

Exploring the Potential of ICT Tools in Replacing Vernacular Education for ELT Out-of-Classroom Students

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Abstract: *This study looks at the possibility for information and communication technology (ICT) tools to take the role of native language instruction for English language teaching (ELT) outside of the classroom. The use of ICT tools in education is becoming more and more common as digital technologies develop. The question of whether these resources can completely replace conventional vernacular teaching strategies in the context of ELT for students learning outside of the classroom still needs to be answered. To offer a thorough understanding of the subject, this essay examines the benefits and drawbacks of ICT tools, the importance of human connection in language learning, and the cultural setting of language acquisition.*

Keywords: ICT tools, ELT, vernacular education, out-of-classroom, human interaction, cultural context, blended learning

I. INTRODUCTION

The education environment has undergone a considerable transformation as a result of the fast development of ICT technologies, providing new potential for interactive and individualized learning. These tools' accessibility and ease can be useful for ELT, particularly for students who study outside of the classroom. In order to understand what has to be taken into account during this shift, this study will examine whether ICT technologies can successfully replace vernacular education in ELT.

II. BENEFITS OF ICT TOOLS

ICT technologies can provide individualized information and activities that can adjust to different learning styles and tempos. It may be quite beneficial to customize ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools for English language learning since it enables students to cater their learning experience to their unique requirements and preferences. Following are some tips for customizing ICT products for English language users.

The fast advancement of ICT technologies has had a profound impact on education:

- **Adaptive learning platform:** Deploy flexible educational devices and software, that alter the level of intensity of courses and practices in response to the learner's performance. This guarantees that students are consistently given challenges at a suitable level.
- **Customizable Content:** Look for technology-based options that present a wide range of information and let learners choose what meets their interests and objectives. This can include books, movies, podcasts, and other content.
- **Individualized Learning Pathways:** Many language learning apps provide initial assessments to determine a learner's proficiency level. Make customised learning pathways using this data, including activities and lessons that are relevant to the learner.
- **Progress Tracking:** Encourage students to use the ICT products' tracking functions to keep track of their advancement. With the use of this, they may create objectives and monitor their progress over time.
- **Vocabulary and Grammar Practice:** Customize vocabulary and grammar activities to the needs of the individual student. Focus on such topics to strengthen their skills if a student has trouble with them.

- **Language immersion:** Use ICT products that provide immersive experiences, such virtual reality or language acquisition games. These might enhance learning by adapting and participating in it.
- **Feedback and Corrective Action:** Ensure that ICT tools offer prompt feedback and corrective action for exercises and speech. This can help students in realizing their shortcomings and extracting lessons from them.
- **Time Management and Scheduling:** A lot of language-learning programs let users create their own study timetables. Encourage students to create a schedule that works with their commitments and way of life.
- **Social Interaction:** Some ICT applications provide communication or language exchange capabilities that let users practice their language skills with native speakers or other users. Encourage students to practice using these tools in authentic settings.
- **Encourage students to produce their own English-language material,** such as articles, journals, or audio recordings of spoken tales. These creations may be improved and corrected using ICT technologies.
- **Gamification:** Use gamified language learning applications that offer points, badges, or other incentives in exchange for making progress. As a result, learning might become more engaging and inspiring.
- **Feedback and Assessment:** Consistently evaluate the learner's performance and offer helpful criticism. Depending on strengths and weaknesses, modify the learning strategy as necessary.

Keep in mind that customization is essential for successful language acquisition. ICT tools should be modified to the learner's particular interests, objectives, and degree of skill while also encouraging them to actively participate in the design of their learning path.

III. LIMITATION OF ICT TOOLS

The use of ICT tools for learning English as a second language (ESL) can be very advantageous, but they also have certain drawbacks. Here are some ICT technologies for ESL learning's drawbacks:

- **Infrastructure and Access:** Not every student will have access to the technology and internet connectivity required for efficient online learning. A digital gap may result, depriving certain pupils of resources.
- **ICT technologies are susceptible to technical hiccups and challenges,** such as sluggish internet connections, program failures, or compatibility issues, which can impair learning.
- **Limited Human Interaction:** ESL students can learn languages more quickly by interacting with native speakers and other students. The personalized touch and in-person engagement that conventional educational environments offer are sometimes lacking in ICT technologies.
- **Lack of Immersion:** ICT technologies could not completely immerse learners in linguistics and culture. For instance, while apps and websites for language learning might teach vocabulary and grammar, they might not expose students to the subtleties of colloquial language or cultural context.
- **Limited Speaking and Pronunciation Practice:** Although there are voice recognition programs and language-exchange websites, they might not offer as much speaking and pronunciation practice as face-to-face interactions with teachers or native speakers.
- **Difficulty in Assessing Soft Skills:** Soft skills, such as communication, cultural sensitivity, and empathy, are crucial for successful language acquisition and application in everyday life but may be difficult to test using ICT methods.
- **Over-reliance on technology:** ESL students who rely excessively on ICT tools may find it difficult to communicate offline and may get less used to environments without access to technology.
- **Inadequate Personalized Feedback:** Although some ICT systems provide automatic feedback, it may not be as precise and individualized as input from a person instructor who can address the unique strengths and shortcomings of each learner.
- **Content Quality:** The accuracy and timeliness of internet materials can vary greatly in quality. Learners could come upon inaccurate or out-of-date information.
- **Motivation and Engagement:** Not all learners possess the self-discipline and motivation needed to utilize ICT tools for learning. When studying remotely, they could find it difficult to stay motivated and engaged.

