

iPads in Teaching and Learning English
for Speakers of Other Languages

Approved:  Date: May 13, 2016

John Nkemnji,

iPads in Teaching and Learning English
for Speakers of Other Languages

A Seminar Research Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Science

In

Education

By

Xia Yaoyang (Joe)

2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me in the course of my study. First, I would like to thank the instructors in my program for providing me with nourishment both mentally and physically. The food for thought kept me going on well during my studies. I would like to give my special thanks to Dr. John Nkemnji for his patience and guidance during the research and writing of my paper. Also I want to thank the staff in writing center for helping with the editing and revision of my paper.

Second, I want to thank the students and staff of the University of Wisconsin - Platteville. I thoroughly enjoyed my stay and studies at the university of Wisconsin-Platteville Campus. Thank you, Caleb, for your coffee machine which helped me stay up.

Finally, and most important, I want to thank my parents for their support, without their support, I would not have been able to study in Platteville.

ABSTRACT

iPads in Teaching and Learning English for Speakers of other Languages

Xia Yaoyang (Joe)

Under the Supervision of Professor John Nkemnji, Ph.D.

This paper discusses how the iPad helps English learners of other languages overcome the obstacles in language learning, increases the chances of language exposure, and applies the language in a way which students can enjoy themselves and feel confident. The teachers should use the contents available on the iPad as toolkits for English teaching. In order to improve students' language performance, the apps should be arranged to make for good workflow and used routinely. The students need to make their own digital portfolios to show their ability and achievements with multimedia in their language learning.

Key words: iPad, apps, English teaching, language learning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE	i
TITLE PAGE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION1	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Definition of Terms	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	2
Delimitation of the Study	2
Methodology	2
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	3
Useful built-in features	3
Contents for education	4
Contents for teaching and learning ESOL	6
Activities available.....	13
III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15
REFERENCES	16

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Table 1	Applicability of word picking methods of Eudic	7
---------	--	---

Figures

Figure 1	Education contents for iPad	4
Figure 2	Gliksman's categories of apps in education	5
Figure 3	Dicken & Churches' categories of apps in education	6
Figure 4	Dictionary sets in Eudic	8
Figure 5	Phrasal verb "put ___" in iThoughts	10
Figure 6	An outline view of iThoughts	11

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mobile devices, like cellphones, were once prohibited by primary and secondary schools as they might distract the students. However, they are now adopted as teaching tools in some schools. The iPad is one of the most popular devices as its weight and size are similar to the book and it has plenty of useful apps and functions. It has been used for English language learning inside and outside classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

What roles does the iPad play in the ELT (English learning and teaching) classroom? What kinds of apps can assist in teaching English? What kinds of activities have been designed and are used now?

Definition of Terms

iPad: a tablet computer designed by Apple Inc., first released in 2010. Now, it has three series, with three different sizes: iPad mini (7.9 inch), iPad (9.7 inch), iPad Pro (9.7 inch/12.9 inch).

iOS: the operating system on iPad, iPhone, and iPod. iOS devices (or simply “i” devices) in this article refer to the iPad, iPhone, and iPod.

OS X: the operating system on Mac.

Apps: short for applications, the programs run on the mobile devices.

App Store: an application market where users buy all kinds of apps running on their iPads, iPhones/iPods.

iBooks: a built-in app on iPad for reading e-books. It also refers to the e-books distributed on Apple’s iBooks Store which are available on Mac, iPad, iPhone/iPod. iBooks can also be created by users with some kinds of iOS apps (e.g.), or iBooks author (an app on

Mac). Both ePub (another popular e-book format) and iBooks e-books contains texts and pictures, but only iBooks can be embedded with audios, videos, and other widgets realized by the book creators.

ESL: English as second language.

ESOL: English for speakers of other languages

Purpose of the Study

This paper aims to discuss the application of the iPad in the ELT classroom, categorize the apps, and introduce ways in English language teaching classroom.

