

WISE USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE-A STUDY

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Abstract

As we are in the 21 century-a century with latest technology, the entire world is following the technological advancements. Even in language teaching and learning, we have to a lot to choose and implement from the world of technology. Here, we are facilitated with Radio, TV, CD Rom, Computers, C.A.L.L., the Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes,Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's. This onset technology revolutionized the last two decades and has changed the dynamics of various industries. It also influenced a lot people and work in the society. We are sure that this rapid rising and the revolution of Information Technology has promptly offering better designsto explore the latest teaching methods. Hence, technology plays a very significant role even in English teaching and learning. We have multimedia with unique advantages to create a contextual activities to teach English. So, my paper purposes to study the need of multimedia technology in language teaching and learning and some problems surfaced by the usage of these technologies to style our English teachers conscious of the new strategies to use this technology in an actual and real ways.

Key words: Technological advancements, Multimedia Technology, English Language Teaching and learning, pros and cons, strategies.

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Introduction

As one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change, technology changed the tradition of English teaching and learning drastically. Graddol: (1917:16) states that,

"technology lies at the heart of the globalization process: affecting education, work and culture".

We are well aware that, at present, the role and prominence of English is that it is the language of social context, political, socio-cultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and the key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education. It is also a crucial determinant for higher learning entrance examination and appropriate ability for well paid jobs in commercial sector. In order to fulfil this need, students have been facilitated with various language learning tools to enhance their language skills effectively and interestingly.

Yes, the world of technology has been providing us a lot tools in language teaching and learning such as, Radio, TV, CD Rom, Computers, CALL, The Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, power Point. Videos, DVDs and VCDs are the significant results of 21st century technology. It is quite obvious that, the onset of technology has brought a revolution in all fields of the world. This rapid rising and development of technology has changed the dynamics of various industries and influenced them a lot. It has also offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. As a result, technology plays an important role even in English language teaching and learning. Among the technological tools mentioned above, Multimedia software and the Internet have their unique advantages by creating apt contexts to teach English Language.

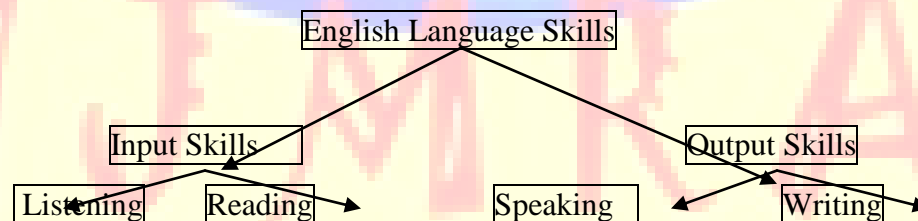
This report presents the analysis on the 'wise usage' in the sense ' better usage' of multimedia technology in English Language classrooms especially by the Professional Students, the random students from I B. Tech., Course, from the department of Computer Science and Engineering, at the college Madanapalle Institute of Technology and Science, India. It also highlights the various technologies, their impact, their practical uses and the some of the problems associated with the applications of these modern technological tools.

Though we are all well aware of that how Information and Communication Technology can be used to support the process of English language learning for those students from the rural areas at their Engineering graduation. It is also mentioned in summary of the findings, nearly 80% of the total intake of MITS are very poor at the level of English language skills. Hence, here it is a big question before us; what innovative approaches to language learning and development can be employed to meet the needs of a new generation of young technocrats of increasingly globalised world?

Maggie Sokolik observes:

"Machines are now used as tools for communication rather than simply as ways of delivering automated drills or exercises. Vast amount of reading on any topic and in many languages are now available on the web, and the chance to participate in discussions with people from all walks of is motivating many learners".

To justify the above quote and cope up with the latest trend in language teaching and learning, we have to use modern technologies to teach English technical students. Students obviously have to update their skills by using these modern technologies, otherwise they will be relegated in the job market. The four basic language skills such as:



can be enhanced by using technology in a better way as a supplementary tool, apart from the vital role of a teacher.

Various modern technologies for English language learners are

- Communication Lab

At present Communication Lab can be incorporated with a number of suitable software to develop LSRW skills of a student. Here a student will practice again and again until he feels confident of his/her language skills.

- Internet

It is the most recognised and used tool across the world. It allows student to learn English in their class rooms. Online teaching seems to be interesting and makes student to practise exercises on grammar.

- CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)

It is a software which facilitates both teachers and students in English language classroom. At present, there are copious software application programs available including vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation programmes, spelling check utilities, electronic workbooks, reading and writing programmes, and different learning packages to assist instructors in creating tutorial exercises in enhancing their language skills through language games and drilled activities.

- TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning)

It is a computer technology includes hardware, software and the internet facility to enhance teaching and learning of language skills. It allows students to get access with many technologies available such as online dictionaries, grammatical exercises and chat to update themselves with the happening around the world.