- Privacy and Security Issues: The possibility of data collection on students by online language learning platforms raises privacy and data security issues.
- Cost: Although many ICT tools are available for free or at a reasonable price, some premium materials and language learning platforms may have a hefty price tag, restricting access for some learners.

By addressing both the benefits and drawbacks of technology in language education, a blended approach to ESL learning that integrates ICT resources with in-person instruction and practical experience can be more successful in overcoming these constraints.

IV. ROLE OF HUMAN INTERACTION

- Personalization: Human teachers can tailor instruction to meet individual students' needs, learning styles, and proficiency levels. They can use ICT tools to gather data on student progress and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Motivation: Human interaction fosters motivation and engagement. A skilled teacher can provide encouragement, feedback, and support, which can be more motivating than solely relying on automated responses from ICT tools.
- Authentic Communication: ICT tools can simulate real-world language use, but they cannot replicate the authenticity of human-to-human communication. Interacting with a teacher or fellow students allows learners to practice language in authentic situations and contexts.
- Pronunciation and Speaking Practice: Speaking and pronunciation are areas where human interaction is particularly valuable. Teachers can provide real-time feedback on pronunciation and intonation, helping learners improve their oral communication skills.
- Cultural Awareness: Human teachers can offer insights into the cultural nuances of language use, helping learners understand the social and cultural context of the language they are learning. This is something that ICT tools may not cover comprehensively.
- Question Clarification: Learners often have questions and need clarifications. Human teachers can answer questions, explain complex concepts, and provide additional examples to ensure understanding.
- Problem Solving: When learners encounter difficulties or challenges while using ICT tools, a human teacher can provide guidance and help troubleshoot technical issues, allowing students to focus on language learning rather than technology.
- Conversation Practice: Conversational fluency and pragmatics are best learned through interaction with native speakers or proficient speakers. Human teachers can engage in meaningful conversations with learners, helping them build conversational skills and cultural competence.
- Feedback: While ICT tools can provide automated feedback, it may lack the nuance and specificity that a human teacher can offer. Teachers can provide detailed feedback on written assignments, pointing out specific errors and suggesting improvements.
- Building Confidence: Human teachers can provide emotional support and encouragement, which is crucial for building learners' confidence in using the language. This can be especially important for learners who may feel self-conscious or anxious about speaking English.
- Facilitation of Group Activities: In a classroom setting, human teachers can organize group activities, discussions, debates, and collaborative projects that promote peer-to-peer interaction and language use.
- Assessment of Soft Skills: ICT tools may not effectively assess soft skills such as communication, empathy, and teamwork, which are essential in real-world language use. Teachers can evaluate and guide students in developing these skills.

Incorporating human interaction alongside ICT tools in ELT creates a balanced and effective learning environment. This blended approach harnesses the benefits of technology while ensuring that learners receive personalized support, cultural insights, and opportunities for authentic communication, ultimately leading to more well-rounded language proficiency.

V. CULTURAL CONTEXT

- Language and Culture Integration: Language learning is intertwined with cultural understanding, and physical immersion can enhance cultural context comprehension.
- Sociolinguistic Competence: Learning language within real-life situations helps students develop appropriate language use in various social contexts.

VI. A BALANCED APPROACH

- Blending ICT with Traditional Methods: Combining the strengths of ICT tools and human interaction can create a holistic language learning experience.
- Hybrid Learning Models: Integrating virtual classrooms, online discussions, and digital content with in-person interactions can offer the benefits of both worlds.
- Teacher Facilitation: Trained educators can guide students in navigating ICT tools effectively and ensure meaningful language learning experiences.

VII. CONCLUSION

While ICT tools offer remarkable potential for enhancing ELT out-of-classroom experiences, a complete replacement of vernacular education seems unlikely due to the importance of human interaction, cultural context, and the limitations of digital tools. A balanced approach that leverages the strengths of both ICT tools and traditional methods can create a comprehensive and effective language learning environment.

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