Significance of the Study

This study focuses on using the iPad to teach English in a general view. It will also involve its application in activities.

Delimitation of the Study

This secondary research will be conducted in and through the Karmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville using the UW-Search tool beginning Feb. 1, 2016 through May. 1, 2016. Search of the literature will be conducted via the Internet through JSTOR, Project Muse, and Worldcat as the primary sources. Key search topics included “iPad”, “classroom”, “teaching”, “learning”, “ELT”, and “TESOL”.

Methodology

The literature review will be conducted with articles focusing on teaching resources on the iPad. The secondary research will discuss the cases mentioned in publications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The iPad itself is an interactive tablet with useful apps and other sources. It has the capability to do what a computer can do (e.g. photo editing, though with a limited potential), and what a computer can't do (e.g. photo taking with cameras on both sides, switching between portrait and landscape orientations directly). "What exactly is an iPad" has been discussed since it was first introduced, mostly focused on whether it is a computer or not (Thorntwaite, 2014a). Dickens & Churches (2013) say iOS devices have been thought as "media playing, communication and collaboration enabling, web surfing, and book reading tools", but these functions also turned them from "a device for consumption" to "a device for production" (p. xii). Together with its user-friendly built-in functions and long battery life, it gains flexibility in educational settings. As Foote (2014) mentioned, "the flexibility of the iPad as a tool has made it a go-to device for teachers and students" (p. 212).

Useful built-in features

As a leading tablet, the iPad has many built-in features which ease teaching and learning. The multi-touch screen facilitates the interaction between user and iPad. The Slide Over and Split View allow users to do multiple tasks at the same time. An Apple Pen which works on the latest model, iPad Pro, enables users to jot and draw. Among all those features, a noticeable function which fits the classroom presentation and sharing best is to display the screen of iPad in front the classroom.

With a lightning to VGA adapter (or lightning to HDMI adapter), the screen of iPad can be easily mirrored to the projector, TV, or interactive whiteboard like a laptop or desktop, so teachers and students can share slides, photos and videos. However, it is inconvenient

switching the iPad from one to another, because the iPad needs to be connected physically with the adapter.

Another way for mirroring is to use Airplay, a built-in function of iOS (and OS X) (Apple Inc., 2016). In the classroom, when Apple TV gets connected to the project, TV, or interactive whiteboard through HDMI cable (or with an adapter if the VGA devices are being used), students as well as teachers can display their iOS screens on the projector screen wirelessly, and switch seamlessly (Yip, 2014). This made it “a wonderful way for students to share” and “a real bonus for collaborative activities” (Gliksman, 2015).

Contents for education

Besides the features, the contents are also supportive for education settings. One can find useful contents on App Store (apps, e.g. Eudic), iBooks (e-books), iTunes U (courses) and iTunes (music, movies, TV shows, podcasts) on their iPads (Apple Education, 2015a).

Figure 1. Education contents for iPad



As all contents (including iBooks, iTunes U, Podcast etc.) are fulfilled by apps, Gliksman (2015) puts them into categories by their functions. Many apps have multiple functions (all-in-one), which makes it a common phenomenon that an app in one category is also in another.

Other than the functions, teachers can also see the contents from the perspective of the areas they can be used. Based on the disciplines the apps can be applied in middle school,

Churches & Dickens (2013) makes them into 9 parts. They suggest teachers to use apps as their own toolkits in the teaching for the subjects.

