabling flexible use. Each test contain video conversations, where fragments were alternated with questions. It was found that students showed a great deal of enthusiasm with respect to multimedia test, reporting that they liked to make use of the test.

d. *Multimedia as generating idea*

Multimedia can be used to convey a person's ability to speak and write. With multimedia, teacher can provoke what will be communicated to students in the form of speaking or writing skills. With multimedia teacher may illustrate what is read and heard so that the understanding of the written text and spoken text will be better. Therefore, by using the multimedia students may be inspired to communicate about what has been heard and seen.

4. TYPES OF MULTIMEDIA USED FOR ACQUIRING LANGUAGE SKILLS

It is important that teachers prepare the target language audio-visual material containing a range of different interaction types to enhance awareness of the verbal and non-verbal features used by members of the speech community. In the following, types of multimedia used for acquiring language skills will be explained.

a. *Types of Multimedia used for developing listening skills*

Listening skill is language skill to comprehend the information given orally by a speaker. It is a receptive skill. However, listening is not a simply receptive act, there are multiple interactive and creative processes engaged simultaneously through which listeners receive speakers' production of linguistics and non linguistics knowledge. Classroom listening learning activity is usually done by playing audiorecording, then students listen and answer questions related to the content of the conversation or oral text played. With multimedia, learners do not only listen to the audio recording, but they can watch audio-visual media, such as TV news, video, which contain sound and image. Teachers can create the learning materials themselves. One of the software that can be used for developing multimedia for listening skills is exe-learning (Zaim & Refnaldi, 2016). There are a lot of recorded TV programs available in internet beside YouTube that can be used by teachers for developing students' listening skills.

b. *Types of multimedia used for developing speaking skills*

Speaking skill is language skill to deliver idea, opinion, or answering the idea given by someone. The learners think that they are successful in learning English when they have improved their spoken language proficiency (Ampa, 2013). According to Richard (1990), there are three function of speaking skills; interaction, transaction, and performance function. Interaction refers to conversation. Transaction refers to situation where the focus is what is said or done in obtaining goods or services. Performance refers to public talk which transmits information to audiences, such as public announcement and speeches. The types of multimedia that can be used for speaking are multimedia presentation, video, and animation are as follows.

1) *Multimedia presentation*

The use of multimedia presentations in teaching evokes special academic interest. Presentations generated with the help of Microsoft Office Power Point play a significant role in this area (Bochina, Ageeva, and Vlasicheva, 2014). Most papers devoted to educational multimedia presentations mention their informative and illustrative functions. It is no doubt that the use of the visual aids improved students perception, since the more channels of perception are used (optic, mechanical/tactile, auditory and emotional ones), the higher the indicator of perception is. Consequently, the quality of the acquired knowledge is improving too. The traditional means of visual aids (graphics, maps, symbols and signs, schemes, tables, etc) can be presented to the students with the help of new information technologies, including multimedia presentation. Bochina, Ageeva, and Vlasicheva (2014) state that the slides can be divided according to the following kinds of support.

a) *Verbal support*

Slides with verbal support are used to enhance skills of forecasting and expanding information. Verbally information is represented as a text in its absolute sense (words, phrases, sentences). In

speaking practice the verbal support in presentations should mainly contain encyclopedic information such as proper names, title of works of art that are not included in the lexical minimum of the given level. For instance, in studying “tourism” topic verbal supports may be presented by names of historical sites, places of interest of a particular country.

b) Verbal-pictorial support

Slides with verbal and pictorial support are combination of images with the title slides, inscriptions of various kinds, etc. This type is the most popular because it has an effect on imagination, feelings and it allows combining verbal and visual image.

c) Graphic support

Slides with graphic support are slides with charts, diagrams, dates, pictures, etc. Students should describe and discuss what they see, exchange opinions on what they know about the person and the picture by operating the knowledge received earlier in class up to the utmost.

2) Video Presentation

Video provides simultaneous audio-visual input and complete contextualized conversations. It contains captivating storyline, true-to-life scenarios, on-location scenes, various social interactions, realistic yet easy-to-follow linguistic and cultural information (Hwang, 2005). By viewing videos, learners can observe social, cultural, and discursal conventions, and even go through a range of emotional experiences along with characters (Diyab, 2013). Instructional videos have certain characteristics, they represent lasting records, they can be collected, edited and recombined, and they sustain a set of practices that are very different from traditional teaching (Brophy, 2008). Video can also be presented in the form of silent story where there is no conversation or sounds in the film.