- Broadband related Technologies

This tool enables learner to communicate with each other over distance, bringing native speaker into contact with non-native speakers and assists in developing intercultural understanding. Initially these project was started in universities, but many schools around the world have access to broadband-technologies or mobile tools and even many projects have been developed across the world with support from organizations like the British Council (<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org>).

- The Web

There are some interesting sites such as www.smic.be where a student gets hundreds of exercises on grammar and vocabulary and www.eslgo.com, an interactive site which facilitates him/her to interact with an ESL teacher.

- Pod casting

It is a tech-based entertainment system for educational purposes. Vijayalakshmi observes: Podcasting allows students to use their tech-based entertainment systems for educational purposes by enabling teachers and students to share information between and among them. Here, an absent student can download the podcast of recorded lessons. Students even get access to lectures of experts by consuming time and money.

- Quick Link Pen

It allows to copy and store printed text, internet links. It helps to transfer the data to computers and enables the reader to get the meaning of the word from a built-in-dictionary. Access to this kind of machine seems to be a more convenient method. Most useful machine translations engines are GO Translator and Bablefish.

- Quicktionary

It is a pen like device, which allows the reader to easily scan the word and get its definition and translates to on its own LCD screen. Technology such as Enounce and Sound-Editor enable learners to adjust the speech rate of listening materials to assist their comprehension, and spectrum of speech waves and visual depictions of mouth and tongue movements to ease the learning and refine pronunciation.

- Blogging

Blogging can be used for instructing the candidates when the teachers is off campus. The teacher can post his article or the instruction to the students, where the students are allowed to post their comments and queries. The teacher can answer the question through this blog. It is one of the widely used tools.

- Messages through Mobile Phones

Mobile Phones also enriches vocabulary list by adding new words daily. There are number of tools and services to provide new words every day. The only thing that students have to do is that they should register their mobile numbers in the particular websites. This allows students to get access with new words daily.

- Video Library

These facilitates a student to listen the recorded lecture on his absence by viewing the tapes. This advantages a student to replay the things and learn them properly.

Apart from these tools, students are facilitated with some more useful tools with specific benefits which best impart in their learning. These tools such as below help students get started with-or to further-technology integration and make them well-versed in technological tools, skills and language.

Content-Specific Tools



Marvel.com has a comic maker that allows students to create their own characters and write their own comics, which are a great way to get in some entertaining reading and writing practice.

Fluent U



Fluent U immerses students in English through videos and real-world interactions. It is especially helpful that students get quality independent practice offers valuable exposure on language skills.

News ELA



News ELA is a fantastic tool to increase reading comprehension with current events. Here, each article is available in different levels, whereby the entire class can read the same content based on their level of language skills.

Prezi



Prezi is a power point presentation where the older students can be given the opportunity to exhibit what they have learned. It is an easy-to-use tool to create stunning and engaging presentations.

Teacher Tools

There are two other effective teacher tools to facilitate both the teacher and the student.

Edmodo



Edmodo allows teacher and student to easily share files, links and media, and allows for seamless two-way communication.

Engrade



engrade

The tool Engrade transforms traditional paper grad eBooks and offers a host of features that would not be possible with any traditional grad eBook.

After profound observation on the uses and applicability of all these tools and applications, it is assessed that, yes, exactly it is need of the hour to integrate modern technological tools to learn and upgrade the level of English learning, which inspire and relax the minds of the students to get into the subject rather than a difficult task to do.

Wise Usage of Technology by my students in Communication Lab

Methodology

The four main skills of English language were practised by the select students in English Language Communication Skills Lab for 3 hours in a week. The results of these practise sessions are provided here. Herewith, the *Young India Films' version 6.5*, Clarity Programmes are mentioned.



Listening: use of computers

As an input skill, listening plays a vital role in student's language enhancement. Here, My students were provided computers with the *Young India Films* software, entitled *Clarity English*. They were offered computer-based listening tests to reinforce the understanding skills. CD-Rom based learning films and Internet voice chatting aided the student in enhancing communication capabilities.

Broadcasting, CD Players and Tap-Recorders

Students were allowed to listen specific TV and Radio educational language programmes for two weeks to develop their understanding levels. Later they were allowed to listen News satellite channels like BBC, National Geographic and Discovery Channels to enhance their further comprehending levels.

They were also provided with audio CD-player devices saved with lectures and listening examination for their latter use.

Speaking

Internet as a rich source, there are many strategies to improve learner's oral skills such as use of songs and traditional stories. Here, students were provided with recorded songs, talking electronic books, podcasts and video clips and thereby they enhanced levels in pronunciation and reinforcement of vocabulary. Their mouth movements in phonetic accuracy were recorded provided video cameras, whereby their recordings were compared with standard models of software provided.

