

## **The Use of Technology in English Language Teaching: Benefits and Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

In the digital age, technology plays a pivotal role in shaping educational practices. This thesis explores the integration of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in secondary education. It examines how tools like digital platforms, online resources, multimedia, and mobile applications are revolutionizing language instruction. While technological integration in ELT offers numerous advantages such as increased engagement, personalized learning, and access to authentic materials, it also presents challenges including digital divide, teacher preparedness, and technical limitations. A case study of a vocational school in Uzbekistan further illustrates practical implementation and outcomes. This thesis aims to provide a balanced analysis and offer pedagogical implications for language educators and policymakers seeking to optimize the use of educational technology in English classrooms.

**Keywords:** educational technology, ELT, digital learning, teaching challenges, secondary education

### **Introduction**

The use of technology in education has transformed the way languages are taught and learned around the world. In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), digital tools have introduced innovative ways to support student-centered, communicative, and interactive approaches. From traditional computer-assisted language learning (CALL) environments to modern mobile applications, technology now allows learners to access English beyond the walls of the classroom and beyond the limits of textbooks. Especially in secondary schools, where students are digital natives, the integration of technology aligns well with their interests and learning habits. However, the implementation of technology is not without its drawbacks. Teachers must be trained not only in language pedagogy but also in digital literacy. Moreover, the effectiveness of technological tools depends on contextual factors such as infrastructure, curriculum, and student access to devices. This thesis seeks to explore both the benefits and challenges of using technology in English language classrooms, drawing upon research findings and real-life examples. The goal is to offer comprehensive insights into how

educators can maximize the potential of technology to enhance English proficiency among secondary school students.

### *Benefits of Using Technology in ELT*

#### 1. Increased Engagement and Motivation

Technology brings variety and excitement to language lessons, motivating students to participate more actively. Through videos, animations, podcasts, and online games, students engage in English learning in a way that feels natural and enjoyable. Platforms such as YouTube and TED Talks expose learners to diverse accents and real-world contexts.

#### 2. Access to Authentic Materials

One of the most significant benefits is the accessibility of authentic language materials. Learners can read blogs, listen to real interviews, watch films, and follow international news — all in English. This helps them understand how language is used in various cultural and social settings, improving both comprehension and fluency.

#### 3. Personalized and Self-Paced Learning

Digital tools support differentiated instruction. For example, apps like Duolingo or Quizlet allow learners to practice vocabulary and grammar at their own pace. Learning management systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom or Moodle let teachers assign tasks based on student levels and track their individual progress.

#### 4. Immediate Feedback and Assessment

Online quizzes and language learning apps offer instant feedback, helping students identify their mistakes in real-time. This is particularly useful for grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice. Teachers also benefit by being able to monitor progress quickly and accurately.

#### 5. Collaborative Learning Opportunities

Technology encourages collaboration through digital forums, discussion boards, and group projects. Students can work together using tools like Padlet or Google Docs, enhancing both language and teamwork skills. Furthermore, virtual exchange programs connect students with peers worldwide to practice real communication.

### *Challenges of Using Technology in ELT*

#### 1. Digital Divide and Inequality

In many regions, including parts of Uzbekistan, students face limited access to high-speed internet or digital devices. This digital divide creates inequality and restricts the consistent use of technology across different schools and demographics.

#### 2. Teacher Training and Confidence

Not all teachers are prepared to use technology effectively. Some may lack training in digital tools, while others may resist change due to unfamiliarity or fear of failure.

Ongoing professional development is necessary to ensure that technology is used meaningfully, not just as a gimmick.

### 3. Technical Issues and Infrastructure

Classroom technology relies heavily on stable electricity, internet access, and functioning equipment. Technical disruptions — such as slow internet, software crashes, or hardware problems — can frustrate both teachers and students, disrupting the learning process.

### 4. Distraction and Misuse

With access to the internet, students may become distracted by social media or unrelated content during lessons. Moreover, improper or excessive screen time may lead to decreased attention span or lack of focus on language learning goals.

### 5. Curriculum Constraints and Overreliance

Technology is not always fully integrated into the national curriculum, which may limit its use to supplementary roles. Overreliance on digital tools without balancing traditional pedagogy can also hinder deep learning and reduce student–teacher interaction.

*Case Study: A Vocational School in Syrdarya, Uzbekistan*

#### Context and Objectives

A vocational school in Syrdarya, where English is taught as a second language to students aged 16–18, launched a project to integrate technology into its ELT curriculum. The goals were to improve speaking fluency, vocabulary retention, and student engagement by incorporating mobile apps, video-based learning, and online quizzes.

#### Methodology

Teachers were trained for two weeks on how to use apps like Kahoot!, YouTube, and Google Classroom. Classrooms were equipped with smartboards and Wi-Fi. Students were given weekly online tasks, listening exercises through podcasts, and collaborative projects via Google Docs.

#### Findings

After three months, students showed improved speaking confidence and active participation. Vocabulary test scores increased by 15%, and attendance improved by 10%. However, challenges included initial resistance from older teachers, occasional technical issues, and students using smartphones for non-educational purposes during class.

#### Conclusion from the Case Study

The case illustrates how thoughtful implementation of technology, combined with teacher support and curriculum alignment, can lead to improved learning outcomes. Nevertheless, success depends on infrastructure, teacher attitude, and digital literacy.

## Conclusion

Technology, when used strategically, holds immense potential to transform English language education. It fosters engagement, encourages autonomy, and enables access to real-world content. However, challenges such as digital inequality, lack of teacher training, and infrastructure limitations must be addressed to harness its full benefits. Educators must adopt a balanced approach that integrates technology with proven pedagogical practices. Policymakers and school leaders should invest in infrastructure, training, and inclusive policies to ensure equitable access for all learners. The future of ELT lies in the thoughtful fusion of technology and human-centered teaching.

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