THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract:
The most common method to teach foreign languages is the use of course books. However, the 21st century serves other possibilities to use during learning, such as multimedia tools. The use of Internet, newspapers, the radio, or TV might be an alternative to typical language teaching methods.

Multimedia can be defined as the exciting combination of computer hardware and software that allows you to integrate video, animation, audio, graphics, and test resources to develop effective presentations on an affordable desktop computer. The method of teaching a foreign language through Multimedia has been used wider and wider and it has contributed a lot to higher teaching quality. Chalk-and-Talk teaching method is not enough to teach a foreign language effectively. We should change our teaching ideas and recognize their impersonal attribute as one kind of teaching method. Thus we can utilize modern education technology reasonably to fulfill the target of language teaching. We live in times where multimedia tools accompany almost everyone in their daily activities, e.g. one can get ready to leave home with the rhythm of the music on the radio, while another person cannot imagine breakfast without reading a newspaper. This illustrates the media's enormous impact on people. It seems to be more enjoyable when knowledge is gained through multimedia tools: entertainment, language authenticity, and encouragement to learn more are provided. Consequently, boredom, which sometimes accompanies working with a course book during lessons, might be avoided. Of course, everything depends on the teacher's attitude and preparation. What is more convincing, is the fact that all the skills may be taught with the use of multimedia tools. Moreover, they may satisfy all types of learners, which is not always possible during teaching with a course book.

Keywords: multimedia; language teaching; language acquisition; educational technology.

1. WHAT IS MULTIMEDIA?

Text, graphics, sound, animation, and video are all combined into multimedia, which is then interactively supplied to the user by electronic or digitally modified means. The name "multimedia" is derived from "multi-"

which means many, numerous, and "media," which are a medium for information delivery and presentation, including text, graphics, speech, images, and music.

Media that solely use primitive computer displays, including text-only or conventional types of printed or hand-produced material, contrast with multimedia. A live performance can include multimedia, which can also be recorded and played, displayed, interacted with, or accessed by information content processing equipment such as computerized and electronic devices.

Electronic media players called multi-media devices are used to store and view multimedia content. In fine art, multimedia is distinguished from mixed media since it has a wider scope and, for instance, includes audio. In the early days of multimedia, "rich media" and "interactive multimedia" were synonymous, and "hypermedia" was a form of multimedia. Bob Goldstein, a musician, and artist first used the term "multimedia" to promote the launch of his "Light Works at L'Oursin" performance in Southampton, Long Island, in July 1966. Goldstein might have been familiar with American artist Dick Higgins, who had spoken two years before about a brand-new method of creating work that he called "intermedia." In the 1993 first edition of *Multimedia: Making It Work*, Tay Vaughan declared

> "*Multimedia is any combination of text, graphic art, sound, animation, and video that is delivered by computer. When you allow the user – the viewer of the project – to control what and when these elements are delivered, it is interactive multimedia. When you provide a structure of linked elements through which the user can navigate, interactive multimedia becomes hypermedia."* (Vaughan, 1993:25).

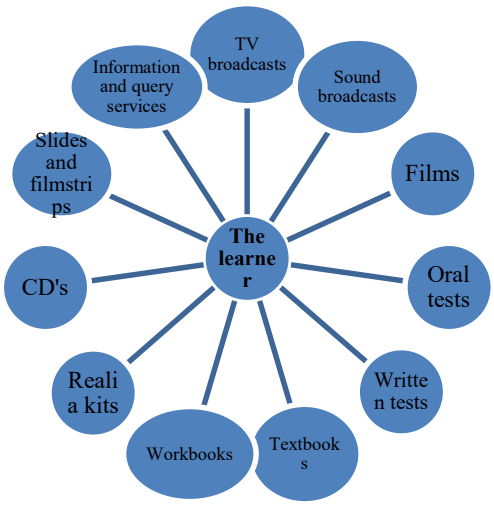
The word was given the distinction of German "Word of the Year" in 1995 by the German language society in recognition of its importance and pervasiveness in the 1990s. The institute succinctly stated that "Multimedia has become a crucial word in the marvelous new media landscape" to explain its position. Multimedia, as it is often used, is a collection of media that has been electronically transferred and can be viewed interactively. This includes video, still photos, audio, and text. Millions of people understand that a lot of the material on the internet today fits this criterion. A CD-ROM drive, which allowed for the transport of several hundred megabytes of video, picture, and audio data, was a feature that certain computers sold in the 1990s were referred to as "multimedia" computers. Multimedia educational CD-ROMs were also produced more frequently during that time. Presentations using multiple media formats can be viewed live on stage, projected, streamed, or played locally using a media player. A multimedia presentation that is being aired could be live or recorded. Both analog and digital electronic media technology are used for broadcasts and recordings. You can download or stream digital online media.