Figure 2. Gliksman's categories of apps in education

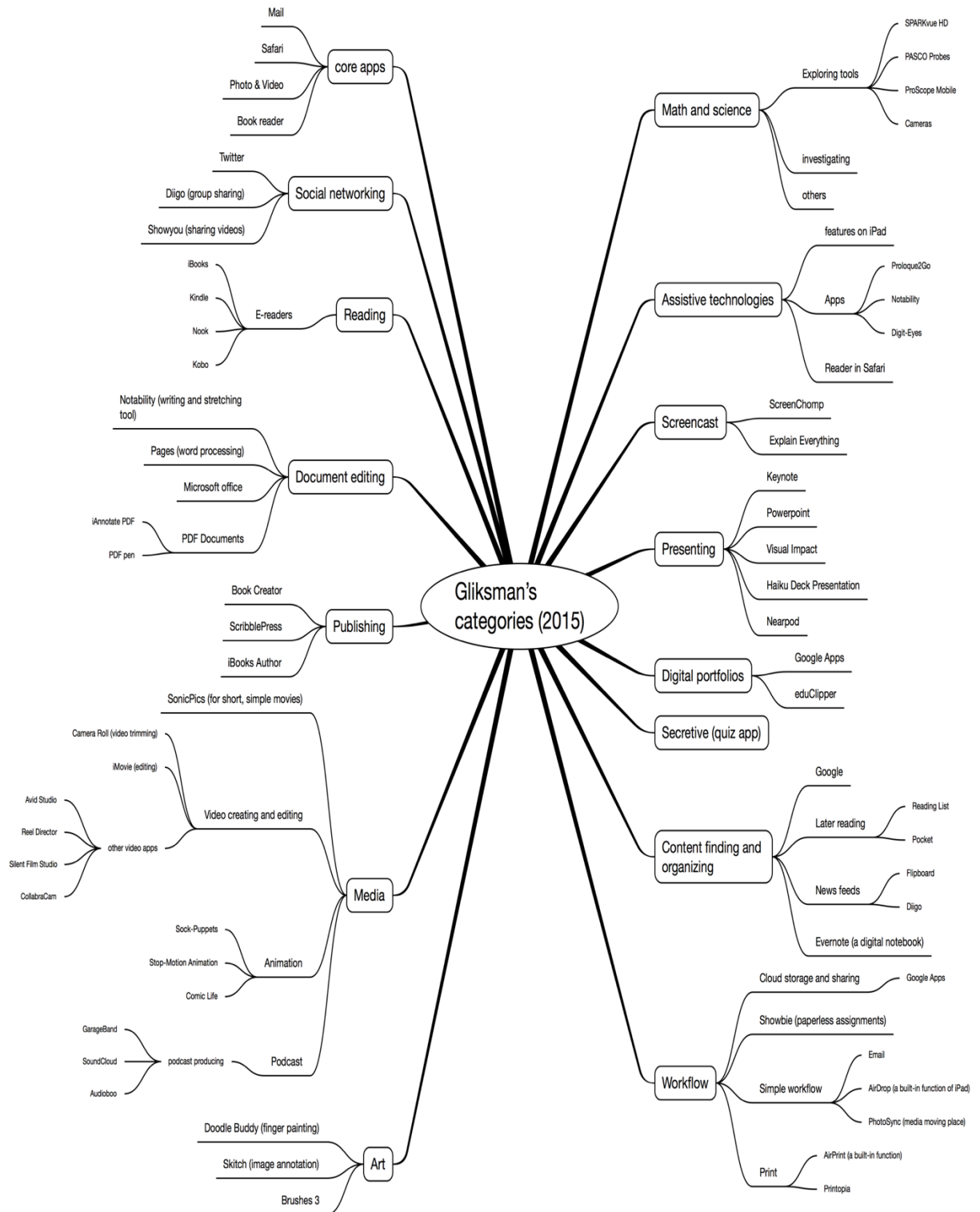
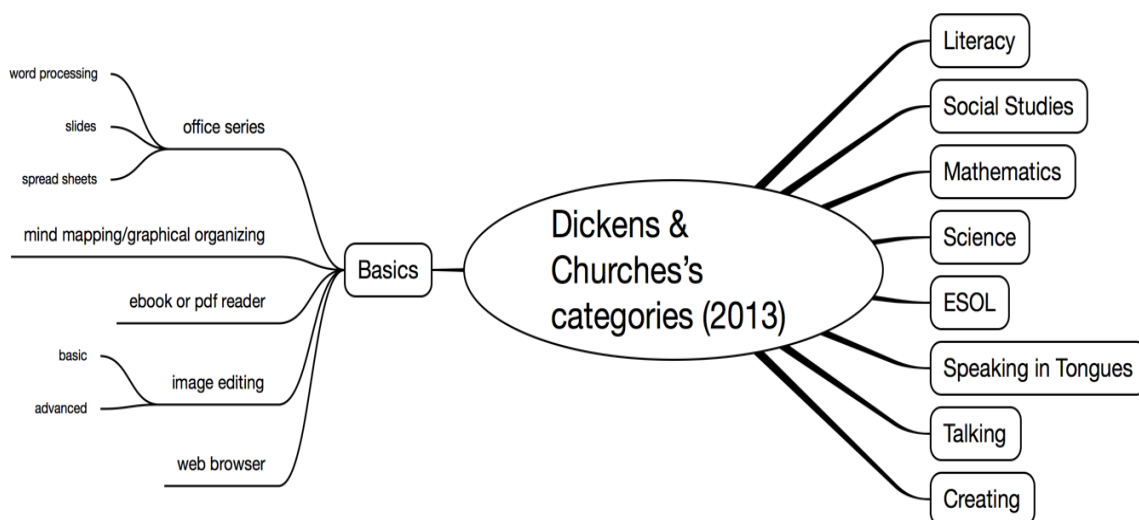


