IRAQI Academic Scientific Journals
العراقية المجلات الاكاديمية العلمية
JORNAL OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)
**Journal of Language Studies**
Contents available at: http://jls.tu.edu.iq

# Adapting Technology to Meet 21st-Century Language Learning Difficulties

**Asst. Intr. : Israa Eibead Ajaj***
**Depart. English University Tikrit College - Education for Women**
**E-Mail : xd425057@tu.edu.iq**

**Keywords:**

- technology
- English learning
- 21st
- language learning difficulties

**Article Info**

**Article history:**

**Received: 16-1-2021**

**Accepted: 17-2-2021**

## Abstract

The use of technology tools in education is one of the modern educational methods that have proven themselves in a short period and have become an important reference for the parties to the educational process. This study aims to study the importance of adapting technology to meet 21st-century language learning difficulties. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, English has gradually replaced regional dialects in schools. The English language today occupied a prominent place among the languages of the whole world, and it has become the language of science and technology and the language most learned and used as a second or foreign language (FL). In the other hand, many previous studies showed that students face difficulties when learning the English language. Although these English learning difficulties in the classrooms, several researchers indicated that utilizing technologies in language learning processes is a useful instrument that could improve students' performance. The results indicated that technologies are considered as a vital part in the recent learning process, and it could enhance learners motivations and develop their spelling, vocabulary and sentence structure skills. This study results also showed that the main difficulties that could face English teachers especially when adapting technologies in the teaching process are, technical difficulties, poor management abilities of

* **Corresponding Author**: Israa Eibead Ajaj , **E-Mail**: xd425057@tu.edu.iq
**Tel**: +9647719301353 , **Affiliation**: Tikrit University -Iraq

| | |
|---|---|
| **Available online** | teachers and Bad technological learning infrastructure. The study recommended preparing a technology assisted environment to cover 21st English learning abilities. |

# تبني التكنولوجيا لمواجهة صعوبات تعلم اللغة في القرن الحادي والعشرين

**م.م. اسراء اعبيد عجاج**

**كلية التربية للبنات _ قسم اللغة الإنكليزية _ جامعة تكريت**

**الكلمات الدالة:-**

- التكنولوجيا
- تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية
- المركز الحادي والعشرون
- صعوبات تعلم اللغة

**معلومات البحث**

**تاريخ البحث:**

***الاستلام: 16_1_2021***

***القبول : 17 _2_2021***

***التوفر على النت***

**الخلاصة :** يعد استخدام أدوات التكنولوجيا في التعليم من الأساليب التعليمية الحديثة التي أثبتت جدارتها في فترة وجيزة وأصبحت مرجعاً هاماً لأطراف العملية التعليمية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أهمية تكييف التكنولوجيا لمواجهة صعوبات تعلم اللغة في القرن الحادي والعشرين. منذ بداية القرن الحادي والعشرين ، حلت اللغة الإنجليزية تدريجياً محل اللهجات الإقليمية في المدارس احتلت اللغة الإنجليزية اليوم مكانة بارزة بين لغات العالم كله ، وأصبحت لغة العلم والتكنولوجيا واللغة الأكثر تعلماً واستخدامًا كلغة ثانية أو كلغة أجنبية. من ناحية أخرى ، أظهرت العديد من الدراسات السابقة أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات عند تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. على الرغم من صعوبات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصول الدراسية ، أشار العديد من الباحثين إلى أن استخدام التقنيات في عمليات تعلم اللغة هي أداة مفيدة يمكن أن تحسن أداء الطلاب. أشارت النتائج إلى أن التقنيات تعتبر جزءًا حيويًا في عملية التعلم الحديثة ، ويمكن أن تعزز دوافع المتعلمين وتطور مهاراتهم في التهجئة والمفردات وبناء الجمل. كما أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن أهم الصعوبات التي يمكن أن يواجهها معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية خاصة عند تكييف التقنيات في عملية التدريس هي الصعوبات التقنية وضعف القدرات الإدارية للمعلمين وسوء البنية التحتية للتعلم التكنولوجي.و أوصت الدراسة بإعداد بيئة مدعومة بالتكنولوجيا لتغطية قدرات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في القرن الحادي والعشرين.

## 1. Introduction

The world is witnessing tremendous developments in various aspects of life, especially in the field of using information technology. Technology has been able to enter all fields, especially the field of education, where technology tools have become an important element in the educational process, because of their role in achieving the goals and objectives that educational institutions seek, and keeping abreast of modern developments. The use of technology tools in education has also contributed to making positive changes in educational institutions.