Multimedia streaming can be on-demand or live. Multimedia games and simulations can be played locally with an offline computer, gaming system, or simulator as well as in a physical setting with special effects. The many technological or digital multimedia formats may be used to improve the user experience, such as by facilitating information transfer that is quicker and easier. The blending of several media content types enables higher levels of engagement. Online multimedia is moving more and more toward object-oriented and data-driven architectures, allowing for applications that support end-user innovation and customization on a variety of content types over time. Examples of these include multiple forms of content on websites, such as photo galleries with user-updated titles or text and images or pictures, as well as simulations with modifiable simulation coefficients, events, illustrations, animations, or videos that allow the multimedia "experience" to be changed without having to be reprogrammed. Haptic technology enables virtual things to be touched as well as seen and heard.

2. THE INTEGRATION OF ELEMENTS IN MULTIMEDIA LANGUAGE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Although the idea of reaching the language learner through as many of his/her senses as possible is not a new idea, modern technology provides so many means of doing so that at first the mind reels. Diagram 1 shows the full panoply of stimuli which may reach the learner, from open circuit broadcasting through recordings of one kind or another, books and kits, to the range of human contacts s/he may make. Indeed, the resources made available to a learner in a learning system of this kind may be classed in the first instance as human and material.

Diagram 1



The most important human resource is the learning effort of the learner himself, in terms of time, intensity, efficiency and appropriateness of that effort. All other components in the system are evaluated by their effect upon these learning parameters. A system that makes it possible for the learner to work longer, more intensively, more efficiently and appropriately will be more highly valued than one which does not. It is rather difficult to assess the social cost of learner effort. So much depends upon the competing claims upon that effort. Even leisure learning is achieved at the expense of other satisfactions and attainments. Where language learning requires, say, an executive or a highly skilled craftsman to interrupt his professional employment the direct socio-economic cost may be very high.

The second human resource is the teacher, i.e. an initiator who organizes, arranges and presents the material to be learned, checks on progress, provides feedback on performance and finds ways of overcoming learning blocks and difficulties, building and maintaining motivation, fostering and controlling group dynamics.

A third human resource is provided by the 'native informants', i.e. the members of the speech community who produce the behavior to which the learner is assimilating himself, or a corpus of linguistic artifacts on which the learner models his behavior, as well as the framework for direct conversational and pragmatic interaction. This latter service is also provided by the learner's fellow pupils.

Fourthly, human resources lie behind the provision of all material resources employed in the learning system, and its organization (engineers, technicians, writers, printers, publishers, secretaries, producers, etc.) The cost of these human resources depends on such interrelated factors as skill, training, availability, efficiency, and the extent to which their commitment is specially commissioned (thus 'immersion' learning benefits from the fact that the behavior of members of the speech community is produced in the course of everyday living and is not specifically changeable). Language learning is a “spin-off benefit”. The per capita cost depends furthermore on the scale on which a service is provided, i.e. the number of learners amongst whom the cost is divided.

Material resources, produced by large number of people whom the student never meets (which may be very large) are of many kinds, each taking over some function or functions from teachers and informants. In making a brief survey of material and technical resources one may concentrate upon the 'software' directly used by the learner, without forgetting the substantial industrial machine which stands behind its production, and that of the 'hardware' devices which are necessary to its

employment. They include printed documents (textbooks, course books, workbooks, pamphlets, newspapers, journals and magazines, works of fiction and non-fiction), realia kits (coins, bills, tickets, cultural objects).[1]

2.1.EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER TEACHING EQUIPMENT

As language teachers we use a variety of teaching aids to explain language meaning and construction, engage students in a topic, or as the basis of a whole activity.

