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EUROPEAN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY WITH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

For the past few decades the use of technology has become essential to every kind of activity in everyday life for everyone all over the world. Consequently, today the use of technology is an indispensable part of the educational practices both inside and outside of the classroom settings. Specifically, it is an effective asset in the foreign language teaching process providing learners with various opportunities to improve their language skills. This study focuses on strengthening the European policy of teaching a foreign language through the use of technology both inside and outside the classroom context for teachers in service, and training them to clarify and receive current trends and developments in the use of technology for their professional purposes. The method of the study was qualitative via the document analysis. The result of the study indicated that the European policy of teaching a foreign language promotes the use of technology to achieve the desired goals.

Keywords: European policy, training language teachers, language teaching, European documents

1. Introduction

In the majority of countries, educational policy today is under transformation. The new requirements of the labor market, the need for lifelong learning, technological advancement in the provision of education, and last but not least international comparative surveys, such as the Bologna process to establish a common European higher education area, create challenges in developing national policies in this field. Education. Whereas the Bologna Process, in the context of the European Union (EU), aims at harmonization of tertiary educational systems and degrees within the European region (Martins, et al., 2010).

Depending on drastic changes in the area of technology, Information, and communication technology have become inseparable parts of people's lives. Education is one of the most important fields affected by technological developments. Accordingly, in most parts of the world, there is a trend to scrutinize different modus to incorporate technology and education so that the returns of training activities increase. In this respect, Zhang (2010) mentions that "researchers from around the world have been exploring new learning programs, often supported by new technology, to increase student capabilities of productive and collaborative knowledge work"

The field of education has been heavily influenced by the potential offered by technology, which has found a suitable place in the teaching of foreign languages, which has diversified traditional methodologies. Some practitioners (Williams & Williams, 2000; Egbert, 2000; Cheng, 2003) discussed the potential of technology and suggested that using it could produce a rich learning environment, enhance motivation, encourage creativity and improve learning

outcomes. In addition, with the penetrating globalization and human voyage taking place within Europe as well as beyond, an increase of multiple cultures and languages, as well as the ability to communicate efficiently with people in their respective diverse languages and with the aid of new digital media, is critical. To that end, high quality of foreign language (FL) skills, competence in communication, and compassion in intercultural must be encouraged to the global citizens of this 21st century. It is assumed rottenly that knowledge of English, clearly is a dominant language of international business, information and communication technology, higher education, popular culture, and also diplomacy, is not only enough but transcendent. English is undoubtedly a global language, as it provides access to prospects of all kinds (Graddol, 2006). Both teaching and learning a foreign language has become changed. Nowadays it is proved that technology-enhanced teaching environment is more fruitful than lecture-based classrooms. "Teachers need to seek ways of using technology as a learning tool for their students even if they do not master the technology and cannot act as an expert". Using technology has remarkably changed the foreign language teaching techniques. Technology provides so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvement (Patel, 2013). Gee and Hayes (2011) mention that technology is power-ups for learning languages. Although the technology used for the purpose of education may at times take time to drop down to instructed settings, it is fair enough to say that technology has become deeply part of the instructor's life. The foreign language policy is described as an enabling factor for students to read efficiently read and understand academic texts and also follow the development of technology in the global world and effectively communicate with people from diverse countries (Incecay, 2012). Cetto (2010) puts forward that technology has broadened the spectrum of interaction while empowering the students' learning process by providing better opportunities for language usage. Graddol (1997) also states that technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture.

This paper aims to give in-depth details on the factors stimulating institutional priorities to use technology, how teachers and students adopt the foreign language as a shift to economic advancement, the support of government policies towards the course and how relevant are the findings to the present state of the art of European foreign language policy. Technology has always been an important part of the teaching and learning environment. Technology is also an essential part of the profession of teachers that they can use to facilitate learners' learning. When talking about technology in teaching and learning, the word "integration" is used. With technology being an essential part of our daily life. That is to say, technology becomes an integral part of the learning experience and a significant issue for teachers, from the beginning of preparing learning experiences through the teaching and learning process (Eady & Lockyer, 2013).

