

DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH DIGITAL AND MULTIMODAL APPROACHES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: The development of digital technologies has changed the ways in which people communicate and learn foreign languages. Modern learners receive information not only through traditional texts but also through videos, audio materials, images, animations, online platforms, and interactive content. These changes create new opportunities for English language teaching. This thesis examines the role of digital and multimodal approaches in developing learners' communicative competence. Particular attention is given to video materials, podcasts, digital storytelling, online discussions, interactive tasks, and multimedia resources. Such approaches can provide learners with meaningful language input and create communication situations that are closer to real life. They can also support speaking, listening, vocabulary, reading, and learner motivation. The thesis argues that digital and multimodal approaches can make English language learning more active and meaningful when they are used with clear learning objectives and appropriate teacher support.

Keywords: communicative competence, English language teaching, digital education, multimodal learning, multimedia, speaking, listening, digital storytelling, language learning.

Introduction

The main purpose of foreign language education is not only to teach grammar and vocabulary but also to help learners communicate effectively. Students need to understand spoken English, express their ideas, interact with other people, and use language appropriately in different situations.

At the same time, communication in modern society is becoming increasingly digital. People communicate through social networks, video calls, online meetings, podcasts, websites, messages, and multimedia content. As a result, English language teaching should also respond to these changes.

One of the useful approaches in this context is multimodal learning. A multimodal resource combines different forms of communication, including written language, images, sound, video, gestures, and visual information. When these forms are used together, learners can receive richer language input and understand language in context.

Digital Technologies in English Language Teaching

Digital technologies provide teachers with many opportunities to create new learning activities. Online platforms can be used for homework, quizzes, discussions, presentations, and independent study. Videos and podcasts can provide learners with examples of real spoken English. For example, a teacher can use a short video about travelling and ask students to identify important vocabulary, discuss the main ideas, and create their own dialogue. In this way, one digital resource can be used to develop several language skills.

Digital technologies can also provide students with greater access to authentic English. Learners can listen to interviews, watch educational videos, read online articles, and communicate with other English users.

Multimodal Learning and Language Input

Multimodal learning is particularly useful because language is not communicated through words alone. In real communication, speakers use pronunciation, intonation, facial expressions, gestures, images, and body language. A video, for example, allows students to hear pronunciation and intonation while also observing the speaker's gestures and facial expressions. This can help learners understand the meaning and use of language more clearly.

Multimodal materials can therefore provide a richer learning environment than isolated written exercises. They can also help students connect new vocabulary and grammar with real situations.

Developing Speaking Competence

Digital and multimodal activities can create additional opportunities for speaking practice. Students can record short videos, prepare digital presentations, participate in online discussions, and complete role-play activities. Digital storytelling is another useful activity. Students can create a short story using pictures, text, voice recordings, and video. While preparing the story, they need to choose vocabulary, organize ideas, and communicate a clear message. Role-play activities can also be supported by digital materials. For example, students can watch a short hotel check-in video and then act out a similar situation in pairs. Such activities can help learners move from controlled language practice to more natural communication.

Developing Listening Skills

Digital resources are especially useful for developing listening skills. Learners can listen to podcasts, interviews, news reports, educational videos, and conversations. Teachers can choose materials according to students' proficiency levels. Lower-level learners can work with short recordings and clear speech, while advanced learners can use authentic interviews, lectures, and news programmes. Another advantage is that digital materials can be replayed several times. Students can first

listen for the general meaning and then listen again to identify specific information, vocabulary, pronunciation, and useful expressions.

Vocabulary Development through Multimodal Materials

Vocabulary is more useful when learners meet new words in meaningful contexts. Images, video, sound, and written examples can help students understand and remember new vocabulary. For example, students studying English for Tourism can watch a short video about a hotel and identify words such as *reservation*, *reception*, *accommodation*, *facilities*, and *customer service*. They can then use these words in a role-play activity. In this way, vocabulary learning becomes connected with communication and professional situations.

Digital Storytelling and Communicative Competence

Digital storytelling is a useful multimodal activity because it combines several language skills. Students may need to read information, select vocabulary, write a script, record their voices, and present the final product. This process encourages learners to use English for a real purpose. It also develops creativity, cooperation, presentation skills, and digital competence. For university students, digital storytelling can be connected with academic and professional topics. For example, students can create a story about their future profession, a cultural tradition, a tourist destination, or an important personal experience.

The Role of the Teacher

The use of digital technologies does not reduce the importance of the teacher. On the contrary, teachers need to make careful decisions about which digital resources are appropriate for their learners. Teachers should consider students' language level, learning goals, interests, age, and access to technology. They should also provide clear instructions and feedback. The teacher's role is therefore changing from simply providing information to designing learning activities, guiding learners, supporting communication, and helping students use digital resources effectively.

Challenges of Digital and Multimodal Learning

Digital and multimodal education also has several challenges. One problem is unequal access to technology. Some students may have limited access to computers, smartphones, or stable internet connections. Another problem is distraction. Students may use digital devices for entertainment rather than learning. There is also a risk of information overload because learners can access a very large amount of online content. Teachers should therefore select materials carefully and provide clear tasks. Technology should support learning objectives rather than become an objective itself.

Conclusion

Digital and multimodal approaches provide important opportunities for developing communicative competence in English. Videos, podcasts, digital stories,

online discussions, interactive platforms, and multimedia activities can give learners meaningful language input and create realistic communication situations.

These approaches can support speaking, listening, vocabulary, reading, and other language skills. They can also increase learner participation and encourage independent learning.

However, successful digital language learning depends on more than technology. Teachers need to select appropriate materials, establish clear objectives, organize meaningful activities, and provide regular feedback.

The effective integration of digital and multimodal approaches can therefore contribute to a more active, flexible, and communication-oriented English language learning environment.

Further research may examine the use of specific digital tools and multimodal activities for developing communicative competence among university students at different English proficiency levels.

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