2.1.1. PICTURES AND IMAGES

Teachers have long utilized images or visuals to support learning, whether these were created by the teachers themselves, taken from books, newspapers, or magazines, or captured on camera.

Cue cards, which are little cards that students use in pairs or groups during instruction, flashcards, giant wall pictures that allow everyone to see the details, photographs, and illustrations are all examples of pictures (typically in a textbook).

Additionally, some instructors present computer visuals, slides from a slide projector, or images from an overhead projector.

The following examples demonstrate the variety of uses for images of all types: With lower-level pupils, cue-response exercises are a traditional way to use images, particularly flashcards. Before naming a student and asking for a response, we hold up the cue. We then raise a second one, designate a different student, and so forth. Flashcards are a great tool for practicing vocabulary, cuing new sentences, and "hammering" grammar points.

Teachers employ larger wall pictures that students can respond to by pointing to a specific detail, such as *Paul is swimming in the pool* or *There is milk in the refrigerator*. Teachers will occasionally assign students to couples or groups and provide them a stack of cue cards with a suggested statement on each card.

As a result, the student must ask a question after selecting an image of a piece of cheese. The subsequent student chooses a picture of eggs and must ask, *How many eggs have you got?*; and so on. Pictures are very helpful in a number of communication activities in communication games, especially when they have a game-like feel to them, like in describe-and-draw exercises where one student describes a picture and a partnered classmate must draw the same picture without seeing the original. Another

[1] https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/ELT_The_Use_of_the_Media_in_English_Language_Teaching

option is to divide the class into groups and offer each group a unique image depicting a distinct scene from a novel. After the group members have looked over their image, we remove it. New groups are created, and through exchanging the details depicted in their images, they must determine what narrative the images as a whole tell. When conveying and confirming the meaning, one of the most suitable uses for graphics is understanding. For instance, including an image of an airplane makes it simple to explain what the word means. The use of pictures in a lesson might help students predict what will happen next. Therefore, after carefully examining an image, students might infer what it represents. Then, the students read a text or listen to a CD to check whether it fits what they anticipated based on the picture. The students will be more engaged in the task at hand thanks to this effective use of visuals. When used in talks, images can prompt queries like: *What is it showing? What does it do to you? What was the point of the photographer's or artist's design?* Whether they are in a book, on flashcards, or on a wall, images can be utilized to express ideas in English in imaginative ways.

So, pupils might examine an image and make an educated guess as to what it depicts. Then they listen to a CD or read a text to see if it matches what they expected on the basis of the picture. This use of pictures is very powerful and has the advantage of engaging the students in the task to follow. In discussions, pictures can stimulate questions such as: *What is it showing? How does it make you feel? What was the artist's/ photographer's purpose in designing it in that way?* Pictures can also be used for creative language use, whether they are in a book, flashcards or wall pictures. We might ask our students to describe a picture, make up a dialogue between two characters in a picture, or, in a specific role-playing exercise, respond to questions as if they were figures in a well-known artwork. The selection and application of images is mostly a matter of personal preference, but there are three characteristics that must be present in order to arouse the pupils' interest and be linguistically effective.

We might ask our students to write a description of a picture, to invent a conversation taking place between two people in a picture, or in a particular role-play activity, ask them to answer questions as if they were characters in a famous painting.

The choice and use of pictures is very much a matter of personal taste, but we should bear in mind three qualities they need to possess if they are to engage students and be linguistically useful. First and foremost, they must be suitable for the classes they are being used in. Students might not enjoy them if they are too juvenile, and if they are culturally insensitive, they might insult individuals. The primary requirement for photos is that they be clearly visible. They must be large enough for all of our students to see the

required detail. Last but not least, we will not spend hours gathering photos only to have them destroyed after the first use. It is important to consider how to make them durable. Maybe they can be adhered on cards and covered in transparent materials.