1.1. Previous Research

Some studies have been done on the advantages of using technology in teaching foreign languages. Bergoy and Boyle (2012) conducted a study on using technology to improve literacy skills for learners. The results of this study indicated that technological tools have strengthened literacy skills for learners because they are easy to use, and learners can learn faster and more effectively. Another result of this study is that learners learn more effectively when they use technology tools instead of traditional teaching methods because the Internet has provided an enabling learning environment for learners to learn, and has facilitated a new platform for learners who can easily access learning lessons.

Stepp-Greany (2002) used survey data from Spanish language classes that used a range of technological methods and techniques to determine the significance of the role of teachers, the importance of the availability of technology laboratories and individual components, and the impact of the use of technology in the learning process of a foreign language. The results confirmed students' perceptions of the teacher as the primary learning facilitator and emphasized the importance of regularly scheduled language laboratories and the use of a CD. He recommended a follow-up study to measure the effects of related technology on the learning process for acquiring a foreign language.

Baytak, Tarman and Ayas (2011) researched the impact of technology on learning. The results obtained from this study revealed that learners increased their learning by incorporating technology into their classes. Researchers emphasized that technology has made learning learners fun and interactive and has increased their motivation, social interactions, and participation.

Bordbar (2010) investigated the reasons and factors behind language teachers' use of technology in their classrooms. The study also explored the attitudes of teachers towards computers, information and communication technology, and the different ways in which they applied the practical language learning experience by helping the computer to provide their own language education. The results found that almost all teachers took positive attitudes toward using computers in the classroom. The results also emphasized the importance of teachers' comprehensive perceptions of technology, technological expertise, skill, competence, and the cultural environment surrounding the introduction of information technology in education and shaping attitudes toward computer technology.

Shyamlee (2012) analyzed the use of multimedia technology in language teaching. The study found that this technology enhances the motivations and interests of student learning because it involves students in the practical processes of language learning by communicating with each other. She recommended the use of multimedia technology in the classroom, especially since its positive impact on the learning process is in line with the ongoing effectiveness of the teacher's role. The research findings support the uselessness of traditional English teaching methods and confirm that learners are more motivated and interactive when using modern technology to understand English. Statistical data confirm that a high percentage of those who learn English language skills do so via modern media such as smart boards, computers, and screens, compared to traditional teaching methods. Moreover, the study revealed that interaction with teachers and the overall response of students in the classroom have improved markedly when using modern techniques in teaching English. Indeed, it is clear that students are more likely to learn from the electronic curriculum and that English teachers prefer to use modern technology rather than traditional teaching methods. Technology helps learners and teachers study materials due to quick access to them. Advances in technology play a major role in preparing learners to use what they learn in any subject to find their place in the global workforce. Technology facilitates learners' learning and acts as a real learning tool that enables learning.

2. Method

The present study is based the qualitative research method and document analysis. For the document analysis, data collection technique has been used and the data collected has been repeated using on European foreign language teaching policy which is prepared by the European Commission on Education and various previous studies about using technology for

Foreign language teaching in the classroom and the other resources on the importance of using technology in Education.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented and discussed in relation to the proposed aim of this study.

3.1. Definition of Technology and Technology Integration

Different researchers have defined technology integration, according to Pourhosein Gilakjani (2017) it is defined in terms of how teachers use technology to perform familiar activities more effectively and how this usage can reshape these activities. Dockstader (2008) defined the integration of technology as the use of technology to improve the educational environment and supports classroom instruction by providing opportunities for learners to complete assignments on a computer rather than a regular pen and paper.

3.2. The Common European Framework

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for developing language curricula, curriculum guidelines, exams, textbooks, etc. throughout Europe. Its purpose is that language learners must learn it in order to use a language to communicate and the knowledge and skills they have to develop in order to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which the language is assigned. It is also determined by levels of competence that allow the progress of learners to be measured at every stage of learning and over a lifetime.

The common European framework aims to overcome barriers to communication between professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the various educational systems in Europe. It provides the means for educational officials, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examination bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practices, with a view to identifying and coordinating their efforts and ensuring that they meet the real needs of learners who are responsible.

By providing a common basis for an explicit description of goals, content, and methods, the framework will enhance the transparency of courses, curricula and qualifications, thus enhancing international cooperation in the field of modern languages (Council of Europe, 2000).