3) Animation

Animation is the process of making the illusion of motion and change by means of the rapid display of a sequence of static images that minimally differ from each other (Wikipedia). Animation is the process of displaying still images in a rapid sequence to create the illusion of movement (Wisegeek, 2016). Animation is a simulation of movement created by displaying a series of pictures or frames. (Beal, 2016). Cartoons on television is one example of animation. Animation on computers is one of the chief ingredients of multimedia presentation.

c. Types of multimedia used for developing writing skills

Writing skill is language skill to convey messages, ideas, and opinions in writing to be understood by others who read the message, ideas, and that opinion. Various instructional media can be used for speaking such as still picture, picture series, animated video, cartoon, film, etc.

d. Types of multimedia used for developing reading skill

Reading skill is language skill to understand written language, understand the information conveyed in written form. There are two possible multimedia used for reading comprehension; static visualization and dynamic visualization. Static or fixed visualization is graphic, diagram, and picture, and dynamic visualization a kind of instructional animation. The example of visualization is illustration in textbook-based instructions or animations in computer-based instruction. Animation is any application which generates a series of frame, so that each frame appears as an alteration of the previous one and where the sequence of frames is determined by the designer or the user (Niknejd & Rahbar, 2015). Concerning the role of visualization, research has revealed the superiority of animated visualization over static visualization.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE USING MULTIMEDIA IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Many researches strive to measure the effect of multimedia on students' learning achievement. Mayer (2001) reports that multimedia learning combining animation with narration generally improves performance on retention text better than when information is presented as either text or narration alone. In addition, Ampa et. al. (2008) state that the implementation on the multimedia learning materials in teaching speaking skills at university is practical and effective. Related to motivation, Neo (2010) states that by

setting an authentic task via a multimedia project into a constructivist learning environment, students became highly motivated learners and active in their learning process and provided strong support and encouragement for educators to incorporate multimedia technology and constructivist learning into their classroom.

Hwang (2005) states that the multimedia video material develops the students' understanding of English-specific ways of thinking, of lexical/syntactic choices, and of formulaic expression. Aldera (2015) investigates multimedia strategies to aid L2 listening comprehension in EFL environment. He found that listening comprehension is improved more when multimedia is used than audio alone is used. This may signify that the greater the amount of multimedia is used in listening comprehension classes the better the listening skills will be.

6. MULTIMEDIA IN MULTILINGUAL CLASS

Multilingualism is becoming a social phenomenon governed by the needs of globalization and cultural openness. Multilingual is defined as using or knowing more than one language. Multilingualism is considered to be the use of two or more languages, either by individual speaker or by community of speakers. (Wikipedia, 2016). Multilingual contexts refer to context where more than one language is used in or out-of-school setting (de Oliveira, 2014). Multilingual reflects the notion of multitude and goes beyond two or more languages and language varieties.

Language teaching in multilingual context should be linguistically responsive. Teachers should understand language learners' diverse language background, experiences, and proficiencies to be able to tailor their instruction and adjust curriculum to take into account language learners' resources and needs. Teachers should understand the connection between language, culture, and identity, and develop an awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education (de Olivera, 2014). Many students will learn concepts faster and retain them better if we provide some form of visual aid to accompany the lesson (Freedman, 2012). People learn more deeply from words and graphics than from word alone (Frey & Sutton, 2010).

Teachers can use multimedia in multilingual class to create more colorful and stimulating language classes. There are some advantages of the use of multimedia technology. Multimedia technology, with the help of audio, visual, and animation effects, motivate students to learn English quickly and effectively. It develop students' communicative competence since it create a positive environment for the classroom activities and offer more opportunities for communication among students and between students and teacher. Multimedia widens students' knowledge about the culture of English. The use of multimedia technology connected to the target culture, offer the students with more information more than textbooks, and helps them to be familiar with cultural backgrounds and real-life language materials. The learners not only improve their listening and speaking ability, but also learn the culture of target language. Multimedia creates conducive teaching environment in the classroom, improves teaching efficiency, and provides opportunities for English teaching outside the classroom (Pun, 2013). Multimedia will help multilingual learners to understand the cultures of the language learned that are different from their own culture and to practice the language being learned. Multimedia enhances the English language skills of the learners.

7. CONCLUSION

Multimedia allows integration of text, graphics, audio, and motion video in a range of combination. The result is that learners can now interact with textual, aural, and visual media in a wide range of format. With multimedia, teachers can expose not only aural processing opportunities, but multi modal, simultaneous sight, sound, and text. Multimedia supports teaching English as foreign language. Multimedia can enhance the students ability to communicate orally and in written form with the language being learned.

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