The Contribution of ICT in the Learning and Teaching of English at CALI (Congo American Language Institute)

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Abstract: Technology has become an important aspect in our lives since it is used nowadays in different ways for different purposes. Technology has become an integrated part in all fields of our life. It is used a lot by different people everywhere and every time. It has revolutionized the way we live, interact with each other and the way we work (www.researchpublish.com).

The English language has become the dominant language at the international level and it is included in almost all fields of human life, among them we have education. This article is on the contribution of ICT in the learning and teaching of English at CALI. The Qualitative method was used, including open-ended questions and a survey questionnaire which allowed us to explore ideas and opinions of the sample constituted of 100 persons about our topic. The data collected demonstrated first that: Teachers from Congo American Language Institute Integrated Information and Communication Technology related methodologies to make teaching more efficient and to facilitate learning and improve performances; and second: Students learn English by using technology devices such as: smartphones, computers and tablets to read materials as videos episodes, audios, online books.

Keywords: ICT, Teaching, Learning, English, CALI.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology has become an important aspect in our lives since it is used nowadays in different ways for different purposes. Technology has become an integrated part in all fields of our life. It is used a lot by different people everywhere and every time. It has revolutionized the way we live, interact with each other and the way we work.

Today, the technological-integrated approaches are used widely as learning tools and as a pedagogical factor in education. They are used to facilitate the learning process and to develop the educational policies (www.researchpublish.com).

The modern age is termed as the era of knowledge explosion. English is as the most important language and it plays a major role in the process of globalization and knowledge explosion. It is the most common means of communication throughout the world. That is why it is called link language, global language, and lingua franca (www.ijrar.com).

Nowadays, the role and use of technology as a tool for teaching the English language is increasing as educators have understood its ability to create independent and collaborative learning environment in which students can learn English with much easy (www.researchgate.net).

Actually, we live in a multilingual world, and English serves as a lingua franca for education, trade and employment, and is an essential skill for anyone wanting to succeed professionally or academically in the 21st century (www.coursehero.com). English is no longer an unusual thing, but English has become the norm especially in globalization, it is used to cooperate in the world of business from different countries, and English has dominated in all aspects in terms of communication, almost all electronic devices are used in English.

In DRC, there is a new trend that gives the English language a different level that will elevate it to a sociolinguistic status of official language next to the French because, English is now involved in many areas of Congolese lifestyle, people are interested to learn English skills by attending English classes through English centers, the most usual ones (Buhendwa 2010, Malekani 2002, Kasoro 2002).

Speaking English in DRC has become a major asset in order to be competitive in the job market because nowadays, English is included in many fields of human being life as it was quoted previously, and to do, Congolese people use different ways and methods in order to acquire English skills, among them: attending English centers, English club sessions and so on.

The problem that led us to work and investigate this topic is the difference that I noticed among CALI students and those who learn or acquired English language skills elsewhere when they are performing English during different English Club I attended in different American Corners.

CALI in DRC is an English language training center considered to be the best in the whole country thanks to its high teaching that it offers to its students, that is the reason why This work is undertaken to investigate and to discover how CALI teachers teach English language to its students what makes them good, and how those students learn English skills.

I noticed that CALI student performances were more advanced than others, which had left me perplexed asking myself the question to know how do they speak English differently, some had a good performance, while others didn't perform well, yet they all learned the same language but in different English places. That is Reason why this study is undertaken to discover what make CALI students better than others who study the same language, how do they learn English. And for the purpose of this study.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. ICT

Information and communication technologies (ICT) is defined as a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. These technological tools and resources include computers, the Internet (websites, blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players, and storage devices) and telephony, fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing.

(https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/glossary/information-and-communication-technologies-ict).

> *English:*
English is a West Germanic language in the Indo-European language family, whose speakers, called Anglophones, originated in early medieval England on the island of Great Britain.[4][5][6] The namesake of the language is the Angles, one of the Germanic peoples that migrated to Britain after its Roman occupiers left. English is the most spoken language in the world, primarily due to the global influences of the former British Empire (succeeded by the Commonwealth of Nations) and the United States.[7] English is the third-most spoken native language, after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish;[8] it is also the most widely learned second language in the world, with more second-language speakers than native speakers (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language).

As time has passed, the global importance of English has increased considerably to the point that it is now considered as the main language of commerce, diplomacy, sciences and technology, and it is now so widely spoken and has such as level of influence that it is sometimes referred to the lingua franca of the modern era (www.lingoda.com).

