G-mail: What I know my teachers didn’t know

This presentation includes detailed information about Gmail, its functions, and its implications on language education from two perspectives: students’ and teachers’ perspectives. The presentation will be ended with discussion about future implications and considerations of Gmail.

Although e-mail is not a new technology especially for language learners, new email system, Gmail, adds a new dimension to the e-mail technology enhancing language learning for both learners and teachers. Firstly, with Gmail, students can see messages in a context. In other words, if there was a reply to a message a student sent or received, Gmail will automatically display it in chronological order with the original. This conversation view continues to grow as students respond and new replies arrive, making it possible for students to follow the whole back and forth discussion in one place. In that, language outcome that learners have produced will always be presented in a context enabling students to comprehend the discourse, and thus helping the learners to realize the corrections implicitly.

Secondly, as texts are presented in a context, Gmail serves as a kind of blogger, but with some differences. The first difference is that communication in Gmail is within a circle of friends. That is, students who have Gmail account can invite up to six people to get Gmail account and Gmail has a contact list that can automatically provided through received e-mails and adding contact features. Therefore, students write to their friends and receive responses from them. Another benefit of G-mail over blogger is that while blogger has the general policy to write in native language, which discourages especially intermediate level language learners to integrate into this environment, Gmail can help these learners since it does not force to use of native language.

Due to being user friendly, wonderful search facilities and automatic labeling and storing systems, Gmail can enhance learners’ access to information they are looking for in their e-mail accounts. Hence, finding information is easier compared to other e-mail servers. Besides, Gmail can be beneficial to language learners as it provides authentic input in emails. In Gmail there are highly relevant, text ads adjacent to the body of the email and some links to related web pages they might find of interest unlike other email servers which have pop-ups, untargeted banner ads or warnings urging them to buy more storage.

Moreover, teachers can use Gmail both as a storage and a database while they are communicate with students. They can store and search in a well-organized format while they are communicating with their students and colloquies.

To sum up, Gmail can provide both comprehensible and authentic input and a chance to produce output during language learning. Students and teachers take benefits in terms of storing, organizing, searching, most importantly being provided a context which is a very important feature in language learning.