

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR IT STUDENTS: ENHANCING LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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Abstract: The article outlines the role of technology in teaching English for IT learners and demonstrates effective digital tools in language learning. The benefits of technology in foreign language teaching are justified.

Key words: approach, application, communication, digital tool, online, resource, technology, virtual.

As technology continues to permeate our daily lives, it is no surprise that traditional teaching methods are starting to evolve. The rise of digital tools and resources has brought significant changes to the way we learn and communicate, particularly in the field of language acquisition. For IT students, obtaining a proficiency in English is essential to their academic and professional success, and technology is playing an increasingly crucial role in enabling them to develop their language skill. The introduction of information technology has significantly altered the traditional approach to teaching English. According to British linguist Graddol, technology is a key factor in globalization, impacting various aspects of society such as education, work, and culture. Currently, English holds a significant position in social, political, cultural, business, educational, media, library, and cross-border communication contexts [1;16].

According to Carter, courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should take into account both the material being taught and the learners themselves. The material should be authentic, while learners should be given some degree of freedom in determining what, when, and how they study. Belcher notes that ESP assumes that learners' problems are unique and must be carefully addressed with tailored instruction. The main focus of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is to improve students' technical vocabulary, reading and translation skills, and

prepare them for exams by using relevant textbooks. To help students overcome their language barriers, Iranian universities offer ESP courses [3; 131-137].

However, the integration of technology in language instruction has brought about numerous benefits for both teachers and students in ESP or EAP courses. One of the most significant advantages is the accessibility of learning materials. With digital tools, teachers can easily create and share online resources, such as interactive grammar quizzes, vocabulary drills, and video lessons, making it easier for students to learn at their own pace, anytime and anywhere. This is especially beneficial for IT students, who may have a busy schedule and may not be able to attend traditional language classes.

Moreover, digital tools can provide a more personalized learning experience. Language-learning apps like Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone can track a student's progress and provide instant feedback on areas that need improvement. For IT students, who may have a higher aptitude for technology, these online platforms can improve their motivation and engagement in the learning process. The use of multimedia resources, like podcasts, videos, and educational games, can also help to create a more immersive learning experience and cater to a variety of learning styles. Also, technology offers opportunities for authentic language practice through real-life simulations and interactive activities. For example, students can participate in online discussions, write blog posts, or create multimedia presentations that reflect their interests and experiences. These activities not only help students develop their language skills but also foster their creativity and critical thinking abilities. Perhaps one of the most beneficial applications of technology in language instruction is the emergence of virtual classrooms. These online environments provide IT students with access to language experts and other students from around the world, creating a global learning community. With the help of communication tools such as video-conferencing software and collaborative online platforms, students can engage in real-time conversations, presentations, and group projects. This not only helps to

improve their language skills but also encourages cultural exchange and networking. Digital tools and resources such as online dictionaries, grammar checkers, and language learning apps provide students with instant feedback and personalized learning experiences. By using these tools, students can improve their language skills at their own pace and convenience, without the limitations of time and place. Another benefit of technology in teaching English for IT students is the promotion of learner autonomy. With access to online resources and self-paced learning modules, students can take charge of their own learning and become more independent learners. This skill is particularly important for IT students who need to keep up with the fast-paced changes in their field.

Despite the many benefits of technology in language teaching, some argue that there may be a downside to over-reliance on digital tools. It's important to note that these resources should be seen as complementary to traditional methods, not as a replacement. Teachers should still provide students with a balance of face-to-face interactions and feedback, as well as language immersion through cultural activities such as visiting English-speaking countries, reading literature, and watching English-language media. With the help of digital tools, language-learning resources have become more accessible, personalized, and dynamic, providing students with a more engaging and immersive learning experience. To maximize the benefits of technology, it is essential that language teachers and faculties carefully integrate digital tools into their teaching methods, remain up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices, and ensure that traditional language instruction methods are still incorporated. With the continued integration of technology in the classroom, IT students will be better equipped to succeed in today's increasingly interconnected and globalized world.

Finally, technology facilitates collaboration and communication skills necessary for success in the digital age. Through online group projects, peer feedback, and video conferencing, students can learn how to work effectively with others from different backgrounds and cultures. These skills are essential for

IT professionals who often work in global teams and need to communicate complex ideas to non-technical stakeholders.

In conclusion, the integration of technology in teaching English for IT students plays a crucial role in enhancing language learning through digital tools and resources, providing opportunities for authentic language practice, promoting learner autonomy, and fostering collaboration and communication skills necessary for success in the digital age. As such, educators should embrace technology as a powerful tool to support language learning and prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

References

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