

Language Learning and Development via the Instrumentality of Information Communication Technology: Prospects, Problems and Panacea

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Abstract

It is axiomatic that Information Communication Technology (ICT) has positively impacted and systematically revolutionized virtually all spheres of human endeavour. Language learning/development happens to be one of the areas that have been positively influenced by the advent Information Communication Technology. This is simply because language learning /development has been made much easier and pretty interesting at least for those who can painstakingly explore the various forms of ICT to learn more about given languages or develop their language skills/competences at various linguistic levels. Basically, this paper explicates the prospects of the use of ICT in language learning and development. It does this by analyzing how in-built spelling, punctuation and grammar checking devices of computers and mobile phones aid correct language usage. It discusses how installed soft copies of various dictionaries also serve as good guides to language learners and users. It explains the essential use of online language translators by many in second language learning. It shows how online language courses and tests have also been useful in language development and testing. The paper presents sub-titling of electronic media films, documentaries and other programmes as linguistic props for beginner / intermediate language learners, just sign language displays accompanying some programmes help those following the sign language system. It also identifies the vital roles online newspaper articles, stories or novels equally accessed via connected mobile phones in language learning and development based on the belief that reading right materials can aid competence in the language of communication. Furthermore, this paper explores some fundamental problems associated with the use of ICT in language learning and development. For example, some are hindered by their 'infotechphobia' as a result of their fear of maximizing the use of information technology and exploring its potentials for language learning and development. Some are negatively affected by their 'infotechmania' resulting from their extremely strong desire for / exposure to information technology which make them adopt and exhibit the informal abbreviated language form characteristic of electronic mails and text messages even in formal contexts among others. Finally, the paper suggests possible panacea to the problems associated with the use of ICT in language learning and development so as to prevent the vitiation of its use but to ultimately ensure the maximization of its potential benefits.