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## Use of Hot Potatoes Software for Language Teaching and Learning

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### Abstract:

In the digital world also known as technological world, where everything is under control of the internet and brand new technological inventions, it is difficult to undermine their contribution to foreign language teaching. It's a common misconception that mixing education and technology individualizes and singles out students in classroom. Every facet of our daily lives is in one way or another saturated by the use of technology tools which have proven to enrich and make our lives a little easier every day. Tools such as videos, podcasts, worksheet banks, special teaching platforms, applications, and websites, alongside with technological devices, are extremely beneficial. Technological advancements have made everything a little better for citizens of the modern age. The educational sector is no exception here; technology has been exponentially beneficial for language learning, teaching and overall development (Maszkowska, N).

Maszkowska said that second language learning such as foreign languages is a process as complex as second language teaching whether it is for primary levels, secondary level or tertiary level, and various factors contribute to and combine together in order to achieve the success of this endeavour. To result in a favourable outcome, teachers have to devote a lot of time and effort to determine the most satisfactory, suitable and effective methods of teaching. Not only everyday reality is affected by the new technology, but also the development of language skills started to depend on it. As the number of English learners is ever increasing, fortunately, more and more modern tools i.e. Web tools such as Kahoot, Edmodo, Wiki, Nicenet, Podcast, Flubaroo etc. Social tools like WhatsApp, Hike, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, software such as Audacity, Hot Potatoes, Movie Maker and technology devices are implemented into the process of teaching. Currently, teachers tend to use tools such as videos, podcasts, Nicenet, wiki, audios, Kahoot, Edmodo, Flubaroo, worksheet banks, e-learning platforms, applications, and websites, accessible through electronic devices such as personal computers, laptops or smart phones. These inventions facilitate classroom environment and diversify learning activities.

Further, if we look at the history, technological devices, tools, applications were coined or founded in the past decay and if we look the present scenario, we come to know that technological tools are still not brought in the classroom for language teaching. Still they are away from the classroom and they feel like they are orphan

though they are founded. Nobody tries to bring it in the classroom. On other hand, teachers also face problems while teaching and engaging whole class. Today's world is known for technological advancement. Technology offers new ways for language teaching. So it is Hot Potato Software which is one of the most powerful softwares among other softwares, which helps the teachers to teach language. The Hot Potatoes suite includes six applications, enabling you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises for the World Wide Web. Hot Potatoes is freeware, and you may use it for any purpose or project you like. It is not open-source. The Java version provides all the features found in the windows version, except: you can't upload to hotpotatoes.net and you can't export a SCORM object from Java Hot Potatoes

Hence, the present paper entitles, '*Use of Hot Potatoes Software for Language Teaching*' focuses on how the new technology provides new ways to teach a language. How Hot Potato Software is helpful for teachers to teach a language than the old talk and chalk method. One of the intensions behind writing this paper is the make aware about available tools, devices, applications for language teaching to the teachers and here the concept of Hot Potatoes, importance of Hot potatoes, research question, use of applications i.e. JMatch used to create matching exercises, this means that a list of items appears on one side, and each one must be matched up to an item on the other side, JMix used to make jumble exercises and can be jumbled the words in a sentence, or the letters in a word and it has two output formats: standard, and drag-drop, JCross used to make crossword exercises. There are two steps to making an exercise: first enter your letters in the grid, then add the clues. To enter letters in the grid, click on a square and type a letter, JCloze used to make gap-fill or cloze exercises, JQuiz used for making question-based exercises; each quiz can consist of an unlimited number of questions. There are four basic question types such as Multi choice question, multi select question, hybrid questions and short answer, and JMasher a different kind of application from the others in the Hot Potatoes suite. It's intended to help you make larger units of materials, linked together. The Masher is also used to upload files in teaching, advantages of applications are covered in the present paper.

**Key Words:** Hot Potatoes, software, application, Language

### **Introduction**

"...Technology is not a panacea or a magic bullet that suddenly transforms all learning. The effectiveness of educational technology depends on how it is employed to meet educational goals for particular kinds of students in specific language learning environments...." (Oxford and others, 1998: 13).

Computer has undoubtedly made a remarkable contribution in the teaching of subjects. It has offered valuable service to the learners and provided them with a powerful motivating force for a productive study. The rapid development of computer technology together with the use of computers by linguists and literary researchers

have paved the way for introducing computer in language teaching and learning. With the advent of Internet and multimedia, studies in recent years have shown an explosion of interest in using computers for foreign language teaching and learning. Computer technology has become an important tool in the teaching and learning process. The advent of new technologies in learning process is always exciting. They add new dimensions to the class and spark students to a higher level of motivation and achievement. Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) gives some impetus to both the teacher and the student. For the former, it makes the course design easier, and for the latter, it creates numerous possibilities for active interaction and offers larger horizons to be directly involved in new concepts and ways of thinking (Panourgia, n.d).

