

MULTI MEDIA FOR RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article discusses the use of multimedia for receptive and productive second and foreign language development. The theoretical bases use for the application of multimedia in second language teaching is on the basis of comprehensible input and comprehensible output, two terms which have been discussed and analyzed in second language acquisition research for the last two decades.

Use of multimedia in this article is on two types of language skills: receptive and productive skills covering the four language skills listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Practical examples of the use of multimedia is directed toward using it by learners and by teachers as learning facilitators. A wide range of internet use for university students is given in a more detailed perspective.

Key words: multimedia, receptive skills, productive skills, internet, comprehensible input and comprehensible output.

1. INTRODUCTION

This information era has resulted in rapid growth of information technology in all aspects of human life. This also affects the second and foreign language teaching and learning practice. While in the past second and foreign language teaching practice was characterized by the dominant role of teachers as the source of information as well as the main actor for providing language input, the practice at this moment was characterized by abundance of source language teaching and learning materials that can be reached easily and quickly with variety of forms of input resources. Teachers are no longer the only resource of language input and learners can independently reach any language resource they need. Yes, the era has changed. Information is handy, learning materials are abundance and learners can learn any time they want without having too much dependence on the teacher. Learners become self autonomous and the rate of learning can be accelerated regardless of time and space.

However, the fact shows that not all of these advantage situations results in positive trend of second and foreign language learning practice. Many people still can not make use of the advanced growth of information technology. Students are still not successful in second and foreign language learning. The case that also happens in Indonesia in the case of the teaching and learning of English. Even though English has been introduced to students early at the elementary school stage or even at the kindergarten. Students are not able to use the language for communication, they still fail in the examinations.

Why is this so? Is it because of the lack of effectiveness of the technology or the inability of the human resources to make use of the technology? Or is there any other factors that hinder language learner to be successful?

This article will discuss how multimedia or information communication technology (ICT) can be used for language teaching and learning by introducing principle of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1989, Yufrizal, 2008) and comprehensible output (Swain, 1999, Yufrizal, 2008) as the basis for developing second and foreign language acquisition using multimedia as the basis.

1.1 The role of input and output in second/foreign language learning

A critical concept for second-language development for students with and without learning difficulties is comprehensible input. **Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them.** This does not mean, however, that teachers must use only words students understand. In fact, instruction can be incomprehensible even when students know all of the words. Students learn a new language best when they receive input that is just a bit more difficult than they can easily understand. In other words, students may understand most, but not all, words the teacher is using.

Making teacher talk comprehensible to students goes beyond the choice of vocabulary and involves presentation of background and context, explanation and rewording of unclear content, and the use of effective techniques such as graphic organizers. **By using context or visual cues, or by asking for clarification, students enhance their knowledge of English.** When input is comprehensible, students understand most aspects of what is required for learning, and the learning experience pushes them to greater understanding.

One way teachers can ensure that material is sufficiently comprehensible is to **provide relevant background knowledge and content**. Teachers should try to explain ideas or concepts several times using slight variations in terminology and examples.

Comprehensible input is related to more than just language development and curriculum content. Appropriate context is crucial. One way for teachers to be sensitive to the language and cultural backgrounds of their English-language learners with learning difficulties is to **provide instruction that draws on the experiences of their students**. This does not mean that teachers have to be experts in their students' cultures, but they do have to understand how effective it can be to connect students' learning to their past experiences. Such understanding can often be gained by listening carefully and attentively to students.

Many other techniques can be used to increase the likelihood that students will understand what is being said to them, such as **the use of consistent language, frequent use of visuals, and providing frequent opportunities for students to express their ideas**. Comprehensible instruction requires that teachers carefully control their vocabulary and use graphic organizers, concrete objects, and gestures when possible to enhance understanding. It is important to limit the length and number of lecture-type presentations.

During instructional dialogs, **the focus should be primarily on accuracy of content**, not rigid requirements associated with correct language use. Spending time defining, discussing, and clarifying vocabulary words unlikely to be familiar to the students prior to reading a passage has demonstrated consistently positive effects on reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension for students with learning, speech, and language disabilities.

To continually modulate and clarify the language of instruction, teaching must also be highly interactive. **Teachers must constantly involve students, ask many questions, and encourage students to express their ideas and thoughts in the new language**. One strategy for motivating students is to give them opportunities to share their language, culture, country, and experiences. Opportunities to use language orally creates, in turn, opportunities to increase receptive language skills.