➢ *Teaching*

Teaching is the practice implemented by a *teacher* aimed at transmitting skills (knowledge, know-how, and interpersonal skills) to a learner, a student, or any other audience in the context of an educational institution (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teaching).

➢ *Learning:*

Learning is a process of acquiring new understanding, knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, attitudes and preferences (https://en.wikipedia.org).

➢ *CALI:*

The Congo American Language Institute (CALI) was founded by the United States Embassy in Kinshasa in 1962 and has been the most renowned English training center in the Democratic Republic of Congo for over 60 years. Tens of thousands of Congolese students and professionals have learned English "The CALI Way." (https://www.calicongo.org/about).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants:

100 people from CALI (70 males, 30 females, 95 students and 5 teachers).

B. Instrumentation:

A survey questionnaire was used and given to teachers and students of CALI, including open-ended questions (qualitative design).

The questionnaire employed in this study had two major sections: the first set of our questionnaire was for teachers from CALI, and the second section was for students from CALI too, and they were 10 questions in all.

➢ *Section 1: For Teachers*

• *Question 1: Do you use ICTs related methodologies during your teaching? Why?*
This question aims to discover if CALI's teachers apply ICTs related methodologies to their teachings and to explore the reason why they apply them or not.

• *Question 2: How do you perceive ICT use in your English language teaching?*
This question aims to explore teacher's views on how they perceive ICTs use in their teachings.

• *Question 3: How do you manage these ICTs related methodologies in your teachings?*
The question aims to know how teachers manage all of those ICTs related methodologies for their teachings.

• *Question 4: What type of ICTs related methodologies do you use the most? Why?*
This question aims to discover what kind of ICTs related methodologies that teachers use the most for their teaching and the reason why they choose them.

• *Question 5: How do ICTs related methodologies help you to teach the four main English language skills to students?*
This aims to discover how use ICTs related methodologies help teachers to teach the four main English language skills to students.

➢ *Section 2*

• *Question: How do you learn the English language?*
This question aims to discover in what conditions students from Congo American Language Institute acquire the English language skills.

• *Question 2: Do you use ICTs tools while learning English? Why?*
This question aims to discover if students use ICTs while they are learning English, and why they use them.

• *Question 3: What is the most ICTs tools do you use while learning? Why?*
This question aims to discover the most ICTs tools use by students from Congo American Language Institute while learning English, and the reason of their choice.

• *Question 4: How do ICTs tools help you in improving the four main English language skills?*
This aims to explore how students from Congo American Language Institute learn and develop their English language skills while using ICTs devices.

• *Question 5: what is your perception about the contribution of ICTs devices during English learning? What is your feeling?*
The question aims to know student's views about the contribution of ICTs in English language learning and their feeling on that.

IV. THE RESULTS

➢ *Teachers*

The first question of the first section destined to teachers and asked to my informants was to discover if they really use ICTs related methodologies during their teaching, if YES, to give us also the reasons why they use them.

To this question, we noted the similarity of answers from teachers who accepted that they use ICT related methodologies in their teachings because they have many advantages that can be offered to both teach and students. After exchanges with them during our investigation, teachers said that ICT related methodologies enhanced engagement with tools such as videos episodes, interactive games and online quizzes which can prove more engaging for students, capturing their interest better than traditional methods. They deepened their thoughts saying that with ICT related methodologies, they have access to resources with the internet which provides a wealthy of resources, including: articles, podcasts and E-books allowing teachers to supplement their lessons with diverse materials, and according to them, many ICT tools, such as applications

provide instant feedback on quizzes and assignments, helping students identifying themselves areas for improvement.

The second question of the first section destined to teachers was to discover their perception on the contribution of ICT methodologies in their English language teaching.

To the first question, their answers were similar and they said they have a positive perception and good feelings on the contribution of ICT related methodologies in their English language teaching in fact that they provide to them the access to the internet where they can find all necessary documents including online articles, E-books and multimedia components.

For them, they perceive ICT related methodologies as a support to their teachings which facilitate collaboration among teachers through platforms that support group work, discussions and peer feedback.

The third question of the first section asked to my informants was to find out the way CALI teachers manage ICTs related methodologies in their teachings. And as the previous two questions, teachers answered the same way but everyone with his own arguments saying that they manage ICT related methodologies by integrating some of their tools in and out the classroom such as story bird or adobe spark that allow students to create their own digital stories using text, images and audios helping them develop narrative skills and creativity; there is also google docs which facilitate collaborative writing projects where students can work together in real time, providing peer feedback and editing.

The fourth question of the first section asked to teachers was to know the type of ICTs related methodologies they use the most in and out the classroom and why.