Figure 3. Dicken & Churches' categories of apps in education



Contents for teaching and learning ESOL

With so many materials available on the iPad, contents need to be sifted. The large amount of apps makes it “easy to get lost in the crowd” (Nichols, 2013, p. 3). Five key considerations in selecting apps are specified by Apple Education (2015b): developmental appropriateness (for target age), instructional design (meet learning goals), engagement and motivation (create engaging environment), balance of interactive features (e.g. between learning and fun), and accessibility (e.g. apps for users with different levels, multiple learning modalities supporting) (p. 3).

In ESOL, language focused contents (apps, podcasts, iTunes U courses, iBooks designed specifically for language teaching and learning) are always the tools that teachers can search for. Non language focused contents also can play an important role, they can either provide an authentic language immersed context, or help learners in their language practice and production in class and in daily life. In this part, several apps and podcasts will be covered.

Digital dictionary -Eudic

Vocabulary plays the most important role in the language learning. Using a dictionary wisely helps vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension etc. Prichard (2011) points out using dictionary strategically can help students overcome the lack of lexical coverage in reading comprehension and have a better understanding on the text.

Eudic is an e-dictionary which works on multiple platforms (Windows, Android, OS X, iOS). With the features of different operation systems, some functions on one kind of device may not work on another.

On iPad, Eudic can pick up the words by typing, dictation (a built-in speech to text function of iOS), and long press on the word in the text (if a document has been imported into the app).

Table 1. Applicability of word picking methods of Eudic

Word picking	Situations works	Situations not available
Typing	Most situation	Spelling is unknown
Dictation	Speech/sound	Voice is not clear/with an accent
Long press	Documents(esp. pdf)	Conversations

Typing on a virtual keyboard is a common way to input a word on tablets, it is the not the fast way to look up as it takes time to type on a tablet without a real keyboard. But as long as the users know the spelling, they will find their words.

Dictation is a built-in speech-to-text function of iPad. It's not as reliable as typing because when the speaker speaks the word without so much accent and in a moderate speed, they will get a correct word. This approach works when the learner hears a word and can repeat

and pronounce the word. It works in the situation when learners can have a pause for searching in their listening, e.g. listening to the podcast or talking with English speakers.