Technology in education has contributed to modernizing the means of communication from the Internet, computers and smartphones, and has also contributed to the development of traditional teaching methods, where the student becomes the focus of the educational process in terms of participation, interaction, dialogue, analysis and conclusion (Halima, 2018). This technology has achieved a radical change in the perception of the learning process and made it more useful and easy than it was in the past, as it contributed to providing many services and applications that enable the student to obtain the useful information he wants (Bell and Bogan, 2013).

The student may encounter various difficulties in learning the English language with regard to reading comprehension at any educational stage. For example, students thinking in his mother tongue will make it difficult for them to perceive the text, sentence or even the word, or change the position of the word from one sentence to another, and he may also find it difficult to read Words or sentences that he has not previously dealt with, or pronounced incorrectly, which may change their true meaning within the sentence (Abdullah, 2015). Also, the similarity of some words in pronunciation may not enable the student to reach the true meaning of them. The student must realize that he does not acquire the language during his studies as sentences and linguistic knowledge only. Rather as appropriate expressions to face the social situations that he may be exposed to (Bell and Bogan, 2013). Students' weakness in realizing this may be related to the administrative patterns that English language teachers practice with their pupils, their inefficiency, or the weak motivation of the learners and their lack of awareness of the importance of the English language in the daily school life (Harmer, 2001; *Al-Shaer*, 2013; Mohammed, 2018).

Many previous studies show that students face difficulties when learning the English language, as Halima's study (2018) found that only a few number of hours devoted to teaching the English language, the lack of sufficient knowledge among teachers about effective methods of teaching the English language, and the lack of use of modern educational methods to teach students the English language. (2010) also found that although the English language supervisors and learners found that the available technologies in their study centres stimulating motivation and help in developing the students' learning methods and language skills, the actual use of modern technology in learning and teaching the English language is not satisfactory, and levels of confidence in the printed materials and teaching methods currently in use are high.

Consequently, given that the English language is one of the most important human acquisitions in the twenty-first century, and that its importance of learning is increased with time, and mastering it is among the priorities of educational systems in

the world, it is important to study the importance of adapting technology in English learning to meet 21st- century language learning difficulties.

## 2. Research Problem

Many students face difficulties in learning the English language that results in neglecting its gains. These students believe that they don't need the English language and that it is difficult to keep up with. This weakness may be attributed to the teacher and the curriculum in the first place, as many studies have shown that the success of the educational process in foreign languages lays 55% of it on the teacher, while the remaining 45% is due to the student's family circumstances and motivation, in addition to the curricula and books used in education (Halima, 2018).

Maarouf (2012) explained that the teacher's teaching methods and behaviours are considered an important part affecting the student's motivation to learn the English language. These methods affect students 'perceptions of the English language, especially if the students' perceptions are related to misconceptions and negative perceptions that constitute an obstacle that is difficult to overcome, especially if the teacher does not rely on modern technical methods that make the content of foreign language accessible to them. Fatiha (2012) stressed that many of the teachers who are unable to achieve success in teaching are the teachers who are unable to stimulate the motivation of the learners to carry out the activities necessary for learning, and the most successful teachers are those who know how to stimulate the interest of students in learning and apply the modern technology in education. Accordingly, the study problem is to study the importance of adapting technology to meet 21st- century language learning difficulties.

## 3. Research Importance

In light of the growth of new concepts and patterns of the nature of the educational process, the use of technology tools has become necessary in teaching the English language subject. The use of technology tools in teaching the English language helps to access the information that students need with minimal effort and time, and it also helps students to develop their capabilities and experiences through learning and looking to the experiences of others around the world. Based on that, the importance of the study can be clarified in the following points:

1. This study provides English language teachers with information that confirms the importance of adopting modern technology in teaching the English language.
2. This study provides important information to students of various scientific stages with information that confirms their need to adopt modern technology in learning the English language and improving their levels in it.
3. It provides supervisors with important information that shows the importance of employing technology tools in teaching the English language and thus trying to provide classrooms with the technological tools they need.
4. This study explains the difficulties facing English language education in the twenty-first century and thus considered as an attempt to provide decision-makers and officials in educational institutions with the gaps that must be focused on to develop students' competencies in the English language.