According to our informants, they always make a combination of flipped classroom method and challenge based-learning method.

They said that with flipped classroom method, students have to visualize a sequence of videos when they are at home before coming to attend the class, while the class time is devoted to exercises, projects and discussions. It is important to note in this method, the videos are used as a teaching resource, recorded by teachers themselves or are selected online. Students are free to visualize these videos many times, in or out the class.

With the challenge based-learning, they said that teachers give students some challenges connected with real situations, then asked students to work together in group and create collaborative space while sharing ideas with others (English club), and these exercises are important in fact that they help learners to find solutions to these different challenges and resolve them and improve their English skills too. We understood that in this method, everybody plays a role, they are all actors for the learning of English.

The fifth question of the first section asked to my informants was to know how ICTs related methodologies help teachers to teach the four main English language skills to students.

To the previous questions, teachers gave the same answers saying that ICT related methodologies help them a lot as a support to their English language teaching as regards the 4 main English language skills. They said that they often use different ICT related applications and devices that help students to improve the 4 main English language skills, among them: multimedia devices with the implication of computers, English applications, smartphones, online dictionaries, audio tapes.

➢ *Students*

The first question of the second section destined to our informants was to discover in which conditions students of the Congo American Language Institute acquire English skills. We should note that, I didn't take only into account what students told me, but I took also my time to see and observe in which conditions these students learn English, and I can reassure you that they are well equipped with a handout, they have CD containing lessons and home works, whiteboard with a projector for multimedia presentations, equally smartphones use is allowed during classes, and learners have free internet on the campus so that they can do their research easily and find necessary materials for their learning, and without forgetting good clean and air-conditioned rooms with good seats. Here are the conditions in which CALI students learn English.

The second question of the second section destined to our informants was to discover if students use ICTs while they are learning English, and why they use them.

After exchanging with them and according to answers they gave in the questionnaire, they agreed that they use ICTs during English lessons involving online and immediate researches while the teacher is teaching, to confirm or not what the teacher is saying, but also they use them to check some difficult words in the dictionaries.

It is important to note in that case, ICTs play an important role since they give students the opportunity to exercise themselves while class is going on, check the meaning of some difficult words they can find and resolve the problem by themselves; students use then self-centered and self-directed learning.

The third question of the second section asked to our informants was to know the most ICTs tools use by students of CALI while learning English, and the reason of their choice. According to their answers, most of ICTs tools use by students while learning are mobiles phones. They justified their answers by saying that the mobile phones are first of all easy to carry, easy to use while learning and they give them opportunity to use some English applications that they can't find in other devices such as computers and son on. They added saying that with mobile phones, they have the facility

to access in some resources fast as dictionaries that could take much time in other digital devices.

The fourth question of the second section destined to our informants was to explore how students of CALI improve their English language skills while using ICTs tools.

They said they improve their English skills while using ICTs tools by listening (using computers which provide visual and voice materials, broadcast) to improve their listening skills; they speak (using the internet voice chatting) to improve speaking skills.

They read (using multimedia software) and motivate them to improve reading skills and the vocabulary, and finally they write (using computers, taping texts or write electronic mails, or chatting with friends on different social medias) to improve writing skills.

The fifth question of the second section destined to our informants was to know student's views about the contribution of ICTs in English language learning and their feeling on that. The results show us that students feel good while exploring ICTs in or out classes, they have a positive feeling about the integration of ICT in the learning and teaching of English as the latter help them manage many works in the same time, with access to different materials. They think that the implication of multimedia in and out the classroom increases their understanding, it is interesting and enjoyable and they add that ICT through its different related methodologies have demonstrated better learning performance.

V. CONCLUSION

After a very long process of investigation on the *"Contribution of ICTs in the Learning and Teaching of English at CALI"*, data collected demonstrated that: Teachers from Congo American Language Institute Integrated Information and Communication Technology related methodologies to make teaching more efficient and to facilitate learning and improve performances; and Students learn English by using technology devices such as: smartphones, computers and tablets to read materials as videos episodes, audios, online books.

According to my respondents, the contribution of ICTs related methodologies in the learning and teaching of English is very important in fact that they are for them a support accompanying the teaching and learning, and give them the opportunity to improve learning and teaching in and out the classroom, and students think that they learn English skills better while having ICTs devices at their side.

It is very important to note that, the main reason that lead to the validation of our hypotheses in their totally is the fact that, the Congo American Language Institute provides ICTs devices as computer, internet, projector for multimedia presentations and interact whiteboard to both teachers and students, and that is the reason why all their answers were

similar, even if everyone tried to explain with his or her own words.

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