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METHODS AND TECHNIQUES TO INTEGRATE DIGITAL STORIES IN ELT

МЕТОДЫ И СПОСОБЫ ИНТЕГРИРОВАНИЯ ЦИФРОВЫХ ИСТОРИЙ В ELT

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Abstract. Being able to use modern technologies is one of the required skills in our modern world. Especially being able to use the internet which is one of the most powerful tools in the history of human life can give a lot of benefits. What if we use this tool in foreign languages education? How can we use it? Can we use it in teaching and learning foreign languages? Of course, we can use it.

We can even combine this powerful tool with one of the most effective activities in learning foreign languages called digital storytelling.

Using the combination of these powerful couples can lead to new and better results in foreign languages education. In order to achieve these results, we should know how to use them. And it is easy if you know the techniques and methods of using them.

Аннотация. Способность использовать современные технологии — один из необходимых навыков в современном мире. Особенно возможность использования Интернета, являющегося одним из самых мощных инструментов в истории человечества, может принести много преимуществ.

Что делать, если мы используем этот инструмент для обучения иностранным языкам? Как мы можем его использовать? Можем ли мы использовать его в преподавании и изучении иностранных языков? Конечно, мы можем использовать его.

Мы можем даже объединить этот мощный инструмент с одной из самых эффективных работ по изучению иностранных языков, называемых цифровыми повествованиями.

Использование комбинации этой мощной пары может привести к новым и лучшим результатам в обучении иностранным языкам. Для достижения этих результатов мы должны знать, как их использовать.

Keywords: digital story, integrate, online learning, websites, ELT, effective methods, techniques.

Ключевые слова: цифровая история, интеграция, онлайн-обучение, веб-сайты, ELT, эффективные методы, способы.

Introduction

Despite being studied by many scholars learning foreign languages remains as a challenging task. From the history till our days there were so many methods suggested by the scholars to make learning foreign languages easier and most of them are still being used. But recently a new technology called the computer brought so many changes with itself. It gave the people the chance of sharing their knowledge and make conversations in distance via the tool called the internet. It even changed the form of storytelling which is one of the oldest method and considered as one of the best ways of learning foreign languages. Now it is called digital storytelling. How did these technologies change the foreign language education? What kind of benefits do they have? How are they being used now? In order to answer these questions let's look at their origin and their function in foreign languages education.

Discussion of the point

Techniques of constructing a digital story

Creating a digital story is a complex task. In order to create a good digital story one has to write a good story and have basic skills using technologies and computer software. So the first thing to create a good digital story is making a plan including all the steps to produce an excellent digital story. And that plan can include the following steps:

1. Script development: write the story, often with a group called a story circle to provide feedback and story development ideas.
2. Record the author reading the story (audio recording and editing).
3. Capture and process the images to further illustrate the story (image scanning and editing).
4. Combine audio and images (and any additional video) onto a timeline, add music track (video editing).
5. Add Background Music, Titles, Transitions, and Effects (Optional... if there is time)
6. Present or publish finished version of story.

1. Write a script for your story and get feedback

The first step in the process of creating a digital story is writing a good script on a paper. So how we can write a good story? A good story has a *beginning, middle and end*.

- Make the beginning *captivate* your viewer. Perhaps frame it with a question, dilemma, or controversy. It should compel the viewers to continue watching, and make them want to see how the problem is resolved.
- The middle *describes* the course of events: What happened?
- The end of a story reveals a *conclusion*: How did the situation turn out? The end of your story should also reveal your meaning or point.

The most important feature of a story is its plot. The core of a story is the chronological description of events dealing with some problems and their solution. The digital storytelling differs a lot from a typical storytelling; especially from a storytelling done by professionals. The plot is very important but it should be brief and simple. If the story is too complicated it may cause difficulties to a learner and the main theme may be lost. The digital storytelling method focuses rather on creating process and on feeling we get from the final digital story when we see it. Short simple story usually evokes stronger emotions than some complicated hardly understandable story. Keep your story to less than 400 words, which works out to about a page of single-spaced text.

[1; 37] Think of your story as a multimedia sonnet, with characteristics of poetry. Use the script template to identify the images that you will want to match with your narration.

2. Create a digital audio clip of your story

You will need to use a microphone to record your story. There are several types of microphones. You can use microphones which built into laptop computers or headsets with microphones for personal computers. When you are ready to record your script, find a quiet place to record. Record only short sections of your story at one time. You can pause recording in a single file, or record separate clips, which you should name as sequentially numbered files. You might use the script template to write down the names of the files, if they are not all in the same file. Put all of your recorded audio files in a folder.

