



# Technology Enhanced Language Teaching in Preparatory Classes

Deniz Yalçınkaya

Selçuk Üniversitesi Yab. Diller Yük. Ok., Kampüs Konya, Turkey

Master of ELT (Eng. Lang. Teaching), Anadolu University, 1991

Master of Archaeology, Social Sciences Inst, Selçuk University,

Doctorate student, Ankara University Educational Sciences, Lifelong Learning, Adult Education

## 1. Introduction

ICT is considered to have the power to improve teaching and learning (Lundall et al., 2000; Hardman, 2005; Louw et al., 2008). Actually, not only in Turkey but anywhere all round the world ICT using has not gathered enough attention to teacher education that is engaged with teaching foreign languages. There have been some applications about e-learning but not widened and received significant attention. Distance learning is under construction in Turkey, and a few universities have been dealing with the blended learning. In these universities that are open universities they are giving lessons as online (e-learning) as a part of blended learning besides class education and class is a part of their teaching programme. However, we need more considerable attempts to the broadening of ICT using in classes, particularly in Language classes.

In fact, language education is one of the most appropriate subjects for ICT using as the benefits of e-learning out the class hours, and self-motivation is a key factor in language learning.

## 2. Method

As a foreign language educator for a long time I have been examining some key features of digital tools (i-tools) in implementation process in preparatory classes. I will criticise the positive sides and negative sides of i-tool applications in my classes. I'm certain about that distance education and web-based learning that is called e-learning have been forcing to change the natural way of traditional learning and teaching phenomenon and also materials and methods and the role of the teachers and learners and surely the curriculum for foreign language learning.

Firstly, I must define what classroom technology is. *'In its simplest form, classroom technology is the use of computer and video applications in the conventional college classroom. The examples range from mobile computer carts to full-blown computer laboratories. An instructor's podium may be equipped with a net-worked computer, an overhead camera, and projection capabilities while the rest of the classroom maintains a traditional design with desks or tables for students. In this variation of the traditional classroom, faculty use multimedia-enhanced lecturers to enrich the curriculum. (Wendy L. Shapiro, Katherine Roskos, & G. Phillip Cartwright, Technology Enhanced Learning Environment, 1995).*

## 3. Findings

In Prep classes of universities, i-tools of the course books can support classroom based teaching to be more interactive and successful, and this cause the students to be engaged in the learning process actively, also e-learning help is possible beyond class and this is also checked by the teachers and students' self-study in their computers can be monitored and followed by the teachers and they can be marked. To evaluate the results of using digital materials and e-learning and i-tools we must see the advantage and disadvantage of technology enhanced classroom teaching.

### 3.1. The advantage and disadvantage of using technology in classroom

#### 3.1.1. Using technology in classroom

#### 3.1.2 The benefits of digital materials:

- Is extremely motivational, since the learners enjoy using the digital everything, computer, the web, etc.
- Support the self-motivation and the learner's self-confidence is improved.
- Support to improve some basic linguistics skills such as listening, speaking.
- Supports to encourage to active participation with the technology and content material and called as technology assisted collaborative learning.



- Supports to high interaction that is necessary in class during the lesson. It is a student- centered teaching; the learner is the doer, not the listener or follower. It is more student-centered learning so learners can engage in learning process more actively
- Supports to communicative language teaching to gain communicative competences which is the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning in language learning.
- Supports better recalling as visual tools are more intensely used,
- Enables trainers to illustrate the concepts via multimedia tools.
- For the teacher, can save time,
- For the teacher, support multiple ways of presenting the same information,
- For the teacher, enable creative and engaging ways of delivering lectures

The significant superior side of using technology is it gives a chance to keep learning outside the classroom when they are alone. They can engage with some activities and task-based exercises as their self-study online with their computer. We must set an internet platform and a web-site to use the resources, actively and we must organize some chat rooms for our learners to enable them to practice their foreign language that is a big issue that should be analysed by educators. Consequently it is known that today speaking practices is a missing part of language teaching as it is not very successfully designed and placed in language teaching curriculums. Using ICT can supply this demand, as because of speaking practices online also writing and listening practices are possible when you are online. There are plenty of advantages of this atmosphere such as;

-not coming face to face releases the stress and it affects your language production in a better way and another critical point here is that stress is an effective filter in a language learning, and one of the best way of avoiding stress is using ICT.

