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## **Information and Communication Technology in Language Learning**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis deals with the possible help of technology for learners of the English language, especially for those suffering from any kind of SLD. It describes the concept of a multisensory approach together with individually preferred learning styles applied in learning the language through the use of ICT tools, related methods, and benefits, and provides several practical examples. It is focused on the level of involvement of human senses in particular interactive ICT activities available for learning the English language.

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## Introduction

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there emerged new technology in various areas of life in human society that has improved any spheres of either interest or business. (Dudeny, 7) As Allen states, the continuous and rapid development of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) over the last years has proliferated into the vast range of human activities and the truth is that most of today's children possess relatively high level of ICT competences. The reason is that they use computers and the Internet almost daily. It has become an integrated part of everyday life both in school and leisure environment. (1-2) Children are familiar with using ICT media and tools, and it could be useful and challenging to incorporate them in the process of learning a foreign language as well.

Especially children who suffer from any of the specific learning disabilities (SLDs) such as dyslexia, dysorthographia and dyspraxia would appreciate new, different methods in learning the foreign language. This alternative approach, using ICT devices, respects learners' individualities and gives more space for a particular learning style preferred by each learner, and helps children to learn in a different way. They are enabled to see the subject matter from diverse angles and to experience dissimilar practices.

Moreover, and according to Dudeny, Internet access is becoming available to learners. It offers opportunities for cooperation and communication among learners online, virtually. It is considered as an endless source of information that could be instrumental in using authentic tasks and materials, as well as a wealth of ready-made ELT materials (7-8). Computer-based materials for language teaching which is also found on many published CD-ROMs for language teaching has become a part of the use of the Internet and web-based tools.

ICT media are divided into two broader categories; those used online and the others which are used offline. They were selected according to the diverse use of multisensory elements to widen learners' horizons and improve all four main language skills - reading, listening, speaking and writing. The main collection requirement was aimed at the level of interactivity provided in analyzed computer-based language-learning activities using the Internet and the World Wide Web, i.e. websites, software, digital media, or virtual environment including sending emails, chatting online, or e-learning.

## Research background

First of all, the main points of a multi-sensory approach in teaching and learning the English language together with both advantages and disadvantages will be closely observed and described in this part of this thesis. The aim is to find and discuss the methods of helping children who suffer from SLDs, especially dyslexia, dysorthographia and dysgraphia which are considered the most frequent and problematic learning disabilities in the classroom, through the means of ICT.

## Main part

As SLDs have been proved to become a real obstruction in the fluent process of learning, it is important for teachers to understand their specifics and be aware of possible differentiated and adapted methods, and approach to those learners. It is important to respect individual preferences in their style of learning as each learner has his or her own experienced way of gaining knowledge.

Visual Problems (difficulty that the brain has with handling information that the eyes see)	Poor visual memory, visual perception, figure ground discrimination, visual tracking
Auditory Problems (related to the processing of information that we hear)	Auditory memory, auditory discrimination, auditory sequencing, auditory figure ground (trouble hearing sounds over background noises)
Motor Problems (related to various motor functions of the body)	Eye hand co-ordination, small or large muscle control
Organizational Problems (poor ability in organizing time or space, or sequencing)	Poor ability to organize time, poor ability to organize tasks, poor ability to organize space, impairment of executive function (a person's ability to analyse things, apply information in a new way or adapt to new circumstances)
Conceptual Problems (understanding abstract concepts, complex language, consequences and social cues)	Difficulty in: interpreting non-verbal language, understanding figures of speech, anticipating the future; rigid thinking, poor social skills and peer relations

Table 1.

This article deals with new possibilities of how to improve learners' approach to studying a foreign language, especially through technology. The main point of this thesis is to pay attention to using as many senses as possible in learning English language and to find ways of how to help learners with special learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dysorthographia. It provides materials concerning multisensory approach and several practical examples of applying it in

learning English using ICT media.

## Conclusion

It brings alternatives in the process of acquiring foreign language. It is focused on providing learners self-studying possibilities using interactive exercises, intercommunication tools, or learning online as well. It is also concerned with finding out the ways of learners' motivation, building of their self-confidence in using the foreign language.

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