Long press on a word in other apps will pop up several options in which there's a "define" option that can show users the meaning in the iPad built-in dictionaries. This function facilitates student's reading when they encounter unknown words. But it takes at least two steps of operation and the location where pop up box comes out changes which brings learners some inconvenience. In Eudic, after the long press, the meanings of the pressed word just come out in a pop up box. This function works on the scanned pdf as well as the searchable ones, which makes a difference with other e-dictionaries.

With Eudic learners can search a word or phrase in several dictionaries at the same time as long as the databases of the dictionaries have been imported. If a word or phrase does not exist in one dictionary, it may appear in another. So users don't need to switch between different dictionary apps or flip through print dictionaries to find the meanings they want. The dictionaries imported can be an illustrated dictionary, a bilingual one, a simplified one etc. Learners with different language proficiency can choose their own dictionary sets for their searching (accessibility).

Figure 4. Dictionary sets in Eudic



Students can create several "glossary notebooks" based on their own needs e.g. "new words", "animals", "ingredients", that help them review the words they've looked up previously. These notebooks can be exported in csv files for learners' further study or saved in the cloud and synced with other devices – PC, Mac, and Android.

The words searched before also can be found in the "history", like the browsers do. Students can check what they've come across later if they forgot to put them in the "glossary notebooks".

In this app, learners can review the words in their glossary notebooks by the flashcard game.

The dictionary makes the process of looking up easier and less time consuming. Students can use it in their extensive and intensive reading and listening.

With the ways picking up words fitting in different situations and the multiple dictionaries searching at one time, this app helps learners look up words and phrases more sufficiently. Learners become more confident and willing to read the materials which might be difficult and boring before.

However, limitations do exist in this app. One of the problems is that this app only has Chinese user interface, which makes it not applicable for non-Chinese English learners. An update for an English interface is needed for other English learners.

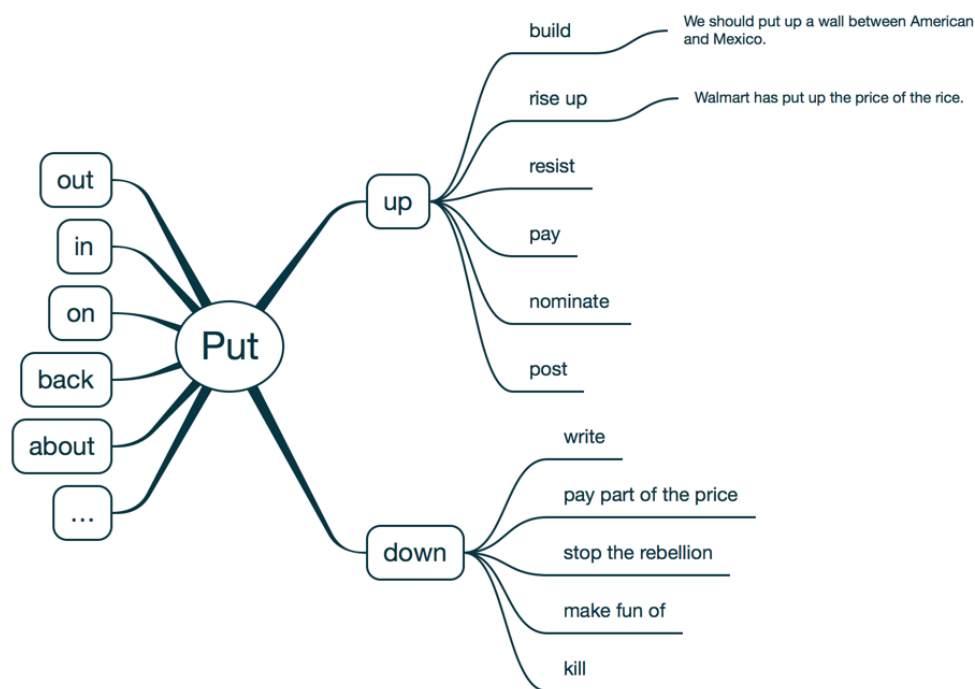
Mind map -iThoughts

Though with a long history in practice, mind map, which was first conceptualized by Tony Buzan, an author and educational consultant, in his BBC TV series in 1974 (Gee, n.d.) was described as a tool for “manuscripts and ‘cribs’ for lectures and presentations”, note-taking, project management, knowledge management and exam preparation (Rustler, 2012, p. 14).

