

# Multimedia Tools and English Language Teaching

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**Abstract:** The integration of technology in the language teaching and learning process is a broad theme. This paper details how multimedia technology could be utilized properly in English language teaching through evaluating the multimedia tools before implementing them in English classes. Multimedia tools could be evaluated by closely looking into their usability, usefulness and visual appeal. The study concludes that all multimedia tools could be utilized by the language teacher as long as it corresponds and complements the learning objectives and learner styles and needs.

**IndexTerms – English language teaching, multimedia tools, educational technology, multimedia**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language serves a number of general functions. People use language to establish good relationships with others, to acquire and share information, to persuade, and to communicate thoughts and feelings in various forms. In fact, language could be considered humans' most powerful tool.

Individuals develop themselves and assist others in their development through the use of language. The fulfillment of one's goals and aspirations, as well as their respective roles in their immediate and larger communities, is heavily reliant on their ability to communicate. A person's communicative competence, which is fundamentally based on their thoughts, feelings, and actions, is the result of a dynamic process that is intertwined with their direct experiences.

Not surprisingly, English is one of the most important mediums of communication in the world; thus, learning it is essential. As a result, English language has become one of the most important courses in school. In the Philippine educational system, English is taught as a second language in elementary, secondary and tertiary level.

Second language learning is a complex process. Hence, English teachers always strategize how learning would successfully take place. Assessing students is always the first step in designing instructional materials and lessons. Due to the advancement of technology, students prefer technology-based learning and multimedia is could be the key to effective English learning and acquisition.

According to Graddol (1997), technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture". The new era has presented modern language teachers with new challenges and responsibilities. With the remarkable development of newer technologies such as multimedia technology, the tradition of English teaching has been drastically altered. Because it has the ability to attract language learners, technology provides a plethora of options for making teaching more interesting and productive [1].

## II. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Theories from education, linguistics, and psychology have shaped the evolution of foreign language instruction., including that of English language teaching. The fundamental difference between traditional approaches to communicative language teaching is the shift from grammatical competence to communicative competence [2].

The most innovative endeavor that English teachers have undertaken thus far is the incorporation of media technology into ELT classrooms in order to improve learners' motivation, integrated language skills, and self-learning environment [3].

Breakthroughs in information and communication technology (ICT) have opened up new avenues for reorganizing language learning/teaching environments. ICT has now opened new doors and presented new challenges to both language learners and teachers [4].

Effective teaching of a second language such as English is a difficult process. As a result, English teachers always plan how learning will take place successfully. The first step in developing instructional materials and lessons is always to assess students. Since students are digital natives, they prefer technology-based learning. Thus, multimedia tools could be the key to effective English learning and acquisition.

## III. THE AMALGAMATION OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

As the use of English has grown in popularity, so has the demand for qualified teachers to teach the language to students. Although some teachers use "cutting-edge" technology, the vast majority of teachers continue to teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are harmful to students. In fact, they have proven to be useful to this day. There are, however, many more opportunities for students to gain confidence, practice, and stretch themselves, particularly for ESL students who are learning the language for more than just fun. In order to keep up with ELT and gain confidence, they must venture into the world of multimedia technology [5].

With the use of various media elements that support information processing, multimedia or digital learning resources help learners get along well with mental representations. Digital learning resources present information, which is made up of content and sometimes learning activities, through the use of a combination of text, image, video, and audio. According to research on the use of multimedia for learning, learners who combine pictures and words achieve better results than those who only use words [6].

Educational institutions around the world, including elementary and secondary schools, and higher educational institutions have already begun to implement technology in education. Rather than considering technology as a deterrent to learning, educational institutions should embrace and capitalize on technology in harnessing the development of learners.

Samuels (2013) maintains that much more recent developments in social media and information technology are taking foreign-language education in new directions. This could be considered true since globalization and information technology have ushered in the twenty-first century [7].

Technology advancement has had a significant impact on the growth of English as a language and, for some, as a lingua franca. As a result of these changes, people were able to adapt and change their communication style. The rapid expansion of the Internet, which has made a variety of platforms for effective communication available, has been linked to the rapid growth of English as a communication tool. Computers and other forms of technology, such as multimedia, have become widely available to the general public in this sense.

Traditional English language teaching and learning have been modernized through the incorporation of technology, such as multimedia tools, into the teaching approach and method. More than its drawbacks, multimedia tools have positively transformed language learning, and many teachers have followed suit.

#### IV. MULTIMEDIA TOOLS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

As the use of English has grown in popularity, so has the demand for qualified teachers to teach the language to students. Although some teachers use "cutting-edge" technology, the vast majority of teachers continue to teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are harmful to students. In fact, they have proven to be useful to this day. There are, however, many more opportunities for students to gain confidence, practice, and stretch themselves, particularly for ESL students who are learning the language for more than just fun. In order to keep up with ELT and gain confidence, they must venture into the world of multimedia technology [5].

##### 4.1 Storybird

Storybird is a social storytelling website that assists children in creating and publishing storybooks. It has simple tools that allow teachers and students to create books in minutes. The tool's social features foster an art-infused storytelling community. Students will learn by experimenting and exercising their creative storytelling muscles [8].

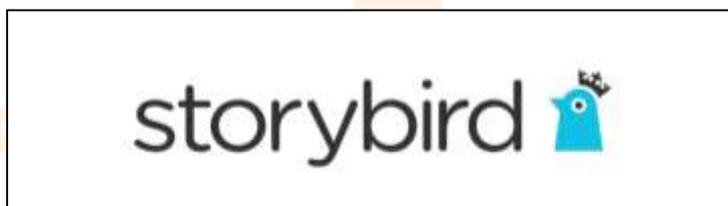


Fig. 1 Logo of Storybird [8]

##### 4.2 Powtoon

Powtoon is the visual communication platform that gives you the freedom to create professional and fully customized videos your audience will love [9]. Powtoon allows teachers to make cool animated explainers and presentations.