Students need to be given more opportunities in the classroom to use oral language and to engage in cognitively challenging tasks. **Cooperative learning and peer tutoring strategies** have the potential to effectively and rapidly increase English-language development, particularly when working with highly decontextualized and cognitively challenged language concepts.

For older students, expressing ideas orally can be risky in some classrooms. The use of **dialog journals**, even computer journals, with feedback from the teacher, can become a more comfortable vehicle for English language development.

In conclusion, it is important to realize **that comprehensible input is as much an ideal as it is an achievable reality**. In teaching English-language learners with learning difficulties, we can attempt to reach this ideal level of support and challenge, but in the context of complex and fast-paced classroom interactions, it may rarely be achieved as much as we would like. Nonetheless, this is a critical principle as you develop an instructional program for each English-language learner.

1.2 Comprehensible Output

According to research, learners need opportunities to practice language at their level of English language competency. This practice with English-speaking peers is called *Comprehensible Output*. Many researchers feel that comprehensible output is nearly as important as input. Cooperative learning groups are one way for new learners of English to receive plenty of understandable input and output. Here are some reasons why.

- A small group setting allows for more comprehensible input because the teacher or classmates modify or adapt the message to the listener's needs.
- Speakers can more easily check on the understanding of the listener.
- There is more opportunity for oral practice and for repetition of content information as peers help new learners of English negotiate meaning.
- Student talk in this small group is centered on what is actually happening at the moment as the task is completed.
- Feedback and correction are non-judgmental and immediate.

2. RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

When you learn a language, you develop both **receptive skills** and **productive skills**.

Receptive skills include understanding when you listen and when you read. You receive the language and decode the meaning to understand the message.

Productive skills are speaking and writing. You use the language that you have acquired and produce a message through speech or written text that you want others to understand.

When you are “learning English” you are learning all of these skills. You will be strong in some and weak in others. Your classmate may have different strengths and weaknesses than you. That is why you shouldn’t try to compare yourself to others.

2.1 Receptive and Productive Vocabulary

Another example of receptive and productive skills is related to your study of vocabulary. It is easy to develop your receptive vocabulary. You can study words independently, memorizing the definitions, the word forms, the collocations and different uses of the words in context. Your receptive vocabulary can grow and when you see a list of words to study in your class, you might recognize some of them already. That’s great but do you use these words correctly when you speak or write? If you do, they have moved into your productive vocabulary. This is the goal of your vocabulary study in the Languages Institute. You will see many new words in your reading texts or hear some in the listening exercises but the words you study are ones that you should try to use when you write or speak.

2.2 Independent Practice

Independent practice can help you practice your receptive skills. Just like the example of vocabulary, you can do extra reading and extra listening on your own to improve your receptive skills. Improving your productive skills by yourself is more difficult. You can write something alone but you can improve more when someone reads what you write. You can speak to yourself in a mirror, but it is better practice speaking to another person. In both cases, you can see if your message is understood. However, just like the example with vocabulary, the more that you develop your receptive skills, the more that they can affect your productive skills in a positive way. Reading more will help you write better. Listening more will help you improve your speaking skills. Productive skills improve from stronger receptive skills. This term, make the decision to do all you can outside of class and take advantage of your time inside of class and you will improve both your receptive and your productive skills!

3. USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

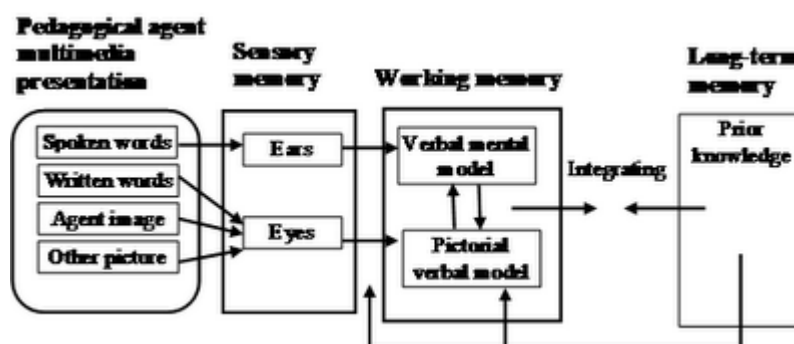
Multimedia is any kind of media that can be used in teaching learning activities both inside and outside classroom. Multimedia is very useful for different kinds of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Using multimedia in teaching methodology is best way to meet students' needs.