iThoughts is an app designed for mind mapping which has both “i” devices and Mac (iThoughtsX is the name in Mac App Store) versions and can be synchronized through iCloud or Dropbox, and shared through e-mail with itmz (its own format), pdf, website (html), image (png), Microsoft Office files (docx –Word, pptx –PowerPoint, cvs –Excel, xml –Project), markdown (a text format), or other mind map format, which makes it easy for collaborative work. It is used in brain storming, outlining, planning or in Wei’s (2013) words “visually their (students’) thoughts, ideas and information”, as well as making comparisons (Dickens & Churches, 2013, p. 7). Dickens & Churches (2013) put it into their “tools for the basics” which suits nearly every subjects (p. 12).

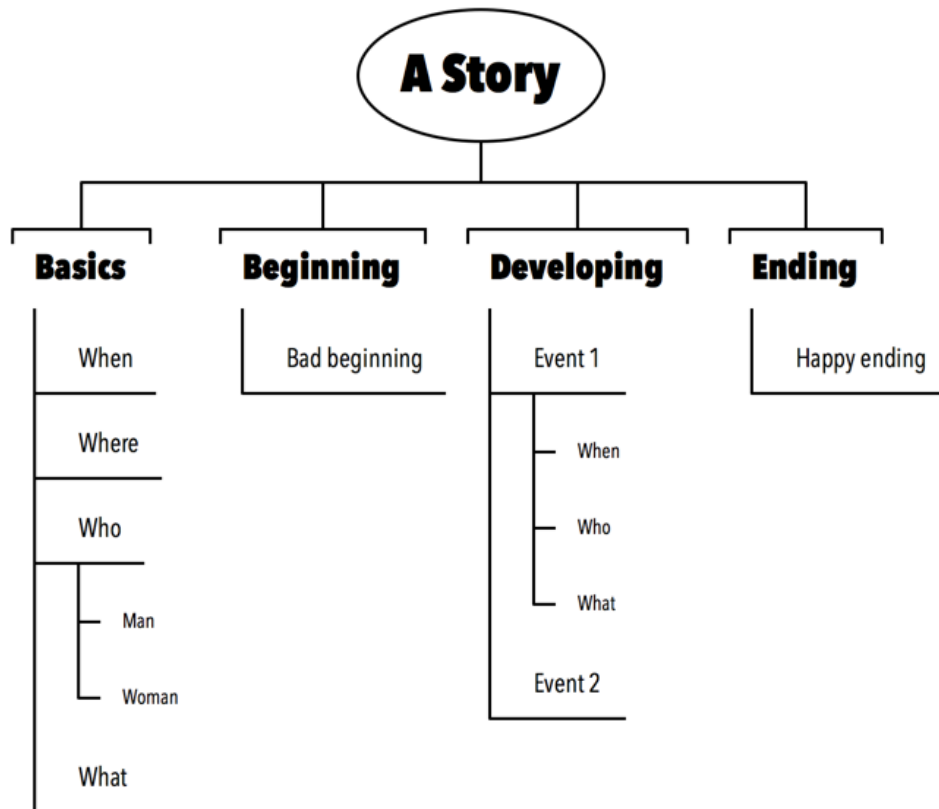
For word reviewing, in this case the phrasal verbs, teacher can come up with a verb, ask what the phrasal verb can be, the meaning of the phrasal verb and have students to make up a sentence with that meaning. Through the visualized picture, the meanings can be clearly explained. This technique can also be applied in affix practice.