2.1.2. THE OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

Since they enable us to prepare visual or presentation material, overhead projectors (OHPs) are incredibly practical pieces of technology. They typically do not require a lot of technical expertise and are portable. Overhead transparencies (OHTs) can display just about anything, including complete texts, grammar exercises, images, diagrams, and student writing. Transparencies can be of very high quality because they can be copied on a photocopier or printed from any computer. The overhead transparency offers the opportunity for the elegant, well-printed script, particularly in cases where students' handwriting is not appreciated by professors. The fact that we do not have to show everything on an OHT at once is one of the main benefits of the overhead projector. We can obscure what we do not want the students to view by placing a piece of cardstock or paper over a portion of the transparency. In order to progressively move the paper or card downward, we might, for instance, expose the first two lines of a story and ask the students what would happen next before disclosing the following two lines and then the next. On one side of the transparency, there may be questions, and on the other, there may be solutions. In order to keep the students' interest, we begin the teaching sequence with the answers already known.

Sometimes we can place a text on the OHP with vacant spaces and then place a transparent sheet on top of it so that students can come up and write what they believe belongs there with OHP pens. Alternately, students working in groups can construct a list of their arguments after discussing a subject (such as whether or not the students under 12 should have a curfew starting at 10 every night) and display it to the class as they present it. Although overhead projectors are very adaptable, they can also present certain issues. They are also not very strong, especially when compared to windows and doors that let in natural light. They can be uncomfortable to look at when projected onto slick surfaces like boards, and when projected onto some other surfaces, it can be quite challenging to see what is on them. The size of the projection square on the wall or screen and whether the image is in focus both play significant roles. However, the overhead projector is a very useful resource if all these possible issues are considered and fixed. (Harmer, 2001: 251).

2.1.3. SONGS AND MUSIC

Songs on recordings, video/DVD or perhaps played on a guitar in the classroom are often used as a filler activity to change the mood or pace of a lesson. They sometimes tend to get relegated to the Friday afternoon slot as a sort of reward for the week's hard work.

Songs can be used in many of the same ways that we might use an ordinary speech recording. Interesting lyrics and clarity of vocals help to make a song into appropriate classroom material, and for this reason, folk music or a solo singer-songwriter are often a better bet than a heavy-metal band.

2.1.4. TV, DVD AND VIDEO

The most obvious way to use visual aids is to place students in front of a television. Turn it on. Let them finish watching the show. This is the standard lecture from a "lazy" teacher. The majority of teachers who have access to the equipment have used it, and it works perfectly. But video must be more than just this! We may develop some fantastic lessons simply by fiddling about with this straightforward case. Many excellent video courses with supporting resources have been released. Some of them try to teach grammar or function, while others center on improving pupils' listening and understanding. A growing number of recordings are being used in conjunction with coursebooks and contain a variety of objectives and activities. However, you can do a lot with recordings you make of TV news, commercials, popular music, etc.

Video is only another teaching tool; it doesn't carry out the instruction for you. It is not difficult to make out 30 to 60 minutes of study from a three-minute video, and that might be much more beneficial than playing a one-hour recording straight through as the students silently drift off.

2.1.5. COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

Many teachers nowadays have access to computers and the Internet, whether in a separate 'Computer lab' or perhaps with single machines in the students' normal classroom. Reactions to this high-tech equipment vary a lot among teachers, and the popularity of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) seems to go in waves over the years. Sometimes it is 'the future of language teaching' and at other times a fairly expensive white elephant. I suspect it's somewhere in between. There is obviously a great deal of value in computers for home study, self-access, and distance learning. In terms of classroom work, computers have many of the same advantages and disadvantages as video recording. We need to make sure we exploit the

materials rather than just plonk students down in front of the screen and expect the programs to do all the work.

An obvious initial problem may be to do with your own computer literacy. However, you don't need to know very much in order to be capable of providing some useful lessons. There are various commercial programs designed for language learners, popular as self-access activities for students working on their own, but which also work as well as class activities. They often involve flexible variations on standard pen-and-paper exercises and activities - fill in the gaps, match the words to the pictures, choose the best answer, etc. Teachers have increasingly found ways to also exploit computers in classroom time; even if you don't have any special programs, there are still useful things to do with just a computer and standard office-user software.