## 4. English learning in the 21st-century

The twenty-first century is known as the knowledge era or the digital age, where knowledge of information and communication technology is one of the main factors for growth and development in society. Adequate knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) is synonymous with strength, and today's society is an information-based global society (Wu, 2005). Based on this massive shift from the industrial age to the age of knowledge, the views of teaching English have changed completely because the focus has become more on educational methods based on technology and modules. Rapid technological innovation has also created new words and a new way of expressing through "emoji or emoticons" (Sawan, 2020).

About two decades ago, English Language Teaching perspectives were not quite the same as the current scenario. The focus was more on gaining all four skills and imitating native speakers. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, English has gradually replaced regional dialects in schools (Eaton, 2010). The English language today occupied a prominent place among the languages of the whole world, and it has become the language of science and technology and the language most learned and used as a second or foreign language (FL) (Sarica and Sarica, 2009).

The English language at present time is one of the most important contemporary languages. Therefore, learning and mastering has become one of the urgent needs required by the circumstances of the era in which we live. Hosain (2018) argued that since the growth of the human sense in this era of the importance of the English language and his need to learn an international language that the largest number of people understands and deal with, the demand for learning the English language increases day after day. The objectives of learning the English language vary, as it includes exchanging ideas and information, being able to read and understand texts and identify the main ideas thereof, translating texts from Arabic into English, in addition to gaining a positive trend towards learning the English language as a means to enhance understanding between peoples and countries (Al-Senani, 2014).

However, when considering teaching English in schools in developing countries, especially according to a holistic view and field experience in language teaching, and interacting with a large number of reform and development efforts; there is a clear decline in the outputs of English language education, and this has been confirmed by some previous studies such as Al-Saghir (2009); Bell and Bogan, 2013 and Al-Senani (2014).

On the level of field practices, most of the literature related to teaching the English language calls for a departure from traditional methods of teaching English and recommends in making the student the focus of the educational process (Learner-centered). It also indicates the need to change the approved methods of teaching the English language and transform it from instruction and lecture to presentation, discussion and role-playing. This means to follow methods that focus on raising communication skills more than focusing only on explaining the grammar of the language. Also, the classroom activities must be designed to allow the learner the opportunity to speak in the English language in the classroom, and to provide him

with opportunities to participate and interact in various individual, bilateral and group activities.

Thus, in the twenty-first century, teaching English is working in areas of cognitive development and facilitators of English language teaching need to combine a project-based approach, case-based teaching and group activities, as they are beneficial for the learner to adopt social skills or Life skills or people concerning the social and cultural context.

## 5. English learning Difficulties in the 21st-century

First of all, it should be mentioned that there are a lot of common difficulties in learning English in the 21st century. One of the main these difficulties is the low specified hours for teaching the English language. Although the English language is a dynamic field that continuously changes by time passing but English educational school curricula are the same from 20 years ago, and the recent students needs are not realized in English learning. Furthermore, the volume of English topic contents and the low motivation of students toward learning English make the time specified for learning English not sufficient (Khajloo,2013).

Another difficulty that can face English teachers in the 21st is a low motivation and lack of interest toward English learning; as most students learn English for passing purposes only with no any interest to learn the language itself. Therefore teachers should add some motivational strategies that develop students interest in learning English such as offering some awards for excellent performance in reading and writing the English language.

Low student focus in the classrooms is another problem that could face English teachers and affect students academic scores. This could be explained due to life fatigue, some surrounded family issues, environment, etc.

Furthermore, although the new developments in the 21st but the vast majority of teacher suffer from their lack of proficiency; and this could be explained because the fact that most English teachers are not fluent in English and they do not learn English orally rather than following the written language learning criteria (Ortiz,2007).

The most important thing, that there are a lot of potential frustration sources that are connected to adding technology in classroom learning strategies that each teacher must be aware about. The main difficulties that could face English teachers especially when adapting technologies in the teaching process are( Andrade,2014; Erben et al.,2009):

- Technical difficulties
- Poor management of the classroom environment, for example, occurring a temporary down of learning website hosts.
- Bad technological learning infrastructure in some schools, such as low speed broadband; which could cause pixilated videos or low internet connectivity that could negatively affect the professions of the learning process.
- Poor quality of the used websites or software technologies in the teaching process.
- Difficult classroom control abilities for teachers as they should preserving student independency while keeping learner-centeredness

Although the existence of various types of English learning difficulties in the classrooms, several researchers indicated that utilizing technologies in language learning processes is a useful instrument that could improve students' performance (Harmer,2007; Gençlter,2015). The following section will discuss in details the concept of adapting technologies in English learning and what are the derived benefits.