Figure 5. Phrasal verb “put __” in iThoughts



In Wei's (2013) writing class, iThoughts is used as a brain storming tool for visualizing their ideas. She sees changing the preset layout of the mind map is for students' fun. However, this also helps to make an outline by changing the templates, which facilitates their writing.

Figure 6. An outline view of iThoughts



English learning podcast –ESL Podcast, Grammar Girl,

A podcast is a digital media series provided periodically on the internet by distributors and can be subscribed by digital devices. With the Podcasts app, students can receive the audios and videos from different channels automatically, such auditory and visual materials can “significantly enhance” learner’s experience (Thorntwaite, 2014b, p. 139).

ESL Podcast (ESL Podcast is the name of a podcast channel) and Grammar Girl are the two among the top language learning channels. Usually, with a podcast channel which only provides audio service it is more convenient for listeners to carry smaller devices like iPods or iPhones instead of relatively big, heavy iPads. ESL Podcast, Grammar Girls and some other

podcasts have the texts of the audios provided on their website (ESL Podcast provides scripts for registered members). Learners can either listen to the audio or just browse their web page. When using an iPad, combining the audio and the text helps learners better understand the contents.

These English learning podcasts can be used in self-directed learning or teachers can use a clip for student's reading and listening as a way to enrich the materials.

Radio podcast -NPR series

NPR (National Public Radio) is a radio service which has channels from Ask Me Another to Wait Wait... Don't tell me! (in alphabet order) on Podcasts app. Though the target people is mainly the American listeners, it's also a good listening material and a way to learn the American culture and lifestyle for advanced learner. NPR provides several different podcast channels for users to subscribe the ones meet their needs.

Creating a podcast

Aside from being used as teaching and learning resources, another potential of podcast is to create one's own (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). In Glisksman's (2015) book iPad in Education for Dummies, he explained the reasons why podcast suits for education: developing students' ability, motivating students by sharing own contents, requiring integrated skills (research, planning, media, presentation etc.), partly replacing other assignments (e.g. traditional written assignments) etc. Further, he described how to use the iPad apps (GarageBand, SoundCloud, and Audioboo) to produce and publish podcast. "Anyone can easily create and publish" the recordings (Lee, 2014, p. 61). Students can be encouraged to create their own podcast channel with the assistance of teachers.

iTunes U

iTunes U is a further development of podcast, with which users can receive a well-organized course which consists of a syllabus, lessons with text, audio, video and additional reading materials. Those content types are organized as: 1. lectures, talks, and public program, 2. instructional media, and 3. primary sources (Apple Education, 2014). The distributor or the course contributor can choose whether the course is open to the public or restricted to specific persons (Rosell-Aguilar, 2013).

Grabiec (2014), once an ESL teacher in secondary school, now (by the time her book was published) the CEO of Tech Girl Savvy, LLC, and Director of Instructional Technology at the Fletcher School in Charlotte, North Carolina, encourages her students to gather and synthesize information to make their own Multi-Touch books (ePub or iBooks format) with iPad and upload the digital books to iTunes U.

Activities available

The contents on the iPad can become more effective when integrated into tasks-based language teaching. Teachers use iPads to introduce the topic, build student understanding, and let students demonstrate their learning (Apple Education, 2015a). The iPad is an excellent device for developing student-generated multimedia content –digital storytelling, slowmations (simple stop-go animation), screencasts, and podcasts (Dyson, 2016).

Cassidy, an elementary teacher in Canada suggests student's digital portfolio - "a digital, online version of what teachers have long used to communicate a child's progress" works better than those in the folders (2014, p. 7), also she points out a blog which can contain texts, pictures, audios, videos, and arrange them chronologically is her first choice. But the contents posted to blogs need her sensor to make sure student's personal information will not be leaked.

