THE ROLE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article examines the role of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching English to students of vocational colleges and technical schools. The study analyses how multimedia resources, mobile applications, interactive whiteboards, learning management systems and artificial intelligence tools can be integrated into English lessons in vocational education, where learners need English primarily for professional purposes. The article is based on the analysis of scientific literature, normative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan on foreign language teaching, and the author's practical experience at a technical school. The findings show that the purposeful use of modern technologies increases learners' motivation, supports the development of profession-oriented communicative competence, allows differentiation of instruction in heterogeneous groups, and compensates for the limited number of classroom hours allocated to English in vocational curricula. At the same time, the article identifies the main difficulties of technology integration — insufficient infrastructure, low digital competence of some teachers, and the risk of superficial "entertainment" use of devices — and proposes practical recommendations for overcoming them.

Key words: English language teaching; vocational college; modern technologies; ICT; CALL; MALL; multimedia; mobile applications; English for specific purposes (ESP); digital competence; motivation.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, knowledge of English has become one of the basic professional qualifications. According to international estimates, English is used by approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide as a first or additional language, and it remains the dominant language of science, technology, international trade and the Internet. For graduates of vocational colleges and technical schools — future technicians, mechanics, electricians, IT specialists, accountants and service workers — English is no longer an abstract academic subject: it is the language of equipment manuals, software interfaces, technical standards and international labour markets.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has clearly recognised this reality at the level of state policy. The Decree of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-1875 of 10 December 2012 “On measures to further improve the system of learning foreign languages” introduced the continuous teaching of English from the first grade of secondary school and required the wide application of modern pedagogical and information-communication technologies in language teaching. This policy was significantly strengthened by the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-5117 of 19 May 2021 “On measures to raise the activity of popularising the study of foreign languages in the Republic of Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new level”, which set the task of bringing foreign language teaching in all types of educational institutions, including vocational education, in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In parallel, the national strategy “Digital Uzbekistan — 2030”, approved in 2020, requires the digitalisation of the entire education system.

Vocational education occupies a special place in this process. After the reform of the professional education system in Uzbekistan in 2019–2020, technical schools (texnikum) and vocational schools began training specialists on the basis of updated curricula, in which English is taught as a compulsory subject with a professional

orientation. However, teaching English in vocational colleges has specific difficulties: the number of classroom hours is limited; students enter with very different levels of language preparation; many learners regard English as a secondary subject compared with their speciality; and traditional textbook-based methods often fail to reflect the professional vocabulary that students actually need.

Modern technologies offer realistic instruments for solving precisely these problems. The purpose of this article is to analyse the didactic possibilities of modern technologies in teaching English to vocational college students, to summarise practical experience of their application, and to formulate recommendations for English teachers working in the system of professional education.

Theoretical background

The use of computers in language teaching has a history of more than half a century and is studied within the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). M. Warschauer and D. Healey distinguish three stages in the development of CALL: behaviouristic CALL of the 1960s–1970s, based on drill-and-practice programmes; communicative CALL of the 1980s, which used the computer as a stimulus for communication; and integrative CALL, which emerged in the 1990s with multimedia and the Internet and integrates the four language skills into authentic environments. With the spread of smartphones, a new branch appeared — Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which allows learning “anytime and anywhere” and is particularly relevant for vocational students, almost all of whom own mobile phones even when colleges lack computer laboratories.

In Uzbek methodological science, the theoretical foundations of foreign language teaching have been developed by J. Jalolov, who formulated the principles of communicative methodology for Uzbek-speaking audiences, and by O‘. Hoshimov and I. Yoqubov, whose works on English teaching methodology remain basic textbooks for teacher training. The general pedagogical basis of technology

integration is described in the works of J. Yo‘ldoshev and S. Usmonov on pedagogical technologies, and of O‘. Tolipov and M. Usmonboyeva on their practical application. These authors emphasise that technology is not a goal in itself: it becomes effective only when it serves a clear didactic purpose and is combined with interactive methods.

For vocational colleges, the key methodological concept is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). T. Hutchinson and A. Waters define ESP as an approach in which all decisions about content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning. A future electrician needs to read wiring diagrams and safety instructions in English; a future programmer needs the English of software documentation; a future cook needs the English of menus, recipes and customer service. Modern technologies make ESP practically achievable in an ordinary technical school, because the Internet provides authentic professional materials — video instructions, technical texts, manufacturer websites — which no printed textbook can offer in such variety and currency.

Modern technologies and their application in vocational english classes

Practical experience and the analysis of literature allow us to single out several groups of technologies that have proved effective in teaching English to vocational students.