## 6. Adaption technologies in English learning

Technologies are considered as a vital part in the recent learning process. Teachers should seriously think of adapting and emerging technologies in the English curriculum to develop the correctness of employing technologies to enhance the language skills of learners (Costley, 2014). Adapting technologies in the learning process could enhance students cooperation as they will work among groups and share their knowledge and improve their educational performance through reading other peers' assignments (Keser, Huseyin, & Ozdamli, 2011).

Susikaran (2013)indicated that utilising technologies changes the teaching methods criteria and outputs in English language learning. Moreover, adapting technologies in the learning process enhanced the learning environment as they considered as a useful learning tool although it needs a lot of preparation and training to be usefully added to the learning strategies.

The way of learning English has been considerably changed when the emergence of new learning technologies. The traditional English learning was only limited to teacher standing in the classrooms while discussing, explaining and giving direct instructions to learners. While utilizing technologies develop learners dependency as utilizing active films, internet and printed texts enable learners to pay efforts to reach to the required information from different knowledge resources which as a result will enhance learners language and vocabulary structures and enhance learners linguistic abilities (Patel, 2013; Arifah, 2014).

Pourhosein Gilakjani (2014) indicated that adapting technologies in learning English could create a learning environment that considers students as the core element in the learning process rather than the teacher. Adapting technology could develop learners responsibilities in the learning process, and encourages learners to have self-directions and learn individually.

Arifah (2014) also clarified that utilizing internet and computed assisted learning could enhance learners motivation and enthusiasm toward language learning. Furthermore, it develops the creative thinking and problem solving abilities of learners, in addition to develop learners motivation and attention towards learning the English language.

Several studies have indicated the benefits of employing new technologies in English language learning. Hennessy(2005) understood that using information and communication technologies (ICT) in English language learning develop students independency and encourage teachers to provide learners with activities that support learners self-confidence. Furthermore, information and communication technologies (ICT) activate the learners' role in the educational process which could enable them to reserve their information for a longer time, and enable them to enhance their language learning abilities (Costley, 2014). Zhao (2013) also considered using computer-based

learning is considered as a vital factor to ensure successful language learning. Baytak, Tarman, and Ayas (2011) also said that using technology add joyful atmosphere to the language learning process through activating a more interactive learning environment which as a result enhance learners motivation. Lin and Yang (2011) investigated the benefits of utilizing Wiki technology (is a website or online resource that can be edited by multiple users. Some wikis, such as Wikipedia, are publicly accessible. Others are used by organizations to manage information in-house, enabling teams to easily share knowledge and work together more effectively) in learning English. The results indicated that this technology enhanced learners spelling, vocabulary and sentence structure through reviewing their classmates' works. This technology also enables students to have direct feedback on their performance. All above mentioned benefits approve that adapting technologies could cover the difficulties of learning English in the 21st .

## Conclusion:

This paper reviewed several studies that are related to adapting technology in English learning and its ability to meet the 21st- century language learning difficulties. The study indicated that the English language at present time is one of the most important contemporary languages. The results also showed that the use of technology tools in teaching the English language is a vital part in the recent learning process as it helps to access the information that students need with minimal effort and time. The main difficulties that could face English teachers especially when adapting technologies in the teaching process are, technical difficulties, poor management abilities of teachers and Bad technological learning infrastructure. While the main results that this study approve is that adapting technologies in the learning process could enhance students cooperation, improve their educational English learning skills through reading other peers' works, develop learners dependency, and develop learners responsibilities in the learning process. The study recommended preparing a technology assisted environment to cover 21st English learning abilities.

## References

-Al-Saghir, K. (2010). The reality of teaching English in general education. Limited teacher training, poor motivation for the learner, an unattractive course. Article published in Knowledge Magazine.

-Al-Senani, S. (2014). Teaching English: Reality Unmotivated. Knowledge (the Saudi Ministry of Education) - Saudi Arabia, pp. 234, 120 - 123.

-Al-Shaer, I. (2010). Employing New Technology In English Language Teaching/ Learning At Al- Quds Open University. Al-Quds Open University Journal for Human and Social Research, Issue 20

-Andrade, M. D. L. (2014). Role of Technology in Supporting English Language Learners in Today's Classrooms. Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

-Arifah, A. (2014). Study on the use of technology in ELT classroom: Teachers' perspective. M.A. Thesis, Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

-Baytak, A., Tarman, B., & Ayas, C. (2011). Experiencing technology integration in education: children's perceptions. International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 3(2), 139-151.

https://www.iejee.com/index.php/IEJEE/article/view/233. Date accessed: 17 June 2018.