In the second half of the 20th century, education technologies were one of the most developed areas in the world. Computers, which were introduced at school life in the late 1950s in developed countries, have entered schools in all parts of the world. Today, they have become more powerful, faster, easier to use, more convenient and cheaper, and their capacity to store data has increased tremendously. Equipment such as hard disks, CD ROMs, laser disks and printers used with computers has also developed rapidly. Using these, a computer program can handle sound, pictures and video (Gündüz, 2005). Computers have decreased in price dramatically over the last ten years. At the same time, they have become much more powerful, yet smaller in size, more adaptable, more flexible, and easier to use. As a result, schools and governments have devoted resources to computer literacy, or knowledge about computers and computing. Today, we are living in an era where changes occur very rapidly. The nature and direction of changes taking place around the world, and more precisely within the educational system, reinforce the need for a new approach based mainly on the recent technologies of only the last few decades. Such an approach is CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and it describes the use of a computer as part of a language course.

#### **What Hot Potatoes is**

Hot Potatoes is shareware from Half-Baked Software which is based at the University of Victoria in Canada. It is a program that allows you to make six different types of self-test exercises. These exercises can also quite easily be imported into an LMS like Moodle to be used for assessment of learning content (Anonymous, n.d.).

Hot Potatoes was originally meant to create language exercises, and some Hot Potatoes exercises (like jumbled sentence) have little use otherwise. However, most exercises can be used for any subject (Anonymous, n.d.).

Hot Potatoes is shareware. That means you can freely download the program from the Internet. The Hot Potatoes suite is a set of six authoring tools, created by the Research and Development team at the University of Victoria Humanities Computing and Media Centre. They enable you to create interactive Web-based exercises of several basic types. The exercises are standard Web pages using XHTML 1.1 code for display, and JavaScript (ECMAScript) for interactivity. These core W3C standards

are supported by all good modern browsers, including Internet Explorer 6+, Mozilla 1.2+, Phoenix, Safari, and many others. The authoring tools will also handle Unicode, so you can create exercises in virtually any language, or in a mixture of languages (Anonymous, n.d.).

You don't need to know anything about XHTML or JavaScript to use the programs. All you need to do is to enter your data texts, questions, answers etc. and the programs will create the Web pages for you. Then you can post them on your Web site. However, the programs are designed so that almost every aspect of the pages can be customized, so if you do know HTML or JavaScript code, you can make almost any change you want to the way the exercises work or to the format of the Web pages (Anonymous, n.d.).

Hot Potatoes v. 6.3 is freeware. You are welcome to use it for any project you like, for as long as you like. You will be prompted to register when you start the application. This process simply asks for your name, and stores it in the system registry; your name will be inserted into exercises you create with Hot Potatoes, identifying you as the author of the exercises. It will not be sent to us or to anyone else (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **General description of the program**

General description of the program Exercises are made in two steps. First, you create the so-called 'data file' which has a Hot Potato XML extension (like .jcw or .jcl). This file is useless without the Hot Potatoes program but is used to edit the exercises later. The exercises are exported to web-based exercises (which have the HTML extension .htm) which can be displayed anywhere on the Web. Note that you CANNOT RELOAD THE WEB PAGES INTO THE PROGRAM, so it is important to save your data files (Anonymous, n.d.).

Before creating a Hot Potato exercise, you need to think about what you want to achieve with it. Do you want students to learn vocabulary items? Then the gap text (JCloze) or the short answer quiz (JQuiz) are the best choices. If you wish to test text comprehension, the multiple choice (JBC) or matching (JMatch) exercises are more suitable (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **Use of Applications of Hot Potatoes for Language Teaching and Learning**

The Hot Potatoes software offers different applications which can be used for language teaching and learning. Here is the brief and accurate explanation how it can be used and how it is useful for teachers and students for language teaching and learning respectively.

#### **JQuiz**

JQuiz is a tool for making question-based exercises. Each quiz can consist of an unlimited number of questions. There are four basic question types. In multiple-choice questions, the student chooses an answer by clicking on a button. If the answer is correct, the button caption will change to a smiley face :-), and if it's wrong, it will change to an X (you can configure these bits of text in the configuration screen). In

either case, the student will see feedback specific to that answer, explaining why it's right or wrong (assuming you write the feedback when you make the exercise!). If the answer is wrong, the student can continue choosing answers until a correct answer is selected. The score for each question is based on the number of tries taken to get a correct answer. Once a correct answer is chosen, the scoring is "frozen", but the student can still click on buttons to see the feedback for other answers without penalty.

In short-answer questions, the students has to type the answer into a text box on the page, and press a Check button to see if it is correct. The page will try to match the student's answer to a list of correct or incorrect answers you have defined. If a match is found, the feedback for that answer will be shown. If not, then the page will try to find the nearest match among the specified correct answers, and signal to the student which parts of their answer are right and which parts are wrong. The score for each question is based on the number of attempts the student makes before getting a correct answer. You can also include a Hint button, which will give the student one letter of the answer; using the Hint button incurs a penalty on the score (Anonymous, n.d.).

A hybrid question is a combination of a multiple-choice question and a short-answer question. In this type of question, the student is first presented with a text box and asked to type the answer. However, if the student fails to get the answer right after a specified number of tries (which you can configure in the configuration screen), the question changes to a multiple-choice question to make it easier (Anonymous, n.d.).

