
Role of Information Technologies in Developing Writing Skills

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Abstract: *Multimedia technology has developed rapidly in recent years, and its use has become widespread, especially in education. However, although it is commonly used in combination with traditional models in teaching English, its appropriateness for the task is questionable. This study investigates the relationship between technology use and writing skills.*

Keywords— information technologies, written communication, communicative approach, synchronous and asynchronous written communication

1. INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that multilingualism is an integral part of contemporary Europe, and nowadays the need to speak several foreign languages is a must for top-notch specialists working in any field. Professional written communication as a means of intercultural communication plays an extremely important role in the modern world of information technologies. Worldwide computerization, the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, and a rocketing growth of Internet users have caused a significant increase in the role of written communication. With the increasing role of computer and information technologies, written communication is becoming one of the most important means of communication, thus there is an urgent need to acquire and improve writing skills in foreign languages. Foreign language teachers can try to get students writing in a number of common everyday internet-based activities that can include writing e-mails, chatting, writing short messages, letters of complaint, etc.

It is necessary to emphasize that foreign language writing requires knowledge of culture, communication, and speech etiquette of a country the language of which is being studied. This knowledge is necessary for the development of students' communicative competence in a foreign language. In the aspect of European requirements, teaching of intercultural communication is aimed at the communicative orientation of the learning process. The so-called communicative approach still ranks first in popularity among teaching techniques. As its name suggests, communicative approach is aimed at communication practice. Learning, aimed at different types of communication, should be built on the principles of communication.

2. Methodology

Although it should be noted that the result of teaching a foreign language should be not only communicative competence, but also intercultural competence, and the

process of learning a foreign language should become a cross-cultural training. It is necessary to stress that the efficient use of such services of world wide web as E-mail, Usenet, Internet-Relay Chat (IRC), online forums, and webinars can be rather challenging for students, as they need to understand the peculiarity of synchronous and asynchronous written communication. According to J.C. Lapadat "synchronous conferences are characterized by the use of brief, rapid messages that are often superficial, socially oriented, and ambiguous, and that appear in a linear chronological rather than topical sequence. For these reasons, a printed transcript of a synchronous conference may appear fractured and incoherent to a conference non-participant. Nevertheless, participants say that synchronous conferences "feel" like conversation, and that they quickly adjust to tracking and making sense of the simultaneous conversational threads." [2]. As we can see, the participation of students in synchronous conferences to practice written skills is a challenging task that requires excellent foreign language skills. In contrast, asynchronous written communication, as the word implies, can be beneficial for students who are still not very experienced in foreign language and who need some time for thinking, putting thoughts into writing, mulling over grammar rules, etc. As J.C. Lapadat asserts "not being constrained by linearity or real time, asynchronous conferences have quite different effects on participants' course-related thinking and their discursive interaction online.

3. Results

Asynchronous conferences are dependent on written text as the communication medium, but, unlike the written interaction in synchronous conferences which is more rapid and speech-like, the writing in asynchronous conferences conforms more to the conventions of formal written language" [2]. In order to develop effective teaching tasks, it is necessary, first of all, to identify communicative intentions that influence the mechanisms of generation of texts in the corresponding national culture. The acquisition of grammar, thus, becomes

more effective due to the fact that certain forms of words are included in communicative models or patterns.

4. Discussion

The most important factor that determines teachers' choice of writing tasks is the students' interests. All in all, it should be pointed out that information technologies provide an invaluable help for foreign language teachers in teaching writing. Participation in online communication, whether it be online forums, webinars, chats, online conferences, can contribute significantly in developing/improving writing skills in foreign languages. While conducting my research, I looked at not only the students work, but also their motivation and behaviors while completing writing assignments. Technology is incorporated into most classrooms in this day of age. Whether the technology is just a desktop computer or a Smartboard, all of the participants in my research were familiar with technology. During the course of time, I looked at the motivation and behaviors of students across the spectrum. The students ranged from first to twelfth grade. Each student gave the same positive reinforcement that I was looking for to answer my question of whether or not technology enhances writing. The research showed the physical ease of writing, revising, and editing one's work. It also showed the students' interest in initiating their own revisions before the teacher graded their work and it increased engagement and length of the students' writing pieces.

5. Conclusion

The timing has never been better for using technology to enable and improve learning at all levels, in all places, and for people of all backgrounds. From modernization of E-rate to proliferation and adoption of openly licensed educational resources, the key pieces necessary to realize best transformations made possible by technology in education are in place. It is a time of great possibility and processes for the use of technology to support learning.

6. References:

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