- The growing energy of social networking is a fact of today's world. It is because communication is faster and easier and you can be more available when you use technology. So we should use the advantages of networking in language learning and teaching

- the learners can choose their path and focus on the exercises more closely, and it gives freedom of choosing the most suitable time for study, so they can be more independent and much happier with the learning process

-they enjoy the time they spent while they are learning in their computer as digital exercises are much like games, and they are in charge of scoring themselves

- the learners share the feelings and constraints with the other learners when they communicate with them online it makes them more integrated into the work as they are not separated by the others, and this is another considerable pedagogical side of this situation

-it is possible to gather the natives and the learners to the same chat room as a speaking club this has plenty of benefits for the learners if it is planned and organised and arranged by the educators or material development commissions

-It is also possible to organize for developing writing skills. You can form some clubs online, and the natives can edit the writings of the learners.

- meeting of some people for language learning may create enthusiasm among young learners as this is also a chance to make friends

-internet activities can be scored if they complete the exercises and activities

Briefly, I must express that the most significant point of using digital materials is that when we use them comprehension is easier and faster and even complex concepts through powerful visualisation help understanding. The learners are living in a digital world today, and when they are in class, they shouldn't be away from the digital world. In a class they should follow the lesson watching the board where projector is on, and they should be involved in a digital lesson doing the exercises by choosing the options in exercises that are clicked by the teacher.



### 3.2 The disadvantages of using technology

There are some unpremeditated disadvantages of technology-enhanced language teaching materials such as

- Internet access is inevitable to use e-tools and checking students' study and having certain times for the learners' and trainers to study together online and also being able to connect some sites designed for this study. However, internet access is a problematic issue today even in developed countries. We need continuous internet connection but sometimes it is not possible because of technical or financial problems
- An internet platform must be set up for e-learning as a help to keep learning out of class and setting up an internet platform costs a lot and a very few school, institution can afford this.
- A new curriculum must be redesigned, and it will involve hour class tasks and e-learning tasks, this will bring up a need to establish a new commission who are experienced in technology-enhanced language teaching to reshape the content and process of language education.
- A Computer equipped class, laboratory is required to make examinations online under the control of students' trainers and such a class costs a lot as also there will be some staff for technical care of the computers continuously.
- The psychology under the hesitation of using technology-enhanced materials is a very considerable obstacle to be tackled with because the worry of being left behind is a bigger problem than it seems. Many educators are unwilling to use i-tools (board software) in class because the students are proficient, they are ahead of their teachers in the use of the computers. The new generation is more interested in new technology and incorporates with the technology in their daily lives.
- We don't take into consideration the fact that all electronic devices and computers and mobile phones are not very healthy for the users who use them for long hours. ...
- Using i-tools do not support students to improve their writing skills so much as teachers' help is inevitable.

#### 3.2.1 Affective attitudes towards Technology

Although ICT using for language learning is welcomed, there some constraints that affect our attitudes to technology. Behind the unwillingness there are some factors that are not verbalised by the educators conveniently. In my school, there are 56 preparatory classes and in the school English, German, French, Russian and Arabic are taught to more than 2.500 students. The students ages are between 17 to 25.

I did a research study to reveal the attitudes towards technology for language teaching and learning. I prepared a survey, and randomly I delivered it to 25 lecturers and 100 students to answer the questions.

Pedagogy is a key factor not only in language learning but in all fields of learning as well, so I wanted to reveal the facts of technology-enhanced teaching via using i-tools and e-tools in our school. I think some other people agree on this point with me.