Fig. 2 Logo of Powtoon [9]

#### 4.3 Memrise

Memrise is a language learning app that is the opposite of textbook learning: it is enjoyable and effective. It is a British language platform that uses spaced repetition of flashcards to increase the rate of learning. It makes learning languages and vocabulary so full of joy and life. Memrise allows teachers to create their own courses of rich, multimedia flashcards [10].



Fig. 3 Logo of Memrise [10]

#### 4.4 Flippity

Flippity quickly transforms any Google spreadsheet into flash cards, a badge maker, a spelling quiz, a memory game, a word search, and more. Flippity can be used by teachers for a variety of purposes, including presenting to the class, assessing individual students, and having students create their own creations [11].



Fig. 4 Logo of Flippity [11]

#### 4.5 Padlet

Padlet is a free online tool that functions primarily as an online bulletin board. Students and teachers can use Padlet to post notes on a shared page. Teachers' and students' notes may include links, videos, images, and document files. Teachers can easily monitor what their students post on Padlet [12].



Fig. 5 Logo of Padlet [12]

#### 4.6 Mentimeter

Mentimeter is an interactive presentation tool that helps to engage students and enables every voice in a classroom or lecture hall to be heard. Teachers can use it to gauge student comprehension, test knowledge retention or as a fun way to break up learning. It could also be used in gamifying classes. With Mentimeter, the teacher can make their audience feel involved by enabling them to contribute to presentations with their smartphones and show the results live [13].



Fig. 6 Mentimeter Logo [13]

#### 4.7 Word It Out

Word It Out is a word cloud generator that gives teachers complete control over their word clouds by allowing them to create them from sentences, entire documents, or tables, decide how to filter that text, which words to display or remove, and easily adjust their importance. Word It Out is a novel approach to teaching English with technology that employs word clouds to teach vocabulary. It allows teachers and students to convert text into word clouds, save and share them, so that everyone can find and enjoy them [14].



Fig. 7 Word It Out Logo [14]

#### 4.8 DuoLingo

Duolingo is a language-learning website and mobile app based in the United States. Users learn using "trees" customized to their target language, with specific "skills" for practicing vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation through spaced repetition. It can aid in the development of a foundational level of knowledge for a variety of languages, but it is limited in what it teaches and how much it challenges a learner. Users may want to improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, depending on their goals and prior experience. It is free and can be used to supplement language classes [15].



Fig. 8 DuoLingo Logo [15]

#### 4.9 Word Salad

WordSalad is an app that generates "word clouds" from text input. It allows users to customize the word clouds by changing the colors, fonts, and word orientation. The app detects the language of the text, performs some magic, and draws a lovely picture. Once students have completed their word cloud, they can save it to their device or share it with their classmates [16].



Fig. 9 Word Salad Logo [16]

#### 4.10 Quill

Quill Connect assists students in progressing from fragmented and run-on sentences to complex and well-structured sentences. Students combine multiple ideas into a single sentence using the evidence-based strategy of sentence combining. They are then given immediate feedback to help them improve the clarity and precision of their sentences [17].



Fig. 10 Quill Logo [17]

### V. EVALUATING MULTIMEDIA TOOLS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Technology is regarded as a promising tool with the potential to transform teaching and learning. It is a useful tool for strengthening relationships between teachers and students; it can promote new approaches to collaboration and provide teachers with the opportunity to adopt and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of their students.

Certainly, technology, specifically multimedia materials have numerous advantages in the teaching-learning process. However, teachers must be wary of picking the appropriate materials. The following could be considered by teachers in evaluating multimedia tools for English language teaching:

#### 5.1 Usability

The extent to which a product can be used by specific users to achieve specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specific context of use is referred to as usability [18].

In the context of instructional materials, usability deals with how efficient and effective the material is based on the target or goal set by the teacher. If the teacher's goal, for instance is to create a graphical representation of a concept, is the multimedia tool able to help achieve this?

Natural use, orientation, navigation cues, instructions and appropriate language level could be the factors to be considered when evaluating a multimedia tool for English language teaching [19].

#### 5.2 Usefulness

Usefulness is defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as the quality of having utility and especially practical worth or applicability [20].

The usefulness of instructional materials is related to pedagogical effectiveness and cognitive efficiency. This means that in order for a multimedia tool to be considered useful, users must be able to learn from their interactions with the multimedia content. In order to be useful, multimedia content must first be usable [21].

#### 5.3 Visual Appeal

Learners of all levels generally depend on visual aids; hence, the visual appeal of a multimedia tool should be considered.

In order to evaluate the visual appeal of a multimedia tool, the following question may be asked: (1) Does the design appear minimalist? (2) Are graphics or colors employed aesthetically? (3) Are distractions minimized? [22]

## VI. CONCLUSION

Language teachers must be able to devise strategies that will assist their students in learning and acquiring a language in order to be successful. The advancement of technology may have a variety of effects on language teaching. It is important to note that technology, such as multimedia tools, can have a positive impact on the language teaching-learning process when used properly. The teacher must thoroughly evaluate multimedia tools before they can be used effectively. The evaluation of multimedia tools could be done by examining their usability, usefulness, and visual appeal. It is recommended that language teachers be attentive and cautious when using multimedia tools in language classes because they can be a detriment to the teaching-learning process if not used properly. Overall, no single multimedia tool can be considered the best multimedia tool because the effectiveness of any multimedia tool is dependent on the learning target set by teachers, learning styles, and learner needs, among other factors.

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