3.1 Why choosing multimedia resources?

Multimedia is becoming indispensable in the classrooms. It allows teachers to diversify their lectures, display more information, and enhance student learning. It helps them save time and energy; it allows for more attention to be paid to the course content. There are different multimedia tools available in the market. Audio streaming, PPT, animation, and video are quite familiar with the teachers and students. Pronunciation, accent, vocabulary building, note-taking or note-making skills, reading comprehension, writing skills, etc. are taught using the multimedia tools. There are different purposes for analysing the multimedia tools:

- To decide whether the multimedia tool has had the intended effect;
- To identify what effect the multimedia tool has had;
- To justify future courses of action;
- To identify areas for improvement in a multimedia tool.

Multimedia tools prove to be effective in teaching English. However, they are not tailor-made. Teachers should analyse them predictively and retrospectively to use them effectively in the classroom. Feedback from the teachers and students can be utilised to improve the efficiency of the multimedia lessons. Multimedia tools should be used appropriately and frequently to increase the scores of the ESL students.



Cognitive models for multimedia learning with animated pedagogical agents (image credits: db-thueringen)

3.2 Difference between multimedia and the conventional system of learning

A fundamental difference between multimedia based and the conventional system of learning is that in the conventional system, the book has basic material which follows its own step by step structures and the content are accordingly structured. Some of the benefits of the classroom learning are:

- It develops oral communication skills.
- It develops social interaction skills.
- It creates an environment of active, involved exploratory learning.
- There is greater ability of students to view situations from others perspective.
- It promotes innovation in teaching classroom techniques.
- It uses a team approach to problem solving while maintaining individual accountability.
- It encourages student's responsibility for learning.
- It involves students in developing curriculum and class procedure.
- Stimulate critical thinking and helps students clarify ideas through discussion and debate.
- It establishes an atmosphere of cooperation and helping college wide.
- It promotes higher achievement and class attendance.

In multimedia, on the other hand the content structuring has to be altered so as to incorporate the self paced and non liner interactive exposition possibility besides the fact that the audio / visual material plays a greater role in multimedia than in a book.

Right now, there are two fairly successful applications of automatic speech recognition (ASR) or speech processing technology where the computer "understands" the spoken words of the learner. The first is pronunciation training. Learners read sentences on the screen and the computer gives feedback as to the accuracy of the utterance, usually in the form of visual sound waves. The second is the software where learner speaks commands for the computer to do.

3.3 Instructions for Developing Multimedia Learning

1. Assess students' learning styles. Diane Heacox, author of "Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom," suggests that teachers know and understand their students' different intelligences or ways of learning. She recommends that teachers incorporate Howard Gardner's eight multiple intelligences: spatial, linguistic, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic. As a result of these different learning styles, some learners might not feel as comfortable as others with different multimedia tools. If you have a student who is interpersonal, for instance, he might prefer lectures and lively group discussion, while an intrapersonal learner will enjoy using multimedia tools independently. As a teacher who uses multimedia tools, you must make sure that you note how often you use multimedia tools and that you vary the tools you do use.
2. Gather appropriate resources. Contemporary classrooms have several options for multimedia learning at all grade levels. You might find that you can use interactive electronic white boards, digital video presenters and interactive computer programs for nearly all of your classroom activities. In addition, manufacturers of electronic white boards have built-in tools for educators. For instance, you might consider some of these tools to review questions that are content-based for subject mastery.
Interactive white boards also use touch-screen technology. This allows students and teachers to navigate websites, Powerpoint presentations and data with their fingers. In addition, you can have students use the Internet at home to encourage out-of-the-classroom learning. Consider starting and monitoring a classroom blog where you can post assignment, and students can participate in discussions and ask questions. In some classrooms, you might find that using audio tools, such as a digital audio book, might help some auditory learners read an assignment.
3. Gather data on learning outcomes. It might be tempting to use multimedia tools every day in every learning situation because of their ease and availability. When you start to use multimedia tools, spend time in class allowing students to assess their effectiveness. Also, evaluate students' test scores to look for improvement after using each of the multimedia tools. For instance, how did the kinesthetic learners do after they were allowed to touch and manipulate the interactive white board?

