

New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching Nowadays - Efficient Tools or Trendy Gizmos?

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Abstract

In recent years, educators, including foreign language instructors, have been consistently encouraged to integrate new technologies into the teaching and learning processes. Numerous applications and programs exist that facilitate vocabulary and grammar revision, as well as interactive games. Generally, these technologies are perceived not only as highly important but also as a desirable element in language classes. However, a critical question emerges: are we perhaps overestimating the significance of new technologies in the language mastery process? To what extent do they truly provide results that traditional tools, such as books, blackboards, notes, and board games, cannot achieve in the teaching process? When working with students, particularly young adults or children and teenagers, we engage with the so-called "technological natives" who often blur the line between the real and virtual environments. Given this, new technologies may not serve their activating and engaging functions as effectively as they did when first introduced. It appears that traditional tools, including handwriting, may capture students' attention more efficiently than the potential distractions posed by mobile phones, computers, and tablets. This paper aims to present an experimental study project designed to measure the effectiveness of new technologies in teaching foreign languages, using Russian and Polish as examples, and to compare this with the teaching process using the traditional methods.

Keywords: activating methods, communication, language acquisition, language skills