



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF USING INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Recently, technology has become an essential element of education, especially in the field of foreign language teaching. A widely used digital tool is the interactive whiteboard (IWB). This study examines the theoretical foundation that underpins the use of interactive whiteboards in language teaching. It examines how ideas such as constructivism, communicative language teaching, and multimodal learning support the advantages of IWBs in creating an engaging and motivating learning environment. The study highlights that although interactive whiteboards can improve language lessons, making them more engaging and student-focused, their success largely depends on the teacher's ability to use them creatively and effectively. Understanding the theoretical underpinnings enables educators to effortlessly integrate IWBs into their instructional strategies.

Introduction. In today's educational landscape, technology is crucial for improving how languages are taught and learned. The adoption of digital resources has become a key aspect of modern teaching methods, enabling educators to develop more dynamic and interactive classrooms. Warschauer (2011) points out that incorporating technology in learning settings alters not just the way students acquire knowledge but also the methodology used by teachers, underscoring the significance of digital skills in today's educational environments.

Among the various technological tools accessible, the interactive whiteboard (IWB) has garnered substantial attention recently. This tool combines the features of a traditional whiteboard with multimedia advantages, enabling educators and students to interact with digital resources in real-time (Glover & Miller, 2007). IWBs enhance a multimodal learning approach, which, as noted by Kress (2010), "encourages learners to engage with information via different sensory channels." This approach is particularly beneficial for foreign language instruction, as interactive and visual materials can improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Furthermore, the reasoning for using IWBs is based on constructivist and communicative theories of language teaching. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development highlights the importance of interaction and supportive educational settings, which are both improved through interactive technology. Similarly, the

communicative language teaching (CLT) approach promotes significant interactions and authentic communication, facilitated by IWBs via collaborative activities and the integration of digital material

Thus, exploring the theoretical principles behind the use of interactive whiteboards in foreign language teaching is essential for understanding their educational importance and for enhancing instructional techniques in technologically advanced classrooms. The use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in teaching foreign languages has attracted significant attention from scholars in recent years. A growing body of research emphasizes that IWBs introduce technological progress and represent a shift in teaching methods (Kennewell & Beauchamp, 2007). These tools promote engaging learning, boost student autonomy, and support diverse teaching methods that cater to different learning styles.

The theoretical basis for the use of IWBs in education stems from constructivist learning theory. Piaget (1972) claims that learners construct knowledge actively by interacting with their environment, instead of passively taking in information. Vygotsky (1978) further developed this idea with his sociocultural theory, highlighting that learning occurs most effectively through social interaction and collaboration. IWBs improve this engagement by enabling learners to partake in teamwork, discussions, and problem-solving tasks within a digital environment.

An additional theoretical viewpoint supporting the use of IWBs is communicative language teaching (CLT). Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasize that CLT focuses on the significance of meaningful communication and the active involvement of learners.

Additionally, multimodal learning theory provides an additional framework for understanding how IWBs enhance language acquisition. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) explain that multimodal learning combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, allowing learners to take in information through multiple pathways simultaneously. IWBs perfectly complement this theory by offering a platform that facilitates the concurrent display of text, audio, and visuals, enriching the language acquisition experience and addressing various learning preferences.

Research has also shown positive impacts of IWBs on student engagement and motivation. Cutrim Schmid (2008) found that students show greater involvement in classes that use interactive technology, and educators have observed improved classroom interaction and collaboration. Glover and Miller (2007) caution that the pedagogical benefits of IWBs depend significantly on how teachers incorporate them into their lessons, emphasizing that effective use requires both technical skill and methodological understanding.

The use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in foreign language classes has offered various educational advantages. A significant benefit is the increase in student engagement and excitement. Cutrim Schmid (2008) observes that students display increased enthusiasm to participate when classes include visual and interactive elements that spark curiosity and creativity. The captivating element of IWBs transforms traditional lessons into dynamic experiences where students can engage with digital resources, work on tasks at the board, and receive immediate feedback.

An additional significant benefit is the enhancement of collaboration and communication within the classroom. Glover, Miller, Averis, and Door (2007) indicate that

IWBs encourage collaborative learning by inspiring students to work together on language tasks and jointly tackle problems. This aligns with the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, which highlights interaction as key to language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Participating in pair and group activities on IWBs allows learners to improve both their language skills and their interpersonal communication abilities. Interactive whiteboards enhance multimodal learning, aiding students with varying learning styles. Kress (2010) observes that multimodal settings enhance comprehension by integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning approaches. For example, language instructors can utilize IWBs to present grammar charts, show pronunciation videos, or facilitate interactive vocabulary activities—all in one lesson. This variety of input aids learners in better retaining information and enhances understanding via contextualized illustrations.

Educators might emphasize the use of digital tools over pedagogical objectives, potentially resulting in shallow learning experiences (Kennewell & Beauchamp, 2007). IWBs must serve not just as visual aids, but also as instruments that promote communication, interaction, and a deeper comprehension.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the use of interactive whiteboards in teaching foreign languages presents various educational opportunities when supported by strong theoretical frameworks. Theories of constructivist, communicative, and multimodal learning provide a solid foundation for understanding how interactive whiteboards enhance student engagement, collaboration, and language acquisition. Overall, interactive whiteboards have the capacity to transform traditional classrooms into dynamic, learner-centered educational environments. When employed purposefully, they not only improve language skills but also foster digital literacy and student autonomy. Future research should focus on developing methodological frameworks and training programs for teachers that help them more effectively integrate interactive whiteboards into foreign language education.

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