3.4 Major benefits of Internet aided teaching in the classroom

The following are the major benefits of using internet in the classroom:

a. Increased Student Motivation

Many students love computers. Students feel comfortable with computers and are very receptive to any learning activities that involve the computer. Increased motivation leads to increased language use which leads to improved proficiency. When a writing activity is truly communicative, as e-mail projects are, the language is

authentic. The students are not going through the motions of an artificial exercise. They are communicating because they need and want to communicate. Most of the information on the World Wide Web has been written in English by native speakers. The Web is, therefore, a rich source of authentic reading materials in English.

b. Global Awareness

Information can be exchanged easily between people in different corners of the world, connecting students around the globe. This enhances their chances of using the language and such activities may result into high proficiency. Students attest that this kind of communication increases global understanding.

c. Environmental Friendliness

Use of the Internet can decrease the amount of paper used in the classroom. Much of the writing can be done on the computer. Web sites can replace some printed materials thereby conserving natural resources.

3.5 The use of Internet in the classroom

a. Research

Research is the number one reason to use the internet in education. Students have a wealth of information open to them. Often, when they are researching obscure topics, school libraries do not have the needed books and magazines. The internet helps solve this problem. Here's an example of a great research project.

b. E-mail Projects

English teachers around the world are finding creative ways to use e-mail in their classes. They are discovering that e-mail projects can truly help students improve their writing and reading skills. The communication in e-mail projects can involve the teacher and each student individually, two students, small groups of students within a class or groups of students in more than one class.

c. Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals are a popular means of improving the writing fluency and reading comprehension of students. Students write in their journals in class or outside of class. The teacher then collects the journals and responds to the student entries. Since the focus is on communication, the students write on topics of their own choosing, and their grammar and spelling errors are not pointed out. Dialogue journals may easily become electronic, with students sending the teacher their journal entries via e-mail rather than in a paper notebook. This type of e-mail writing assignment is an excellent way to ease students into sharing their writing electronically.

d. E-mail Discussion Groups

Students can also sign up for electronic discussion groups. They will receive all of the messages posted to the group by the other subscribers and they can post their own messages as well.

Language learners of all ages enjoy communicating in the target language via e-mail. Within their own classes, teachers can divide students into groups for e-mail communication. For example, if the class is reading a collection of short stories, after the students finish a story, they can write a summary and a critique of it to send to the other members of their group via e-mail. Small groups of four or five students work well. Although it may seem artificial for students to write to classmates with whom they could easily communicate face-to-face, intraclass e-mail projects can be effective in helping the students improve their writing and reading skills in English. It also gives shy students an opportunity to participate as much as the more outgoing ones. Of course, it is exciting for students to communicate with students in other places. It might be another school in the same city or a school on the other side of the world. If the participants come from different cultures, the experience will be more stimulating and enriching for all of the students.

e. Creating a Website

A second project that can help integrate technology while truly getting the students excited about school is website creation. You can publish a website with your class about information the students have researched or personally created. Examples of what this page might focus on include a collection of student-created short stories, a collection of student-created poems, results and information from science fair projects, historical 'letters', even critiques of novels could be included.

3.6 Some Consideration on using Internet in the Classroom

English teaching scenarios require teachers to engage in classroom teaching according to the real world. The main materials, rich emotional scenes and the specific atmosphere inspire and attract students to take the initiative to study.

a. Systematization

The aim of English teaching is to provide students with such a learning environment and conditions. One should compose the communicative structure for the language environment, and grasping the Meaning Potential of the language.

b. Authenticity

The real context can meet students' practical needs in communication. In ELT, teachers have various choices of multimedia software, videos, films, slides, photographs, and other media. They can also use multimedia tools to provide vivid materials, creating real contexts and giving background information in order to help students to create an atmosphere of participation and exchange in different contexts.

c. Appropriateness

Multimedia and networks are characterized by the prolific development of information. Although students can access massive amounts of information, they cannot digest and absorb it directly. Therefore, they cannot develop their long-term memory and communicative competence. In order to optimize multimedia English teaching in context creation in terms of the appropriate selection of information, we should take care to classify and organize information effectively and make choices according to students' needs. Otherwise, there will be too much information for them. Moreover, attention should also be paid to fit students' different requests when designing the curriculum, following the process of information exchange. For example, when setting the curriculum, it should be known that the difficulty should be slightly higher than the students' actual level. It is true that appropriate control of the type and amount of material, as well as making good use of time, can be more effective when learning English through multimedia language teaching.