3. Select and edit the images you will use in your story

You can find images in many places: taken with a digital camera, scanned with a scanner, or found on the Internet. Most cell phones have cameras that work very well for digital storytelling. You don't need really high quality images (under 2 megapixels works fine). When searching Google images, though, select only the Large images – scanning from a book use no higher than 200 DPI [3; 78].

You should use a program to crop your images and fix the color and contrast. There are several programs which can be used for editing images. The preferred program is PhotoShop Elements. However, a simple program such as Paint, Picaso, Graphic Converter, would also work. Place your final images into a folder. You could use the same folder as the audio clips, or set up another folder.

3. Movie users: the easiest way to import images should begin with organizing them in iPhoto (rather than folders), where you can then see them in the Media tab. You can also use iPhoto to crop and edit your images, and select the specific files you want to create an Album for only that pictures that you have selected for your story. Use the album to organize the pictures in the order that you will want to use them in your story.

4. Combine the text, the sound and the images together in a particular program

If you have done the previous three steps you can start combining your text, sound files and the images for your digital story. There are several programs which can be used for making a digital story. But the most powerful and the easiest ones are followings: Power Point 2013 which is included in Microsoft Office package, Prezi which is for online users and has a 30-day-trial or iMovie for Macintosh or MovieMaker2 for Windows. Choose the one you like and make a great digital story.

5. Add Background Music, Titles, Transitions, and Effects

Background Music: In order to create a good digital story you can add background music. Background music has a great power to call the attention of the viewers and it makes your work sound more professional. You can choose music which fits to your topic. It is recommended to choose calm and relaxed music which usually does not disturb the narration. Edit volume on the low end under your narration but you could increase the volume when no voice is present.

6. Sharing your story

Once you have finished your digital story you can upload it to different websites on the internet in order to share your story and receive feedbacks or evaluation from many users of the internet. There are several file exchanging servers and websites for the internet users. But the most recommended one is Google drive. There you can upload different files and get a link to your file. Having the link you can share it with anyone on the internet on English learning websites. Via the link people can download your file and learn from it. It will help to develop English learning

websites. Following these steps and practicing the given techniques you can create a great digital story and can help others learn something from you [2; 65].

Analysis, Solutions, Outcomes

Learning English can be achieved by different ways, such as reading a lot of books, watching videos, listening English songs or just living in an English speaking country and talk to English speaking people every day. And doing all these is not an easy job. But there is one great tool to do all of these easily and it is called the internet.

You can do nearly anything on the internet. So how can we learn English by using the internet? And how can we combine all the ways together to learn English? It's really simple. Just use any kind of browser on your computer and type on the search box "English learning websites". There you will see different sites which will help you learn English, but choosing the one you need is an important task.

Here are some tips for Learning English with Interactive Websites:

- Know your level. If the lesson is too easy, you will be bored. If it's too hard, you won't learn. So know your level and be honest!

- Know how you learn best. Find a website that will help you learn through your favorite learning style.

- Use a computer or phone with a microphone. Many of these websites and apps have activities where you can practice speaking. You will need a microphone for that.

- Find topics that interest you. When you use topics that you like, you'll want to learn and listen or read!

- Schedule your time each day to study. You need to practice often and regularly to get better. Schedule a set time each day to study English, like while you have breakfast or take the train to work.

- Don't forget to go offline as well! Even if you learn a lot with these websites, don't forget to practice with real people as well!

Now let's analyze some top English learning websites which are highly recommend by many users and professional teachers:



BBC Learning English
www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish
 Website or app: *Website*
 Price: Free

The BBC always has high standards, so it's no surprise that they have held these highstandards with their "BBC Learning English" website. Unfortunately, this also means that their lessons are better for people with some previous experience in English, not beginners. This website is designed for intermediate and advanced English learners to study English by learning BBC style videos and radio broadcasts. These focus on topics like stories in the news, the latest English words and phrases, and even a series of videos that focus on English pronunciation in incredible detail. Although there is no interactive speaking feature, each of their podcasts and videos include post-listening activities for you to check understanding. Overall, this is a great resource for practicing listening skills.