*"We would like to emphasize that the key to successful use of technology in language teaching lies not in hardware or software but in 'human ware' – our human capacity as teachers to plan, design, and implement the effective educational activity. Language learning is an act, rather than to try to automate it, we can help bring out the best that human and machines have to offer."* (Walker, White. 2013).

*"The educator is critical to the integration of technology in education. For successful implementation of any ICT intervention in an educational institution, it is critical to understand the educators' motivations and the social meanings they ascribe to technology. The sense of disempowerment limits the effectiveness of technology in education. ICT intervention strategies should go beyond provision of physical Access and take cognizance of educators' discourses and concerns."* (Bladergroen, Chigona, Bytheway, Cox, Dumas, Zyl. 2012).



In my school, we follow a course book prepared by Oxford University and i-tools of the book gives a chance to support better studying on the internet as giving the students a *student joining code* that can be used by them to log in the site. Mostly, the teachers use the i-tools in their class hours.

I did a small scale research to gather the data for the attitudes in using i-tools in class for teachers and students as well. This was done to research the positive and negative aspects of using i-tools in class.

In the survey I aimed to compare traditional language classes to technology enhanced classes and I also wanted to point out the differences between the students' and teachers' attitudes.

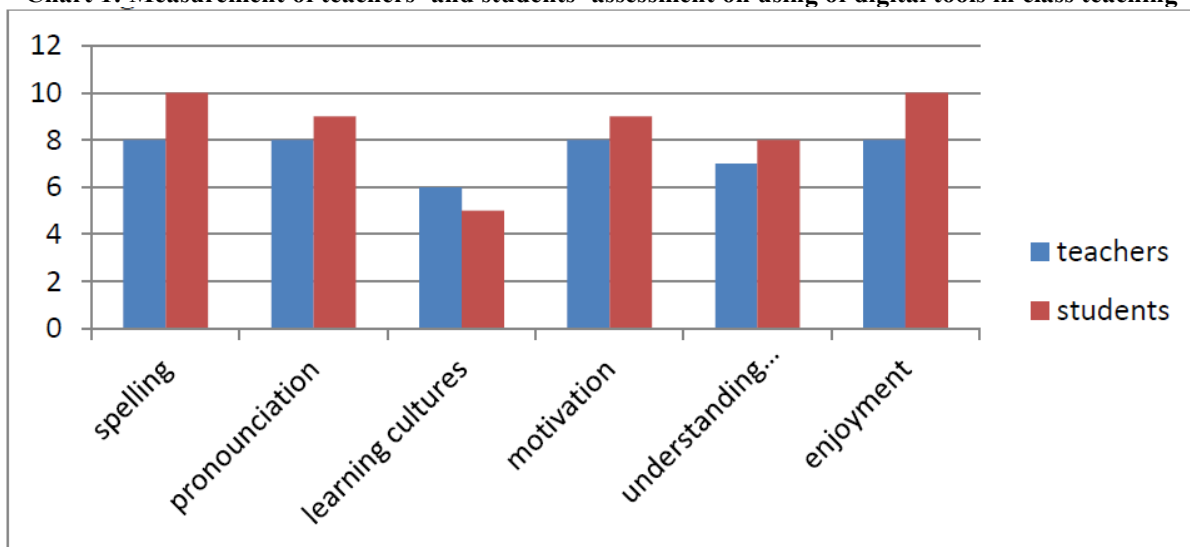
In the survey, 25 teachers and 100 students in prep classes in the School of Foreign Languages of Selcuk University in Turkey were questioned.

**Table 1:** Demographic information detailing teacher numbers, student numbers, years of teaching experience and level of the students

Years of experience	Number of FEMALE teachers	Number of MALE teachers	%	
0-10	6	6	% 48	
11-20	4	2	% 24	
21+	4	3	% 28	
total	14	11	100	
Level of students	elementary	25	25	%50
Pre-int.	15	15	% 30	
intermediate	10	10	% 20	
total	50	50	100	

In my research I questioned 25 teachers and 100 students who are in different level of learning of English. All the students and the teachers are involved in English Prep. Classes. In the study I aimed to reveal how estimated benefits of using digital tools in class.