d. Interactivity

During the process of in-classroom English multimedia teaching, it is believed that the goal of interaction between teachers and students is to achieve exchanges in the real language context. Teaching content should be designed with consideration of how to achieve interaction between teachers and students, among students themselves, and between students and modern technology. This method of language teaching provides various ways to promote the growth of students' creativity, cooperation, and interaction. It also makes multimedia language teaching and learning active and vivid, from which we can see that the interactive exchange of information reflects the characteristics and advantages of multimedia teaching in context creation.

e. Coordination

During the process of optimizing multimedia English teaching in context creation, it is inappropriate to change the classroom into a platform for information exchange between students and modern machinery. Attention should be paid to coordination between teachers and students, teaching materials and methods, theory and practice and multimedia teaching and the real learning environment.

f. Pluralism

Pluralism with Intelligence requires teachers to choose and create appropriate and comprehensive educational methods to promote the full development of students based on the educational content, their intelligence structure, their interests, and their different characteristics. Teaching English in order to create a multimedia classroom context not only restricts but also affects the students' own intellectual development. English teachers should constantly make use of the advantages of multimedia teaching to update English teaching concepts and teaching strategies, and produce scenario-style, animation-style, case-style, analogue-style, and game-show-style films as self-supporting material to inspire students.

g. Intelligibility

The process of understanding discourse is the process of the context establishment. An effective way to understand the discourse is to choose and establish an appropriate context to get people involved in the context. This includes communicative context, communicative environment, and communication based on common sense. English teachers should socialize and contextualize the multimedia classroom, as well as trying to transplant the real use of English into an in-classroom multimedia environment to improve students' interpretative skills. It is helpful for teachers to use the characteristics of contexts in teaching materials to enable students to learn when and where they should speak English in line with the discourse and ultimately improve their English language skills. Teachers can also use multimedia to help students to predict the text in order to grasp the context and enhance their comprehensive skills. From a practical context to language understanding and usage based on different types of training, students may improve their communicative competence effectively in different contexts.

h. Penetrability

To achieve the success of multimedia English teaching in context creation, English teachers should involve their own sincere feelings in the classroom and make use of multimedia to stimulate students' emotions. This is a joint method, where the two elements complement each other to promote and optimize the context creation of multimedia English teaching, which is one of the internal driving forces of students' learning interest.

3.7 Resources that can be incorporated in the classroom

Reading

• Fluency Through Fables

At this site your students will find a short fable to read. After reading the fable, they can complete a variety of activities: vocabulary matching, a true or false comprehension exercise, vocabulary completion and written discussion. They can then use the index to find other fables and accompanying activities. <http://www.comenius.com/fable/index.html>

Writing

• Purdue's Online Writing Lab

This site offers instructional handouts on subjects such as punctuation, spelling, writing research papers and citing sources. Originally created for native speakers, it has a special section for ESL students that includes explanations about the use of articles and the use of prepositions in English. <http://owl.English.purdue.edu>

Vocabulary

• Weekly Idiom Page

This site features a new idiom every two weeks. Each new idiom is given with its definition and a sample dialogue. <http://www.comenius.com/idiom/index.htm>

• Toon in to Idioms

Students will find this site attractive. They will find an idiom along with an amusing illustration and a sample dialogue that they can listen to if their computer has speakers. <http://www.elfs.com/2nInX-Title.html>

• Crossword Puzzles for ESL Students

This site is a new project undertaken by the Internet TESL Journal. It currently has four puzzles and is soliciting volunteers to create additional ones. <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/cw>

Grammar

• Grammar Safari

Students can participate in hunting activities such as "Hunting adjective clauses in Little Women" and "Hunting past perfect verbs in a magazine article." <http://deil.lang.uiuc.edu/web/pages/grammarsafari.html>

• Professor TOEFL's Fun Page

Professor TOEFL will respond to your students' questions about English grammar. <http://www.slip.net/~caa>

• Self-Study Quizzes for EFL Students

This site is another project of The Internet TESL Journal. Students can take grammar quizzes in a variety of subject areas such as holidays, sports and culture. The quizzes are graded on the spot. <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/quizzes>

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many things can be covered by the use of multimedia for second and foreign language learning. Multimedia does not only provide receptive and productive language skills needed to learn a foreign or second language, it also provides a wide variety of opportunities for students to develop their capabilities. Multimedia does not weaken the functions of language teachers, rather it strengthens the teachers' function as language facilitator; the students become more self-autonomous and teachers can become more creative in designing works that can be done through multimedia.

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