Gliksman (2015) claims that the digital portfolios can be "a vehicle for showcasing talents and achievements", "a tool for important self-reflection and deeper learning" or "a viable alternative to more traditional forms of assessment"(p. 355). Google Apps (an online storage and document processing services by google), eduClipper are the tools for building digital portfolios mentioned in his book.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the digital age, everyone - teachers, students, and any others - can get access to the information sufficiently. What the teachers need to do becomes very different from what their predecessors need to. When a student doesn't understand a concept in the class, they might not go to ask the teacher, but google it. However, this does not work for all the questions they search, or it will take time and make them lose patience. Thus becoming less motivated in English learning. What the teacher need to do is to lead them by choosing the contents on the iPad properly and construct their own toolkits in English teaching and learning, especially when they deal with the flourished contents on iPad, thus make workflows which becomes routines in student's language learning.

The goal for the ESL students in an iPad enabled classroom is not only to learn a language, but also to learn the digital literacy with which they can learn the language autonomously. Another aim is to create their own digital portfolio. The portfolio shows what they have learned and also reveals what they have missed. When it is published or shown to the public, it shows their achievement and can build their confidence in the language learning. This helps them to review and make a better progress in their further language learning.

REFERENCES

- Apple Education (2014). *Discovering iTunes U collections: Tips for the classroom* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.
- Apple Education (2015a). *Discovering educational content for iPad* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.
- Apple Education. (2015b). *Evaluating Apps for the Classroom* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.
- Apple Inc. (2016). *Use AirPlay to wirelessly stream content from your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch*. Retrieved May 1, 2016, from <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204289>
- Cassidy, K. (2014). *Student authored portfolios: Arching learning with iPad* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.
- Dickens, H. & Churches, A. (2013). *Apps for learning, middle school: iPad, iPod Touch, iPhone*. Vancouver, BC: 21 Century Fluency Project.
- Dyson, L. E. (2016). Achieving sustainable mobile learning through student-owned devices and student-generated multimedia content. In W. Ng & T. M. Cumming (2016) *Sustaining mobile learning: Theory, research and practice* (212-226). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Foote, C. (2014). Learning together: The evolution of a 1:1 iPad Program. In H. W. Wilson (Ed.), *Embracing new paradigms in education* (211–216). Grey House Publishing, Inc.
- Grabiec, J. (2014). *Student authored books on iTunes U: Sharing learning globally* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.
- Gee, V. (n.d.). Roots of visual mapping [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.mind-mapping.org/blog/mapping-history/roots-of-visual-mapping/>
- Gliksman, S. (2015). *iPad in Education for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- Lee, L. (2014). Using asynchronous web 2.0 tools to promote language learning and intercultural communication. In L. Lloyd & G. I. Barreneche (Eds.), *Educational technology for the global village: Worldwide innovation and best practices* (57-74). Medford, NJ: Information today, Inc.
- Nichols, J. A. (2013). iPads in the library: Using tablet technology to enhance programs for all ages. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, LLC.
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Top of the Pods - In search of a podcasting “podagogy” for language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 20(5), 471–492. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09588220701746047>
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2013). Podcasting for language learning through iTunes U: The learner’s view. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17(173), 74–93. Retrieved from <http://ilt.msu.edu/issues/october2013/rosellaguilar.pdf>
- Rustler, F. (2012). *Mindmapping for dummies*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Thornthwaite, C. (2014a). *Not a toy, but a tool*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Thornthwaite, C. (2014b). *The deuce and a half iPad*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wei, J. (2013). Using iPad applications to teach ESL. In J. M. Perren, D. O. Parren, & T. Dowling (2013) “Serving for a Better World”: Selected Proceedings of the 2012 Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference. MITESOL Proceedings. Book 3(55-64). Retrieved from <http://commons.emich.edu/mitesol/3>
- Yip, P. (2014). *Apple TV: A deployment guide* [iBooks version]. Retrieved from iBooks Store.