3.3. Plurilingualism

In recent years, the concept of plurilingualism has increased in importance of the Council of Europe's approach to language learning. There is a difference between plurilingualism and multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the coexistence of different languages in a given society. Therefore, by diversifying the languages offered in a particular school or educational system, plurilingualism can be achieved, or by encouraging students to learn more than one foreign language, or by reducing the dominant position of the English language in international communication. Moreover, the plurilingualism approach emphasizes the fact that the individual's experience in the language expands in its cultural contexts, from the home language to the language of society as a whole and then to the languages of other peoples

The recent developments in the Council of Europe's language program are designed to produce tools for all members of the language teaching profession in the promotion of plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2000).

3.4. The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language (EPOSTL) is a document for students who receive elementary education for teachers. It will encourage and support them to think about the knowledge and educational skills necessary for teaching languages, help them assess their own educational competencies, and will enable them to monitor their progress and record their teaching experiences during teacher education. (Newby et al., 2007).

3.5. The European Portfolio for Language Teacher Education- A Frame of Reference

The profile focuses on "Training teachers of foreign language developments in Europe" and provides a set of 40 items that can be included in a teacher education program to prepare language teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge, as well as other professional competencies, to promote professional development and lead to greater transparency and portability of qualifications.

Since 2000, the European Union has increased its efforts to improve language education and learning. The European Year of Languages in 2001 demonstrated how language learning can be enhanced at the European and national levels. In 2002, the European Council meeting in Barcelona suggested that European citizens learn at least two foreign languages, in addition to their mother tongue, from an early age.

Teaching foreign language teachers is increasingly important because of their primary role in improving foreign language learning and awakening language learners' interest. Language teachers play a major role in achieving the goal of the European Union: that all EU citizens enjoy language proficiency in their mother tongue and two other languages.

The items in this profile describe important elements in foreign language teacher education in Europe. It is divided into four main sections: Structure, Knowledge and Understanding, Strategies and Skills, and Values. There are two items 17 and 18 concentrating on information and communication technology (ICT) training as follows:

1. Training in information and communication technology for pedagogical use in the classroom

Trainee teachers are taught how to use ICT effectively and how to integrate its use in teaching. They learn how to integrate ICT in other fields of teaching and realize how it contributes to many learning outcomes simultaneously. They use ICT as support and a resource, not as an end in itself. When using ICT in the classroom, trainee teachers encourage the independence of the learner, and combine ICT with tasks and projects that highlight how it can be used independently outside the classroom context as part of continuing learning.

In-service education in ICT is especially important in educating teachers about new resources and technology. This should be a regular and ongoing process. It should be focused on ICT for language learning. There should be systematic monitoring of these methods of in-service education.

Trainee teachers realize that ICT is not useful if it is used for their own benefit and that they have its limitations. The training focuses on how and when to use ICT in language classes and to integrate it into lesson plans. The use of ICT benefits from clearly defined learning goals and outcomes. Training ICT includes a continuous reflection on its educational values and not only focuses on technical competence. It takes advantage of the interconnection with communication skills. Its main goals and outcomes are learner independence and greater access to indigenous resources. Mentors and teacher educators play a key role in guiding trainees in the effective use of ICT for language teaching and learning.

2. Training in information and communication technology for personal planning, organization and resource discovery.

Trainee teachers recognize the ICT value in the organization of workload and schedules for their work and retrieval and the development of resources and archiving documentation.

Information and communications technology is best integrated into teacher education as part of an ongoing process. It facilitates communication and exchange of information and ideas. ICT provides trainee teachers with access to a wide range of resources and information, during the primary education of teachers, lecturers and mentors must inform the trainees of the useful locations for different levels of teaching. Trainee teachers can develop their skills in using word processing packages and data processing. They know how to use online agendas and email, search engines, educational sites, interactive site forums, resources, and databases(Kelly & Grenfell, 2002).

3.6. Reasons for Using Technology in English Language Teaching

Murray (2015) classifies the rationale for using technology in English language teaching as follows:

1. Technology allows students to demonstrate independence.
2. Technology differentiates the needs of students.
3. Technology deepens learning by using resources that students are interested in.
4. Students actively want to use technology.
5. Technology gives students an equal voice.
6. Technology enables students to build strong content knowledge wherever they find it.

3.7. Types of technology used in foreign language teaching

There are different types of technology that can be used in ELT. “The selection of appropriate technology in and out class is essential for ensuring effective learning. When used as learning tools, technology provides tremendous opportunities to enhance classroom instruction”(Raihan & Lock, 2012). Ivey (2011) mentioned some of the technology options that language teachers can use for professional and educational purposes. Teachers can be benefited by using below shown technological options.

