

Integrating Technology into English Language Teaching: An Analysis

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Abstract--- In language teaching and learning, there are a lot of technological options in use: Radio, TV, CD Rom, Computers, C.A.L.L, the Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVDs, and VCDs. With the onset of technology, there has been a revolution spanning the past two decades, which has led to a change in dynamics of various industries and interaction amongst people and society. Information technology developments have led to an exploration in better teaching models. Hence, technology is important in its role in English teaching. Multimedia usage in English teaching has various advantages. This paper attempts to analyze the necessity of the usage of multimedia technology to language teaching as well as acknowledges and discusses its problems. It also hopes to help English teachers improve their effectiveness while teaching.

Keywords--- English Language Teaching, Multimedia Technology, Advantages, Disadvantages, Optimization, Strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

English is widely used in India primarily as the second language, and in some cases, the first language, following the widespread development of English around the world. It is regarded as a prestigious language in the country. Its position as a major medium of instruction proves that its role and status is the highest it has ever been. With the increase in English learners, there have been developments in teaching methods to judge the effectiveness of the process of teaching. Authentic materials such as films, radio, and TV have been around for a long time. These materials have successfully replaced traditional teaching.

The new era has brought with it new challenges and duties for the modern teacher. Traditional English teaching methods have changed staggeringly due to the introduction of technology. There are now a greater number of options to make teaching more interesting and productive and technology is responsible for this improvement. It plays an essential role in bringing about social and linguistic change. Graddol: (1997:16) states that, "technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture. The use of English language has increased rapidly after 1960. At present the role and status of English is that it Is the language of social context, political, sociocultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education." It has increasingly become a key factor for entrance examinations and obtaining high-level work in the commercial sector.

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With the increase in English learners in India, teaching methods have seen more innovation in order to examine the teaching process effectiveness. A predominant method is the usage of multimedia in ELT for the creating of English contexts. This method has proven to improve the involvement of students as they begin learning according to their interest fields. It has been accepted in the world after wide testing for teaching English.

In today's world, technology satisfies the visual as well as the auditory senses of learners and hence, it is used to uplift the modern style of teaching. English has seen a widespread usage and has been further developed due to the same. This has led to a massive increase in speakers. According to David Graddol, "it is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economies and management, new literatures and entertainment genre." David Graddol, The Future of English, Page 2

II. TECHNOLOGY USAGE FOR ENGLISH TEACHING

With the increase in English usage, there has been an increase in requirement of qualified teachers for instructing students in the language. While some teachers make use of 'cutting edge' technology, most have stuck to traditional methods of teaching. The traditional methods are not bad or damaging for the students, in fact, they are quite useful. However, there is also room for improvements as there are steadily growing opportunities for student, especially those ESL students for whom English is more than a hobby, to gain confidence by practicing and extending themselves. Multimedia technology is needed for them to keep up with the ELT and gain and harness their confidence.

III. ELT GROWTH DUE TO TECHNOLOGY

With the advent of globalization in the 21st century, knowledge of foreign languages is of the utmost importance, and English most of all. English Teaching Language's significance has only grown over the many years of its existence, mainly due to the Internet. In 2000, Graddol's study revealed that since the year 2000 when there were nearly a billion English speakers, the number has doubled in the past decade. This increase reached its peak in 2010, when there was a sudden surge in the number of English learners. In the same study, it has been revealed that more than 80% of the information found on the Internet is stored in English. In today's day, there are far more non-native English users than native English users.



This diversity in terms of various factors such as age, nationality, learners, learning background, etc., has become a defining breakthrough in ELT.

With the rate of development of science and technology constantly on the rise, the development of multimedia technology and its teaching applications, using audio-visual, animation effects have become a must in English classes. They are seen as favorable additions to help the reform and exploration of ELT in the present day. Multimedia technology has proven to be a positive addition to promotion of activities and student initiatives, along with the effects of teaching English. Technological innovations have had a direct impact on the growth of English and communication today. Thus, it wouldn't be wrong to insinuate that English has grown with the growth of the Internet, especially as computers have become available far and wide. Due to this, there has been an increase in literature about teaching English using technology. Most of this literature unequivocally accepts technology to be the essence of teaching. Their emphasis on the major role played by technology to the extent of removing the human part of teaching from the equation has been predominant. Due to this, if there is any ignorance of technological developments, one would never be able to catch up, regardless of their specialty. Hence, language teachers must always be up to date with the latest technology. Teachers can give colorful and more stimulation lessons using Multimedia Technology (new Horizons).

Techniques are aplenty for language learning with some being useful for testing, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. The principle for teaching should be to simply appreciate technology in the areas where they are useful without replacing the human part or traditional contributions, which are more useful in certain scenarios. There are many reasons as to why new technology should be common knowledge among learners and teachers. They become a part of our daily life very quickly and hence, avoidance of their influence is not possible.

IV. ANALYSING THE NECESSITY OF APPLICATION OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH TEACHING

The traditional teaching methods are getting unpopular whereas teaching methods featuring multimedia technology such as audio-visual, animation effects makes us accessible to more information naturally. It provides abundant information and crosses time and space. Hence, multimedia technology offers students a realistic sense and works well to cultivate interest and motivation in students to study and participate in class activities.