-Bell, D. and Bogan, B. (2013). English Language Learners: Problems and Solutions Found in the Research of General Practitioners of Early Childhood. e-Journal of Balanced Reading Instruction, Volume 1, Issue 2, p. 1-7.

-Century. Calgary: Onate Press area Intercollegiate International Conference on English language teaching. Chung Hua University, Hsuan Chuang University, and

-Costley, K. C. (2014). The positive effects of technology on teaching and student learning. Arkansas Tech University.

-Eaton, S.E. (2010). Global Trends in Language Learning in the Twenty-first

-Erben, T., Ban, R., & Castañeda, M. E. (2009). Teaching English language learners through technology. New York: Routledge.

-Fatiha, D. (2012). The Reality and Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Algerian High School - Field Study in the Secondary Schools of Ben Aknoun Municipality, Journal of Psychological and Educational Studies, Issue: 8, University of Ouargla.

-Gençlter, B. (2015). How does technology affect language learning process at an early age? Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 199(2015), 311 – 316. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.552

-Halima, Q. (2018). Difficulties learning the English language from the point of view of teachers and parents. Generation Human and Social Sciences Journal, Issue 48.

-Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Harlow: Longman. 400.

-Harmer, J. (2007). The practice of English language teaching. England: Pearson.www.worldcat.org/title/practice-ofenglish-language teaching/oclc/149005881.

-Hennessy, S. (2005). Emerging teacher strategies for supporting. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge.

-Hosain, A. (2018). Difficulties of Learning English Language at the Secondary Level: A Case Study of Thakurgaon District. Journal of Education and Training 5(2):165

-Keser, H., Uzunboylu, H., & Ozdamli, F. (2012). The trends in technology supported collaborative learning studies in 21st century. World Journal on Educational Technology, 3(2), 103-119.

-Khajloo,A .I (2013). Problems in Teaching and Learning English for Students, International Journal of Engineering Research and Development e-ISSN: 2278-067X, p-ISSN: 2278-800X, www.ijerd.com Volume 7, Issue 3 (May 2013), PP. 56-58

-Lin, W., & Yang, S. (2011). Exploring students' perceptions of integrating Wiki technology and peer feedback into English writing courses. English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 10(2), 88-103. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ944900.

-Maarouf, S. (2012). Students 'Attitudes Toward the English Language and Its Relation to Achievement of Both Genders in the Light of Prevailing Classroom Management Patterns, A Field Study on a Sample of First-Grade Secondary Students in Damascus Public and Private High Schools, Damascus University Journal, Issue 1 + 2, Volume 26, 2012 P. 43.

-Mohammed, M. (2018). CHALLENGES OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) BY NON-NATIVE LEARNERS, International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, Volume:03, Issue:04, p. 1381-1 Abdullah, S. (2015). Challenges for teaching English as a Second or forigen langaugeand their Remedies. Intarnational Journal of Humanities and Mangement Science.

-Ortiz, Alba. A. (2007).English language learning with special needs;Effective instructional strategies.Journal of learning disabilities. 30.420-321.

-Patel, C. (2013). Use of multimedia technology in teaching and learning communication skill: An analysis. International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology, 2(7), 116-123.

-Pourhossein Gilakjani, A. (2014). A detailed analysis over some important issues towards using computer technology into the EFL classrooms. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 2(2), 146-153. doi: 10.13189/ujer.2014.020206.

-Sarica, G. and Sarica, N. (2009). New trends in 21st Century English learning, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 1(1):439-445

-Sawan, F. (2020). Teaching English in Higher Education and its Perspective in the Twentieth Century. Academi world.

-Susikaran, R. S. A. (2013). The use of multimedia in English language teaching. Journal of Technology for ELT, 3(2). https://sites.google.com/site/journaloftechnologyforelt/archive/3-2-april-2013/1-the-use-of-multimedia-inenglish-language-teaching.

-Wu, W. S. (2005). Web-based English learning and teaching in Taiwan: Possibilities and challenges. Paper presented at The First Hsiang-shan

-Yuanpei University of Science and Technology, Hsinchu, Taiwan. Taipei: Crane Publishing, and Luke Swart.

-Zhao, Y. (2013). Recent developments in technology and language learning: Literature review and meta-analysis. CALICO Journal, 21(1), 7-27. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ674877.