Here are a few general thoughts about using computers with students:

Writing texts: This idea may seem too obvious, but it's worth noting that the single best use of a computer is probably just to work on writing, in the same way, that people in the world outside the classroom work on it. So, for example, when students have a text to produce, let them work on it using the computer. Three to four students could work on a single console and cooperate in preparing a final text. The standard editing options (i.e. cut, copy, paste, replace, etc.) can help make correction and re-drafting less traumatic. Encourage students to spell-check, use the built-in thesaurus, and experiment with different layouts, fonts, paragraphing, etc.

Marking students' work: Ask the students to submit homework on an e-mail attachment or computer disk. Mark it using a notes-adding or comment option so that students can go back and review their work and prepare a new draft.

Mark the teacher: Prepare a text yourself. Include spelling and grammar errors. Get the students to work together to look at the text and correct it.

Edit source texts: Provide a number of source texts (e.g. short pieces with relevant information or opinions) and set the students a task that requires them to copy, paste and then edit to make a short text answering a specific question. For example, set the task of writing a decision, with reasons, about where to hold a professional conference. Provide source texts, such as short descriptions of two possible towns and hotels, the needs of delegates, the chairman's suggestion, feedback from last year's conference, etc. Although less familiar than word processors, computer presentation programs (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint) are a good way of storing and showing images and text in unusual ways, a sort of high-tech slide show. Here are two teaching ideas based on using such a program to flash images or text only briefly to students:

Flash pictures: Flash pictures for one second each. Students meet up afterward, recall them and make up a story including them.
Flash lexis: Do the same, but instead of pictures, show recently studied words (maybe all from one lexical area, e.g. kitchen words). Students try to recall them.
Many Internet-based lessons will involve research to find information for some specific purpose. For this reason, it is important that students are able to efficiently use search engines and directories. Beyond that, the web can be used for many purposes including live text communication with other online users (e.g. 'Messenger programs); live audio (and/or webcam) chat with other users (e.g. 'Net meetings'); delayed-response text communication (e.g. e-mails, message boards, forums, contributions to websites, etc.); reading web-based text (newspapers, magazines, articles, catalogues, entertainment, etc.); downloading or using web-based content (e.g. language exercises, films, music, etc.); designing their own web pages and websites.

Here are a few ideas for activities involving the web:

Reading and research: 'You have ten minutes to answer these three general knowledge questions'; integrate use of web research into ongoing classroom projects; follow up topics met in the coursebook with 'find an interesting article we can read about this subject'; ask students to find some exercises on specific language points; get the class to agree on certain sites of relevance to them which will be monitored on a regular basis (e.g. an upcoming film, developments in space travel, etc.); join specific interest groups focused on areas relevant to students.
Communication: arrange live online messenger chats with students in other towns/ countries; organized-mail pairings between students in different locations; send e-cards to people; add comments to user forums at club sites of interest to students; send messages with suggestions, feedback, and offers, complaints, etc. to companies, manufacturers, government, webmasters, fan clubs, etc.
Tasks and projects: find real writing projects online, from simple things like registering for websites, to taking part in surveys, and making contributions to collections of stories or opinions; get students to design and start up their own website on a topic of interest. (Scrivener, 2005:135).

Conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of this memoir was to study foreign language learning as a foreign language, particularly to introduce to teenage learners, during the teaching-learning process, didactic sequences based on Internet sources using multimedia resources. Our action has been determined by the

necessity of alignment to principles of the new methodology, active methods proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), as well as to line up to the new class practices, centered on the task concept. Finally, we have reached the following conclusion: nowadays, methodologists and language teachers disapprove of existing a unique and universal methodology. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, of European Council, is a central tool of contemporary didactics. Its aim is to mix well the teaching-learning and assessment process of foreign languages in different European countries. Therefore, we must create adequate conditions for our students, so that they assimilate the content which they should use into a social or interactional practice, under the teacher's guidance. Eventually, we may assume that learning a foreign language is like knowing how the culture of this language works. And for this, multimedia represent the best resources to make the students aware of the cultural environment and thus, to be able to integrate themselves and use a multicultural repertoire.

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