Finally, a multi-select question asks the student to select several of a specific set of items. The idea here is that the student must select all the correct items, and not select all the wrong items. This type of question might take the format "Which of the following are nouns?", followed by a list of words. The student must check all the nouns, but not check any answers which are not nouns, then press a Check button. If the answer is not completely correct, the student will see a readout of the number of correct choices, and one piece of feedback; this would be the feedback from the first item in the list which was either selected when it shouldn't be selected, or not selected when it should be selected (Anonymous, n.d.).

To try out all these question types, go to this example quiz. For an example of how to make a quiz in JQuiz, check out the "Three Steps" link below. For more information on how JQuiz works, check out the Help file -- just start JQuiz and press the F1 key (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **JCloze**

JCloze is used to make gap-fill or cloze exercises. The idea of a gap-fill exercise is that the student completes all the answers before checking; in other words, it's a holistic exercise. When all the answers have been entered, the student presses the Check button to mark the answers. Correct answers will be inserted into the text; any incorrect answers will be left in textboxes, so that they can be corrected. When the student checks an answer that is not completely correct, a penalty is incurred, so

the score depends on the number of checks required before the answer is completely correct (Anonymous, n.d.).

In a JCloze exercise, you can include a Hint button which will give the student one free letter of the answer he or she is currently working on (based on where the cursor is). You can also include a specific clue for each gap. Using the Hint or Clue buttons (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **JMatch**

JMatch is used to create matching exercises. Basically, this means that a list of items appears on one side, and each one must be matched up to an item on the other side.

JMatch output comes in two types: standard and drag-drop. The standard output uses a drop-down list of items on the right. This is the format to use when you have more than seven or eight items, and the items on the right are only text; if you have only a few items, and especially if the items are graphics, you may want to use the drag-drop format. Don't use the drag-drop format if you have more than eight items, because scrolling on the page will make dragging and dropping difficult (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **JMix**

JMix is used to make jumble exercises. You can jumble the words in a sentence, or the letters in a word. Like JMatch, JMix has two output formats: **standard**, and **drag-drop**. For examples, see this standard exercise and this drag-drop exercise (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **JCross**

JCross is used to make crossword exercises. There are two steps to making an exercise: first enter your letters in the grid, then add the clues. To enter letters in the grid, click on a square and type a letter (Anonymous, n.d.).

### **The Masher**

The Masher is a different kind of application from the others in the Hot Potatoes suite. It's intended to help you make larger units of materials, linked together. The Masher is also used to upload files which are not Hot Potatoes exercises to the www.hotpotatoes.net server.

The Masher has its own tutorial, click on Help / Tutorial in the Masher program, or go there now, and a detailed Help file with full instructions.

### **Advantages of Applications**

- Multiple choice questions can be used for any subject. They are most effective when they give good feedback to your learners (why is an answer wrong/correct) (Anonymous, n.d.).
- Short-answer Quiz questions are good in combination with sound clips, definitions or gap sentences, but keep in mind that there can be only one answer (and if there are more correct answers we must include all of them!). Therefore translation exercises are not a good choice, because there are often many possible correct translations. Also, if spelling is not crucial to your subject, you'll find that you will have to think of all the possible ways learners can spell a word – a daunting task! (Anonymous, n.d.).

- Crosswords bring a playful element into your study material, but they need to contribute something (like testing knowledge or having learners train certain skills). The quality of the clues determines much of the success (Anonymous, n.d.).
- Matching exercises can be used in any situation where understanding of a subject can be expressed in the combination of two objects or phrases. It is possible to combine for example pictures with explanations (provided the pictures are small and the explanations not too long. The drag and drop version (DHTML) looks nice but works only with certain browsers!) (Anonymous, n.d.).
- Cloze texts can be used for any type of fill in exercises, with or without wordlist at the top and with or without extra clues given. Learners are trained in understanding as well as spelling. Cloze texts must not be too long (especially not if they have a wordlist at the top; avoid too much scrolling!) (Anonymous, n.d.).
- The jumbled sentence exercise is suitable for any type of activity in which the learner has to order something (e.g. the lines of a poem) (Anonymous, n.d.).

### Conclusion

Hot Potatoes Software has important potential for English language teaching and learning. If used properly with clear educational objectives, it can interest and motivate learners of English. It can increase information access to the learner, provide flexibility to instruction and thereby better serve the individual's learning pace, cognitive style and learning strategies. It allows learners to control their own learning process and progress. Using effective and suitable software's applications, it can provide communicative meaningful language learning environments. Software can offer a balance of controlled practice and free communicative expression to the learners, including immediate feedback. In the future, with the advance of computer technologies, it is expected that different softwares will be able to absorb some teaching functions. However, despite greater user friendliness, and effectiveness, Hot Potatoes and other softwares will never replace the teacher. Like other new technologies, Hot Potatoes is not a magic solution to language teaching. The effectiveness of Hot Potatoes relies on how Hot Potatoes is utilized to meet language learning goals for individualized learners in specific educational settings.

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