Students act as passive recipients of knowledge with traditional teaching methods as it makes the students unable to comprehend certain language components such as structure, meaning and function of the language itself. Communication, which is the target of any language, is then hard to achieve. Multimedia technology integrates teaching and learning by providing more incentive whereas teachers' instructions lead their thought patterns and emotions. PPT courseware, which is visual and vivid, activates students' thinking by helping them transform English learning into

capacity cultivation. Along with that, in-class activities like group discussion, subject discussion, and debates offer greater opportunity for communication among students themselves and between teachers and students. Multimedia technology has improved students' positive thinking and communication skills socially in a unique manner.

Abundant information is on offer thanks to multimedia courseware. Its information is far greater than what textbooks can provide along with facilitating the display of vivid cultural backgrounds, rich content, and true-to-life language materials, which are closer to natural speakers. Listening ability is not the only thing that can be enhanced by multimedia technology. Knowledge of the western culture is also on offer. Due to the multitude of channels for learning, students have different knowledge and can share the information with their fellow students, leading to an active display of discussion and communication.

Class efficiency is improved due to multimedia teaching as the content is enriched as well as constrained within the time to make the most of class time as well as breaking "teacher-centric" pattern of teaching. Students are unable to communicate effectively due to the large size of classes. Multi-media sound labs fill the void to promote individual and co-operative teaching. In tradition classes, the teaching is mainly based of the teachers' instruction, which leads to limited information. However, multimedia technology provides more information while creating a more entertaining environment for English learning while economizing class time.

Multimedia teaching focuses on students and the interaction between teachers and students. It trains and improves students' listening and speaking skills as way of developing their communicative skills. This period is when a teacher's role as a facilitator shines through. Multimedia in context creation has a twofold advantage. It creates a platform for teacher-student interaction as well as provides an improved language environment than the tradition classroom-teaching model. This changes the way of teaching, as there is no blind input by teachers and passive receiving of information by students.

Multimedia teaching gives rise to a livelier and more interesting class by creating a context for language teaching. It also optimizes the class organization. Multimedia is lively, visible and changeable. Sounds and pictures can be played in sync, which both enriches content and enhances teacher and student initiatives. It can also widen the imagination of students and teachers through different contexts to produce new courseware. Multimedia helps facilitate a clearer understanding of the material. It shows that the using multimedia in ELT is profitable for both students and teachers. It increases both their interests in learning and teaching respectively. Zhang (2006:11.1) observed that Multimedia and Network Technology offer a friendly interface due to its vibrant pictures and peaceful sounds along with a library of true learning materials, which is in contrast to the previous inauthentic and uninteresting English learning environment.

Multimedia teaching context can be created inside as well as outside the classroom, which makes it a flexible system. Multimedia language teaching can create a suitable environment for its purposes. English teaching must be student-centric under the guidance of teachers (see, for example, Holec, 1981), which we believe is an essential principle in teaching languages. Classroom teaching leads to problems for students, which can be solved with the help of teachers. Students can reach out to teachers more conveniently with technology by reaching out using email.

V. ANALYSING PROBLEMS ARISING FROM APPLICATION FOR MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY TO ENGLISH TEACHING

There are various advantages to the usage of multimedia technology but it also comes with its various problems. Multimedia technology is intended to play the role of assisting the teaching process. However, if it is totally depended upon, teachers may not be able to lead English teaching and become slaves to the multimedia devices. It has been seen that although the involvement of teachers in multimedia technology application is high, their proficiency is not nearly enough to be able to handle the technology with confidence. The teacher-student interaction lessens, as there is no eye contact between them with students' attention focused completely on the screen. Regardless of the importance of traditional teaching, the advent of modern information and technology in teaching appears to the extremes. Hence, we can arrive at the notion that in Creative Education, modern educational techniques serve as assistance rather than the target and hence, should not be the dominating feature in any class. They then substitute effective teaching and learning.

Teachers play an effective role in conveying knowledge regarding a wide range of topics from English pronunciation to comprehension using English language and analysis. This improves the students' English thought patterns and oral expression. However, with multimedia technology featuring audio-visual, textual effects taking the front seat, although it does fulfill the audio and visual requirements of the students and piques their interest, it does reduce the communication between teachers and students. It does so by replacing the teachers' voice and analysis by computer sounds and visual images. It also reduces verbal communication between students. When mutual communication between teachers and student reduces, along with sound and multimedia reducing student initiative, English class turns more into a show where students are now viewers where they were earlier participants.

Science subjects require demonstrations through various steps, which is very different from language teaching, which is founded on the tense and orderly atmosphere created by questions and answers between teachers and students. Teachers bring a human element to the teaching process by raising impromptu questions, which lead to students thinking and cultivating their problem-solving capacity. When this demonstration is pre-arranged, there is no feedback gained which blocks the students' thinking capacity. It ignores and neglects students' thinking and problem-solving capabilities when the cultivation of these skills should be a major goal when using multimedia

technology instead of taking up the exploring, analyzing, and thinking time of students.