Multimedia presentations and interactive whiteboards. Programs such as PowerPoint and Canva, combined with a projector or interactive whiteboard, allow the teacher to present professional vocabulary visually: a photograph of a real engine part, a tool or an interface is far more informative for a vocational student than a translation in a wordlist. Visual support is especially important because many technical terms have no everyday equivalents in the students’ experience. Interactive whiteboard software also makes it possible to label diagrams, match terms with

pictures and check answers collectively, which increases the activity of the whole group.

Mobile applications. Applications such as Duolingo, Quizlet, Memrise and Kahoot have become widespread in Uzbekistan. Duolingo alone reports over 500 million registered users worldwide, which demonstrates the global scale of mobile language learning. In the vocational classroom, Quizlet is particularly valuable: the teacher can create sets of professional terms (for example, “Parts of a car engine” or “Kitchen equipment”) which students then revise on their own phones through flashcards, games and tests. Kahoot and Quizizz turn vocabulary revision into a competition, which strongly motivates adolescent learners. The author’s experience shows that students who avoid speaking in a traditional lesson willingly participate in mobile quizzes.

Video resources and podcasts. YouTube contains thousands of authentic videos directly connected with vocational specialities: equipment reviews, repair tutorials, safety briefings, cooking demonstrations. Watching a short authentic video with subtitles, followed by vocabulary work and discussion, develops listening skills and demonstrates to students that English is genuinely used in their future profession. Platforms such as TED-Ed and the British Council’s LearnEnglish website offer graded materials with ready-made exercises.

Learning management systems and messengers. Platforms such as Google Classroom and Moodle allow the teacher to distribute materials, collect homework and give individual feedback outside the limited classroom hours. In the conditions of Uzbekistan, the Telegram messenger plays a special role: group channels are used for sharing audio tasks, vocabulary lists and short tests, and practically every student has access to it. During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021, these instruments ensured the continuity of English teaching in vocational institutions and accelerated the digital competence of both teachers and students.

Artificial intelligence tools. Since 2022–2023, AI-based tools have entered language education. Chat-based AI assistants can simulate professional dialogues (for example, a conversation between a mechanic and a foreign client), generate texts of a given level and instantly correct grammar. Speech-recognition functions in applications allow students to practise pronunciation independently and receive immediate feedback. Research on AI in language learning indicates measurable gains in learner autonomy and writing accuracy, although the teacher's guidance remains decisive in setting tasks and evaluating results critically.

The effectiveness of these technologies in vocational education is supported by empirical data. International meta-analyses of CALL research report consistently positive effects of technology-supported instruction on vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension compared with traditional instruction. In the author's own practice at Technical School No. 2 of Kitob district, the systematic use of Quizlet sets of professional vocabulary and Telegram-based homework during one academic year was accompanied by a noticeable improvement in students' term tests and, equally important, in their willingness to attend and participate in English lessons.

Problems and conditions of effective integration

At the same time, the integration of technologies into vocational English teaching faces real obstacles. First, infrastructure remains uneven: not all rural technical schools have stable Internet, projectors in every classroom or computer laboratories available for language lessons. Second, the digital competence of teachers varies considerably; older teachers in particular need methodological support and training, which is one of the tasks set in Presidential Resolution No. PQ-5117. Third, there is a pedagogical risk of superficial use: a lesson does not become modern simply because a phone is switched on. If technology is used without a clear linguistic objective, it turns into entertainment and even distracts learners.

The analysis allows us to formulate the conditions under which technologies genuinely improve results in vocational colleges: (1) every digital activity must serve a concrete language aim connected with the students' speciality; (2) technologies should be combined with live communicative practice, not replace it; (3) tasks must take into account the real technical conditions of the institution — where there is no computer class, mobile phones and Telegram are a realistic alternative; (4) the teacher should gradually build learners' autonomy, teaching them to use applications and online dictionaries for independent professional self-development after graduation.

Conclusion

Modern technologies have changed the position of English in vocational education from a theoretical subject into a practical professional instrument. Multimedia presentations and authentic video make professional vocabulary visible and meaningful; mobile applications and game platforms raise motivation and provide intensive practice beyond limited classroom hours; learning management systems and messengers individualise feedback; and artificial intelligence tools open new possibilities for autonomous practice of speaking and writing. For students of technical schools and vocational colleges, whose goal is profession-oriented communicative competence, these instruments are not a fashionable addition but a methodological necessity, fully consistent with the state policy of Uzbekistan expressed in Presidential Decree No. PQ-1875, Resolution No. PQ-5117 and the strategy "Digital Uzbekistan — 2030".

However, technology by itself does not teach: it amplifies the pedagogy into which it is placed. The decisive factor remains the teacher, who selects resources according to the students' speciality and level, formulates clear communicative tasks and combines digital work with live interaction. Therefore, the further development of vocational English teaching requires parallel investment in infrastructure and in

the digital-methodological competence of teachers. Under these conditions, modern technologies become a powerful means of preparing vocational college graduates who can confidently use English in their professional activity and remain competitive in the national and international labour market.

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