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INNOVATION IN THE MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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25 JANUARY 2024 YEAR

USA, WASHINGTON

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INNOVATION IN THE MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Part 37

JANUARY 2024

COLLETIONS OF SCIENTIFIC WORKS

Washington, USA
25th January 2024

INNOVATION IN THE MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM: a collection scientific works of the International scientific conference (25th January , 2024) – Washington, USA: "CESS", 2024. Part 37 – 373 p.

Languages of publication: русский, english, қазақша, o'zbek, limba română, кыргыз тили, Հայերեն

The collection consists of scientific research of scientists, graduate students and students who took part in the International Scientific online conference "**INNOVATION IN THE MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM**". Which took place in Washington on January 25, 2024.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF VISUAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *Visual aids are powerful tools that can be used to assist the teachers in teaching a foreign language. They can be utilized to add diversity to the classroom activities and effectively display complex teaching material. There are several advantages to employing visuals in the classroom, ranging from capturing and maintaining students' attention to encouraging them to participate actively during the lessons, engage with the topic and assisting them in learning the material. Experts and educators alike concur that visuals play a crucial role in improving students' learning, particularly those belong to a generation accustomed to the visual interface of internet and multimedia technologies. This paper analyses some of the theoretical and practical facets of using visual aids in the English language classrooms.*

Keywords: *visual materials, multimedia technologies, teaching and learning process, language classroom, communication*

Modern technologies offer possibilities to integrate the visual aids into the language classrooms. Students enjoy using technology constantly, if possible. It has become difficult to keep them engaged, motivated and actively participating in class. Making a use of multimedia audio-visual aids in the English classroom has become essential if we want to increase the students' interest, knowledge, and proficiency in the English language.

In the past, foreign languages were taught to elder generations through printed books, images and drawings, with relatively few didactic films or realia primarily to assist pupils correlate words with the actual objects they are used for. Teaching specific vocabulary was beneficial. However, there was an issue related with more intricate and subtle one. With so many contemporary modern methods available to them, teachers can now integrate real-world experiences into their foreign language classroom.

The "thumb generation" no longer finds printed texts appealing on their own. By bringing in a variety of communication forms for the class like illustrations, diagrams, drama, charts, mime, models, overhead projectors or

multimedia presentations, we help students comprehend and learn through the use of these visual aids. Since they are given a more relevant and understandable context, the use of visuals in the classroom increases students' interest in and attention to the material being covered. As a result, they start interacting and communicating more. In turn, educators have gained greater creativity by utilising media in the classroom as they have learnt how to enliven the teaching and learning process and engage students. Nowadays, being a teacher requires more than just academic knowledge. They ought to be able to use modern teaching strategies and create the communicative interactional atmosphere in class in order to fit the students' expectations. Both technological means and didactical software can be of great assistance in these terms.

When teaching a foreign language, it's critical to use more than just "spoken words" because the majority of people learn best visually. When material is presented to students in a variety of ways, they are also more likely to retain it.

"They are designed to help the learner, bringing the prior knowledge to a conscious level in the form of an organizational structure. They help enhancing comprehension and learning, as well as eliciting, explaining and communicating information", as Kang suggests. According to him, the advantages which the visual organizers offer, are as follows:

— They enable users to develop a holistic comprehension that is not understandable through words.

— They give users the means to make their thought and organization processes visible.

— They simplify complex notions into an understandable, straightforward, meaningful display.

— They assist users in organizing and processing concepts and data.

— They promote recall and retention of learning by synthesis and analysis.

He believes that these advantages are "especially important in Second Language Instruction because the language deficiencies of the learners are compensated by the visuals"[18].

The significance of learning a language in an environment that is as similar as possible to the native one is acknowledged by foreign language teachers. With software with native voices and real-life situations at their

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[18] Kang, S. 'Using Visual Organizers to enhance EFL instruction' ELT Journal, vol. 58, no. 1, January, 2004.

disposal, educators may build proper, authentic scenarios that allow students to hear and see natives in their original environments. Geeraerts, claims that the "linguistic meaning is based on usage and experience", and thus students should be placed in a setting that "trigger their experiences and let them use the language for real purposes" as often as possible[19]. Furthemore, Gass submits that "second language acquisition is shaped by the input one receives", while Fotos herself, claims that the "input the students receive in the classroom can be manipulated to make it easier to understand, fitting their needs and level"[20]. She goes further asserting that "teachers have been doing it over the years, with different strategies such as simplifying the grammar activities or physically highlighting the important points of a particular topic (grammar structures or vocabulary) in the presentations or in the prints that they hand to them"[21]. Nation and Newton also consider that students can comprehend a foreign language as the visuals used will "provide conceptual scaffolding, through cultural context or other clues, and it helps with the natural associations of images and words"[22].

The concept that there is a reality "out there" and that the purpose of "our perceptual and cognitive mechanisms is to provide a representations of this reality" through the use of multimedia visual aids in English language classes led to the creation of the new term "Experiential Realism" by experts Lakoff and Johnson (cited in Evans and Green, 2006).[23] Through their research, they discovered that more than "two dozen different image schemas and several image schema transformations" appear regularly in people's "everyday thinking, reasoning and imagination"[24].

Visual aids as an additional tool in the teaching-learning process, when appropriately chosen and designed are important as students are stimulated, motivated and focused on the activities in class, thus enhancing learning. Integration of technology into classroom help the teachers explain concepts and ideas in a meaningful close- to -real- life way.

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[19] Geeraerts, D., 'A rough guide to Cognitive Linguistics' in Geeraert (ed.) Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings, (pp 1-28). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006.

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[22] Nation I.S.P. and Newton, Jonathan, Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking Routledge, 2009, p. 31.

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