**Chart 1:** Measurement of teachers' and students' assessment on using of digital tools in class teaching

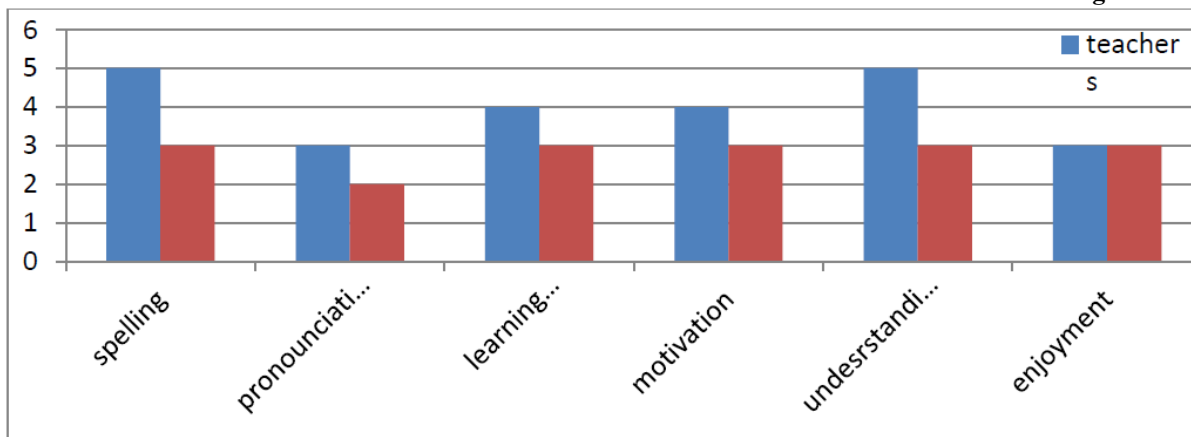


- 8-10 very beneficial
- 6-8 some beneficial
- 4-6 reasonably beneficial
- 2-4 not beneficial
- 0-2 not beneficial at all



As it is seen from the chart students are more satisfied and happier with the i-tools and digital materials used in class. This research shows what benefits are provided by means of i-tools. The benefits provided by i-tools are reported by the students and teachers are grouped according to estimated benefits of digital materials as a language teaching sources.

**Chart 2: Measurement of teachers' and students' assessment in traditional class teaching**



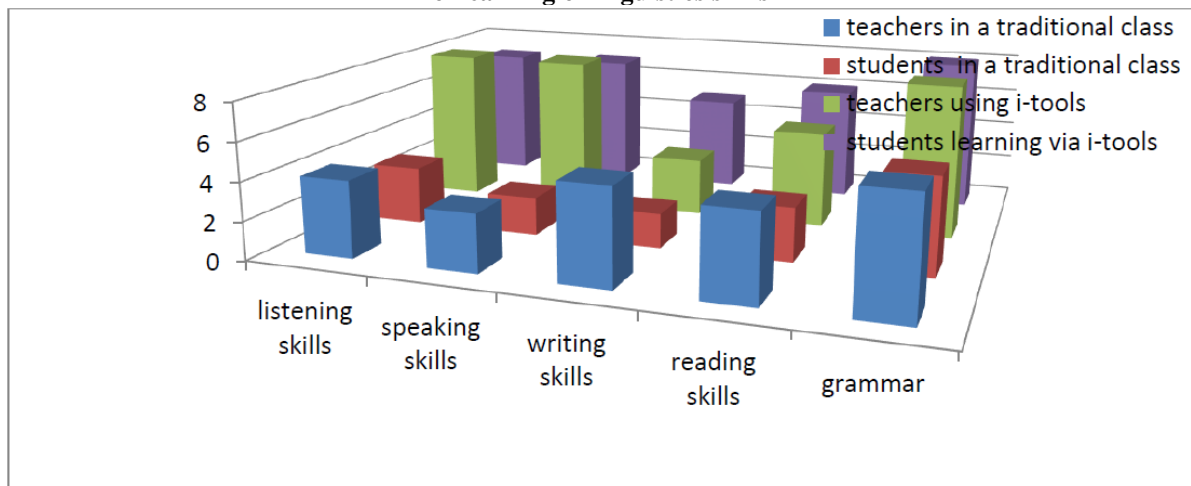
- 8-10 very beneficial
- 6-8 beneficial
- 4-6 not very beneficial
- 2-4 not beneficial
- 0-2 never beneficial