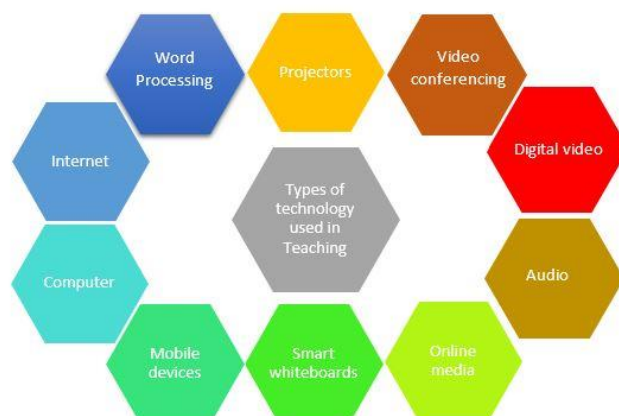


Figure 1. Technological options for teachers

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this paper, the researcher reviewed some important issues related to the use of technology in teaching and learning foreign languages. Especially the files issued by the European Union in the framework of the educational policy to develop teachers pre-service and in-service competencies in teaching foreign languages better and in line with the developments and progress of the age for facilitating the education process and raising the level of learners to absorb and use the foreign language with a high ability. Training and using information and communication of technology in this policy is an effective part because of the necessity of its presence in teaching foreign languages as well as it has become an essential part of our daily life. Therefore, the literature review indicated that technology resources are very important in teachers' methods and techniques where students learn with them and helps them to learn faster. Teachers must be convinced of the benefits and useful of technology in improving learners' learning. This means that teachers need support and training to integrate technology into language teaching approaches. The review revealed that when technology is used appropriately, it could bring many benefits to educators and learners. Learners can use technology resources because they help them to solve their educational problems and find ways to use what they have learned in effective and meaningful ways.

In addition, the literary review indicates that the use of technologies plays a major role in language learning, according to its own speed and helps in self-understanding, and It is not only depending on interacting with the teacher but also creates a great incentive for learners to learn foreign language more effectively. Therefore, the paper clarified that learners should use technology to enhance their language skills because they play a critical role in developing learners' creativity and providing them with interesting and exciting alternatives to language study.

In summary, the results of the literature review showed that technology provides interaction between teachers and learners, provides understandable inputs and outputs, helps learners to develop thinking skills, makes learning and education process more focused on students, encourages learners 'independence, helps them feel more confident, and increases learners' motivations to learn foreign language effectively.

In conclusion, we believe that this process can fully enrich student thinking and practical language skills and promote improved efficacy in overall teaching and learning. Indeed, it is evident that many routine learning issues can be overcome through the effective incorporation of technology and appropriately trained teachers, while funding ramifications can be addressed through ministerial planning and the establishment of an infrastructure that prioritizes the interests of effective learning.

In the following, the researcher presents some recommendations for foreign language teachers and learners to improve their teaching and learning abilities.

1. Technology experts should provide additional assistance to teachers who use it in teaching their foreign language courses.
2. Replace modern technology with old foreign language teaching methods.

3. Provide appropriate training for all teachers to use modern technology in foreign languages teaching.
4. Teachers should ask for guidance from their colleagues who can help them teach better through the use of technology.
5. Students should have encouraged by foreign language teachers to use modern technology as a means to develop their language skills.
6. Provide appropriate training for students in all available technology in order to keep up with the requirements of the electronic curriculum.
7. Establish a foreign language teaching portal school-home connection to enable students to learn in their free time.
8. The technology plan must be closely aligned with the curriculum standards.
9. Professional development must be specifically considered to ensure learners learn and change attitudes of teachers who do not know the advantages that technology provides.
10. Foreign language teachers should motivate their learners to use technology in developing their language skills.
11. Technology should be regarded as a significant part of teaching and learning programs.
12. Teachers should be a pattern for their learners in using computer technology
13. Teachers should find the ways that technology can help them towards learner-centered instruction as opposed to teacher-centered instruction.
14. In order to facilitate technology integration, adequate support and technical assistance should be provided to teachers.
15. Trainee teachers should be provided to learn how to use and teach technology effectively.

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