Session 3: CALL and TELL – Key Concepts, Theories, and Digital Trends

Main Reference: Dudeney, G., & Hockly, N. (2007). *How to Teach English with Technology*. Pearson Education.

1. Introduction

The use of digital technology in English language teaching has transformed from a novelty to a necessity in many classrooms around the world. In their influential book, *How to Teach English with Technology*, Dudeney and Hockly (2007) provide an accessible, practical guide for teachers to integrate technology meaningfully into their pedagogy. Two central terms explored in their work are **CALL**

(Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and TELL (Technology-Enhanced Language Learning). These terms are not only technological in nature but deeply rooted in the evolution of language pedagogy.

The purpose of this session is to unpack key concepts and theories from the book and analyze how they apply to real-world classroom practice. In doing so, we highlight the transition from early computer use in classrooms to today's wideranging digital environments—web-based collaboration, mobile learning, and virtual communication tools.

2. Understanding CALL and TELL

2.1 What is CALL?

CALL stands for **Computer-Assisted Language Learning**. As Dudeney and Hockly (2007) explain, CALL refers to the use of computers in delivering, reinforcing, or assessing language content. Early examples include basic text-based grammar exercises, while modern instances include multimedia-rich web platforms, email exchanges, and pronunciation analysis tools.

CALL has evolved through three main stages:

a) Behavioristic CALL (1960s-1970s)

- Rooted in **behaviorist theories** of learning that emphasized **habit formation** through repetition.
- Featured **drill-and-practice programs**, often offering immediate feedback on grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.
- Interaction was limited and non-authentic, primarily focusing on accuracy over fluency.

b) Communicative CALL (1980s–1990s)

- Influenced by **communicative language teaching (CLT)**.
- Moved away from mechanical drills toward activities that promoted **meaningful interaction**.
- Focused on **language as communication**, using simulations, games, and email exchanges.

c) Integrative CALL (2000s-present)

- Embraces **multimedia and internet-based resources**, enabling language learning to be more **interactive**, **dynamic**, **and student-centered**.
- Supports integrated skills development and project-based learning.
- Includes web-based collaboration, virtual classrooms, podcasts, blogs, wikis, and more.

2.2 What is TELL?

TELL expands beyond CALL to refer to **Technology-Enhanced Language** Learning, encompassing not just computers, but **mobile devices**, smartboards, tablets, and digital learning environments.

TELL represents a shift from device-centered instruction (focused on using a computer) to **a broader, learner-centered integration of technology**. According to Dudeney and Hockly (2007), TELL emphasizes **flexibility, personalization**, **interactivity, and connectivity**. Learners are empowered to access content, produce output, and collaborate in ways never before possible in traditional classrooms.

3. Theoretical Foundations of CALL and TELL

3.1 Skill Development through Technology

Dudeney and Hockly emphasize using technology to support the **four primary language skills**:

- Listening: Learners can access **podcasts**, audio materials, and video content tailored to their level and interests.
- **Speaking**: Through **voice chat**, **recording tools**, or **video conferencing**, students can practice speaking and receive feedback.
- **Reading**: Online articles, blogs, and e-books offer diverse and current reading materials.
- Writing: Tools such as word processors, wikis, and blogs help develop writing fluency, editing, and peer review skills.

The integration of technology ensures **multimodal learning**, enhancing comprehension and engagement.

3.2 Task-Based Learning and Technology

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach where learners achieve **language proficiency by completing meaningful tasks**. Technology complements this approach by providing **realistic, collaborative, and interactive contexts**.

Example from Dudeney and Hockly:

• WebQuests: Learners complete research projects by gathering information online, analyzing it, and presenting findings—a task that mirrors real-world skills and demands.

3.3 Constructivist and Socio-Cultural Perspectives

Dudeney and Hockly support **constructivist learning**, where learners actively construct knowledge. Tools like **blogs** and **online forums** enable learners to reflect, co-construct, and negotiate meaning.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is also relevant: learners interact in their **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** when teachers or peers scaffold their understanding using digital tools. For instance, a wiki entry written collaboratively allows stronger learners to support weaker ones.