When we compare the results we understand that using i-tools is seen very beneficial and it is seen dramatically more beneficial, and new generations, students reported that they can learn better in technology-enhanced language classes.

Research questions asked to find out the level of motivation and student involvement into the lesson compared to the traditional class teaching. According to the data gathered; the teachers:

- % 80 happy to be as a helper but not the instructor in class and think it is less tiring
- % 20 isn't happy to be as helper but not the instructor in class
- % 90 find student-centered teaching more effective in language learning
- % 10 find this student-centered teaching less effective in language learning

**Chart 3: Comparison of technology enhanced language class to traditional class teaching from the point of learning of linguistics skills**





According to the data gathered: The students mostly find the i-tools more useful and effective when they learn a foreign language and also the teachers find that the skills acquired are more successful, and the data regarding the effect of i-tools are shown in the chart clearly. In this chart we can also compare the two different kinds of class; in one of them, digital tools are used and in another one teacher-centered teaching is carried out with prescribed materials.

This result shows that teachers are more unsatisfied with the impact of digital tools according to the students.

### Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I'm in favour of incorporated with technology for language teaching as an academics experienced in language teaching for many years Visualisation has a great effect on the impact and motivation. Digital tools have plenty of benefits. In a traditional teaching, the teacher is the instructor, the learners must follow her/him, on the contrary, when you set-up the lesson with i-tools , all the students focus on the board that is a digital scene like a computer display and they are face to face the digital scene not with the teacher. Teacher's existence is only a voice.. They see the page colourful and live they watch the videos, do the exercises as a game and the significant point is that they see the correct answers on the board and if they have spelling difficulty they feel confident when they see the correct writing on the board so they do not need to ask a friend or ask the teacher to repeat it.

Briefly, I must express that , Firstly Digital tools are joyful and not boring it encourages the students to be motivated to the lesson , Secondly, they are more beneficial as they support to gaining language skills more effectively than any other traditional prescribed materials, Thirdly, they make the students feel more confident that is an important factor when you are engaged in language learning. Fourthly, digital tools supports to comprehension to be easier and faster ,powerful visualisation help students to understand complex concepts .In short technology is timesaver, support multiple ways of presenting the same information, and enable creative and engaging ways of giving lectures.

Of course there are some opponents of digital tools (i-tools) and they consider that they are useless. A possible explanation could be that although we live in a world of technology today there are some teachers are not interested in renewing their ideas of teaching a language and they do not very eager to be a teacher of a student-centered leasson and their view of teaching is still teacher-centered using existing teaching materials which are prescribed tools and they are very bossy and insist on traditional didactical instructional methods.

I think these kinds of educators are driven back because of fear of having difficulties with the use of technology and it is not verbalised by them.

Of course, limited access to computers and computers equipped classes are other reasons which are obstacles in incorporating with technology enhanced language teaching in prep classes. Actually there are few examples of successful integration of ICT s in education.

New generations are living in a world of technology and we must comply with technology enhanced teaching materials especially in language teaching and especially if you study with the young students aged 17-25 in preparatory classes. We must orient our classes with digital tools and keep learning online with e-learning with e-tools, too So, ICT using in language learning, blended learning, distance education, e- learning and digital tools as teaching materials should be in our concern. We should remember that students today spend most of their time with their mobile phones, so if we can make them upload a language teaching program on their mobiles we will make a great progress.

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