British Council

www.earnenglish.britishcouncil.org

Website or app: *Websiteandmobileapp*

Price: Free

Although we're including this on a list of resources for adult learners, the *BritishCouncil* actually has three separate sections on their website for different ages: kids, adults and teens. Each section features a huge variety of interactive lessons, videos, games and podcasts to learn just about any skill. This means that no matter what level you are at or what topic interests you, you will always find something on *BritishCouncil*. After you are finished listening or watching, each video and podcast has an exercise for you to complete so you can make sure you understood everything. Also, there are discussion boards under many of their activities so you can talk about what you learned with other students. The mobile app version of their lessons lets you learn on the go!



Duolingo

www.duolingo.com

Website or app: *Websiteandmobileapp*

Price: Free

Duolingo helps you learn new vocabulary and grammar through interactive games and quizzes both online and on their easy-to-use mobile app. *Duolingo* separates each lesson by category (food vocabulary, family vocabulary, the verb "to be," etc.) and — on the desktop version at least — includes helpful tips and notes in case you need more explanation. There is a strong emphasis on pronunciation since you will listen to new vocabulary and then right away practice saying those words. *Duolingo* also lets you set goals and shows your progress as you use the program. You also have to complete lessons to "unlock" new lessons. All of this is great for lazy language learners who need a little extra motivation!



Livemocha

www.livemocha.com

Website or app: *Website*

Price: Free

One of the most difficult things to practice online when you learn a new language is speaking and reading. However, with *Livemocha* not only do you have access to English lessons, but you can practice reading and speaking with real English speakers afterwards. *Livemocha* focuses on learning English with real people through their online community, which is exactly what makes this site unique. To get a language partner, you have to help someone else learn your native language. So you get to learn English, and you get to help someone else as well!



Learn English online
Website or app: *Website*
www.learn-english-online.org
Price: Free

Learn English online is a site that takes a person from the basics through more advanced learning. The courses are done one at a time and at the pace of the learner. In this site there are 12 units each one has 5 lessons. Starting from the beginning until you finish the course you will master different skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking in English.



English Communication School
Website or app: *Website*
www.ecschool.com.mt
Price: Free

Learn English Phrases, talk like a native English speaker, free email course with phrases, explanations and detailed applications.

Although you already have some basic English vocabulary, and you know enough grammar to communicate, you would like to take your English a step further - you would like to talk like a native English speaker. This free email course in English will help you achieve your goal. In this free course, you will be receiving a number of complete phrases (not just words). Each phrase will come with a detailed explanation and practical examples of how you can use it in everyday life.

For example:

“Hit the ground running”.

This expression is a very powerful statement when used in a job interview or business meeting. To find out what it means to “hit the ground running”, and to learn how to use it effectively, you need to sign up for free email course.

You need to feel in your name and email address in a form, then click “Start learning now!” Then you will receive an email to confirm your subscription.



Five minute English
www.5minuteenglish.com/
Website or app: *Website*
Price: Free

Five minute English is a website which teaches English to children and adults with its free online service. The service provided by the site is for both amateurs and professionals. You can improve your grammar, reading, vocabulary, listening and pronunciation on this site. The greatest advantage of this site is you do not need to sign up or subscribe on the site. You just go, select a skill you want to improve and start learning. The resources on the website can be used by

professionals to practice their skills and explore deeper oceans of the English language. The website imparts ESL classes to students through a classroom system in various countries around the world. Classroom and centers have spread across Australia, U.S.A, Asia and Africa. The website provides links to ESL books which can be downloaded in audio version. These resources are helpful in improving the diction of people engaged in the process of learning English.

Using these top 7 free websites you can learn English faster and improve your skills easily. All you need to do is having a will and a lot of practice.

Conclusion

A modern framework for learning languages includes not only new technologies or new methods but also modern teachers who can use these technologies and methods in their classes. So who is a modern teacher? A modern teacher is a person who can use modern technologies, looks at his class like a little world, makes his lesson interesting, motivates their student always try to innovate something new or producing their own production. In order to produce students should use their creativity and knowledge being guided by their teachers.

Most of the students and the teachers have already mobile phones, laptops or tabs. But usually they do not use the internet in their classes for some reason. By doing this we sometimes forget that having an access to the internet is having an access to the world. If we use it to learn a language we can virtually go to the country where that language is spoken get some information about that country and even talk to the people of that country. Internet can give more opportunities to achieve better results in foreign language education especially when it is used in the class guided by a teacher.

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