4. Digital Tools for Language Learning

4.1 Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs)

IWBs combine images, text, audio, and video in one place. Dudeney and Hockly note their value in:

- Visualizing grammar or vocabulary
- Replaying listening exercises
- Encouraging group interaction and physical engagement

They also recommend recording board activity to revisit later for reinforcement.

4.2 Blogs and Wikis

- **Blogs** are personal online journals ideal for reflective writing, project updates, and opinion pieces.
- Wikis support collaborative writing and group projects (e.g., creating class encyclopedias).

These platforms encourage **peer feedback**, **process writing**, and **publication**, which boosts student motivation.

4.3 Audio and Podcasting

Audio tools like Audacity allow students to:

- Record dialogues or presentations
- Create their own podcasts to share with the class or a global audience
- Analyze pronunciation and intonation

Such tools shift learners from passive consumers to active producers of language.

4.4 Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)

Platforms like Moodle or Edmodo allow teachers to:

- Share resources and assignments
- Host discussions

- Track student progress
- Integrate quizzes and feedback mechanisms

Dudeney and Hockly suggest using VLEs to **extend learning beyond the classroom**, supporting flipped and blended models.

5. Trends and Future Directions

5.1 Web 2.0: Participation and Collaboration

Web 2.0 emphasizes user-generated content and interactivity. In language learning, this means students are not just consuming materials but creating, sharing, and modifying content.

Examples:

- Posting video reviews on YouTube
- Maintaining English-language Instagram accounts for writing practice
- Creating collaborative storybooks with Storybird

5.2 Mobile Learning (M-Learning)

Although still emerging when the book was written, Dudeney and Hockly predicted the influence of **mobile learning**. They note that:

- Mobile devices allow "just-in-time" learning
- Students can learn while commuting, traveling, or waiting
- Apps support vocabulary learning, grammar practice, and spaced repetition

Today, apps like Quizlet, Anki, and Duolingo fulfill these predictions.

5.3 Blended and Flipped Learning

- Blended learning combines face-to-face and online elements.
- Flipped learning reverses traditional structures: instruction happens online before class; classroom time is for practice.

Both approaches promote active learning and greater use of class time for interaction and feedback.

6. Challenges and Practical Considerations

Despite the many benefits, Dudeney and Hockly also recognize significant challenges.

6.1 Digital Divide

Not all students have equal access to devices or internet. Teachers should:

- Use low-tech or no-tech alternatives where needed
- Offer tasks that can be done offline
- Avoid penalizing students without access

6.2 Teacher Training

The successful use of technology depends on **teacher confidence and competence**. They recommend:

- Starting small (e.g., using PowerPoint or audio tools before moving to complex platforms)
- Participating in online communities of practice

• Attending workshops or completing online certifications

6.3 Data Privacy and Ethics

As students engage in cloud-based learning, teachers must:

- Protect student identities online
- Choose platforms that follow ethical data policies
- Teach learners about **responsible digital behavior**

7. Conclusion

CALL and TELL, as explained by Dudeney and Hockly (2007), are more than buzzwords—they represent an evolution in language pedagogy. They call on teachers to embrace technology **not for its own sake**, but as a means to **enhance communication**, **collaboration**, **autonomy**, **and learner engagement**.

By integrating blogs, podcasts, IWBs, and mobile tools, teachers can diversify their methods and reach learners more effectively. However, successful implementation depends on **pedagogical clarity**, **training**, and an awareness of students' digital realities.

Comprehension Questions

- 1. What are the three key historical stages of CALL, and how do they differ?
- 2. How does TELL expand the scope of CALL in the modern language classroom?
- 3. Describe how technology supports each of the four language skills.

- 4. What is the role of Task-Based Learning in technology integration?
- 5. How can blogs and wikis be used to support collaborative language learning?
- 6. What are the features and benefits of using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)?
- 7. What is Web 2.0, and how does it influence learner participation?
- 8. In what ways can mobile learning enhance flexibility and accessibility in language learning?
- 9. What are the key challenges identified by Dudeney and Hockly in integrating technology?
- 10.What principles should guide the selection of digital tools in a pedagogically sound way?