The cognition process has two stages: the perceptual stage and the rational stage. These exist even in the studying process. We believe that teaching should make students accept the outlook cognition from perceptual recognition to rational apprehension, and be able to swiftly move from perceptual to rational thinking. It remains a major goal in teaching. Multimedia technology makes the content easier to understand in order to enhance abstract thinking by clarifying the emphasis in teaching. However, when the image already in students' mind is visible on screen, abstract thinking becomes restricted and logical thinking becomes non-existent. Reading competence among students has reduced due to the replacement of handwriting by keyboard input and textual words by sound and image. Multimedia can hence only act as an assistant but cannot take over the predominant role of teachers to give a complete teaching process. Multimedia does not aim to imitate teaching. Rather, it acts as an integrating component between visual and textual demonstration and the teachers' experience to contribute to the programmed, automatic, and continuous teaching project. This enhances the students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing leading to an overall improvement in the students' skills.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND STRATEGIES TO THE EXISTING PROBLEMS

A teaching method where textual material is merely shown on the screen is improper. The teacher's position shouldn't be ignored to supplement the usage of multimedia in teaching. Through practice, it has been proven that multimedia technology application in reasonable conditions can lead to breakthroughs in language teaching. That is, even for multimedia assisted teaching, teachers play the dominant role without being replaced by a computer. An example is the introduction to each lesson, which can improve speaking communication between student and teacher and also improve the students' listening and speaking skills – a role the computer cannot fill. In this way, the teacher's interpretation of the subject will not be overlooked. Using English as the communication language in class also improves their skills, as it is a practical application of linguistic science. Multimedia serves the teachers well as an assistant to teaching despite its great effect. Hence, it is teaching, which determines upon the usage of multimedia technology. If not, teachers would simply become the projectionist, just clicking the screen.

Computer screens are tasked with input exercises, questions, answers, and teaching plans by some teachers who substitute the screen for the blackboard. They display these one by one without a single shred of information, not even the title, on the blackboard. However, it is well known that teachers should adapt the situation to the scenario and guide student communication in English by simulation. Tradition writing on the blackboard is also far more concise and easy to edit.



With experience, teachers also know that while a perfect courseware is ideal in the mind, in practice, the content needs to be constantly enriched and edited based on the student input and questions.

Multimedia courseware presently contains mostly of image and animation of teaching materials to enable the audio-visual effect, which gives a lively display of the textual content and facilitates better understanding of the text by students. However, the problem still stands. Content display via PPT cannot substitute students' thinking and English communication in real life circumstances. Thus, when studying the courseware, we must encourage students to participate freely in class by joining in on class practice and better communication by speaking and thinking freely. The courseware should not be the only source of knowledge simply to modernize the teaching method.

Multimedia functions cannot be replaced in teaching by any other instrument but the same is true for other instruments, which cannot be replaced by multimedia. Some teachers rely on multimedia for teaching and should note that while multimedia has several advantages, it still cannot be comparable to other forms or instruments in teaching. For example, to broadcast listening materials, a recorder is still required. Therefore, teachers should choose the right media and instrument depending on their use and requirement to integrate it with the traditional method of teaching to the fullest of their ability rather than use multimedia for its trendy purposes.

There is a misconception among teachers about total application of multimedia technology to their teaching. It is also falsely thought that a better class atmosphere can be obtained by a greater usage of multimedia technology, as it would lead to better class participation due to easy access to courseware. However, in reality, though there is some interest among the students in learning, they usually feel like viewers rather than participants. There is less knowledge from language materials when there is greater interference of teaching information. Class time is not sufficient to train students' language expression properly. Despite the several advantages to multimedia technology usage, it can only assist the process of teaching and becomes part of a complete teaching procedure. If implemented properly, multimedia technology could lead to students gaining a huge advantage with the English speaking and listening materials on offer and develop their overall capabilities. That is the main reason for the introduction of multimedia technology in modern teaching methods. This could lead to systematic training of students' reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills and helps teachers by bringing their instructions into play. It can also help students gain basic knowledge in addition to language training and enhances their ability to express in English by perfecting their fundamentals.

VII. CONCLUSION

"Ideally, the purpose of both the tradition and computer-assisted cooperative language learning classrooms is to provide a space in which the facilitation of learning, and learning itself, can take place" (Shi, 2008: 76). One of the main goals of multimedia technology in language teaching is to improve students' interest and motivation in learning

the language in order to get them involved. Openness and accessibility of the teaching material should be the cornerstone for context creation. Students shouldn't depend on their mother tongue too much but still taught to communicate with each other effectively in English during the optimization of multimedia technology in English teaching methods.

With technological developments, there will be further development in multimedia technology in English teaching. Student-centric teaching methods will be more prominent and consume less time. Teaching quality will also improve and students' skill set of applied English will also improve with the same along with communication skills.

In conclusion, the multimedia technology implementation in English teaching can improve students' language skills and ideation and can ensure effective results in teaching and learning of English. There are certain problems that come with multimedia technology, but they can be overcome for effective solutions and the computer competency and knowledge of the teachers, overcoming financial issues for infrastructure setup, and prevention of teachers becoming technophobes.

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