They were allowed to practise Reading-based computer programmes to improve their vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension levels. Here, they increased their interaction with texts and they enhanced their level up to 78%.

Reading

The Internet in Communication Lab offered much access to appropriate sites such as <http://simple.wikipedia.org> where students practised texts with a high content level to enhancing their reading abilities. They also on some other web-based tools such as Wordle (www.wordle.net), where they tried to cement the interface between and writing by comparing their texts to old writers from different genres and ages analysed the formality in their writings and focus on key vocabulary from a particular point.

They were suggested to get access to digital texts and electronic dictionaries with a specialised software to record, measure and track progress in reading and interactive fiction by being maximum engaged in story telling process.

Writing

There are many tools available to support writing and authoring for different audiences such as cartoons, storyboards, presentations, blogs, websites and extended prose. Electronic Mail is a modern way for enhancing writing skills. They also practiced Text chatting an online quick tool for writing, where they expressed their thought, transferring ideas and responded instantaneously with the other side writer. Here, students enhanced their skills up to 65%.

Students were also allowed to the use of blended strategies in their class rooms. They practiced quizzes, puzzles and riddles to enhance their interest in the class room. Practices on debates, extempore, group discussions, mock interviews, group works and pair work also advanced their language skills.

Benefits of multimedia in English language labs

- Students have enhanced their independent learning ability which is one of the greatest benefits of technology integration in English language class room.
- They got developed their deep reflective thinking.
- These applications engaged them a lot and were provided valuable learning opportunities.
- They are empowered in their critical thinking and creativity by engaging among themselves as well as outside their virtual classroom.

Material used in the class room

The majority of the audio and written texts are used from the software provided. A mix of technologies such as the internet, email and virtual conferencing room are used apart from the provision of online dictionaries.

The Young India Films, version 6.5 is used.

Power Point, Slide Share a platform form publishing presentations and online video servers such as Blip.tv, and You Tube apart from some offline tools such as audio and video recorders, media player, editing software such as Windows Moviemaker are used effectively.

Analysis of the Results based on the Case Study and Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been provided for accurate analysis of this report. The form was given to random sample of students at the department of English, at Madanapalle Institute of Technology and Science, India. The collected results show the following.

Minor Research Project-Department of English

Questionnaire for ESL Class Room Students

Name : Ms. M. Parvathi

Designation: Assistant Professor of English

Institution: Madanapalle Institute of Technology and Science, Madanapalle

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is meant for research on the topic titled ‘Wise Usage of Technology in English Class Room by Professional Students-A Study’. Express your opinion frankly. Indicate your choice by putting a (√) symbol against the option. Your suggestions for further improvement in this regard are most welcome.

Course:

Name:

Date:

How do you feel about technology? Do this “Attitude to technology” questionnaire

1=disagree totally 2=disagree 3. Not strong opinion 4= agree 5. Agree strongly.

Attitudes to Technology	1	2	3	4	5
1. I enjoy using technology to enhance English language skills.					
2. I avoid using technology when I can.					
3. I think using technology in English class takes up too much time.					
4. I know that technology can help me to learn many new things.					
5. Students should know to be updated by using technology in class.					
6. Technology intimidates and threatens me.					
7. I would be better learner if I knew how to use technology					

properly.					
8. I am very confident to communicate by using technology at home/at college.					
9. I want to learn more about using technology at home/at college.					
10. I believe that I can improve my language skills using the Internet wisely.					
11. Using technology in learning languages is not necessary.					
12. Technology breaks down too often to be of very much use					

Experience of using the Internet

I use Internet	regularly	Infrequently	Never
At college			
At home			
I use Internet to enrich English language skills for the following:	regularly	Infrequently	never
To enhance language skills			
To communicate across the world			
To find information			
To read the news			

At the end of their semester this questionnaire is provided to assess the results of the use of technology in their class rooms.

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How useful have you found the following applications of technology as part of your learning English?

1 = Totally useful 2 = Not useful 3 = Very useful 4 = Not Applicable

Course:

Name:

Date:

Outcomes of usage of Technology	1	2	3	4
1. Power Point Presentations				
2. Using MS Office (Word, Excel, Access, etc) applications				
3. Using Internet to find information on English Language				
4. Accessing information Rom CD-Roms				
5. Accessing information from DVD's				
6. Using Emails Accessing				
7. The VLE/Internet (as defined on the back)				
8. Downloading Lecture Notes and messages from VLE/Internet				
9. Using message boards and classrooms on VLE/Internet				

10.	Using self-assessment Tests in English Language				
11.	Taking Online tests and quizzes in English Language with Instant electronic feedback.				
12.	Submitting work via emails				
13.	Following web links provided for extra information				
14.	Tracking your own progress on the VLE				

Note: A **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)** is a system for delivering learning materials to students via the web. These systems include assessment, student tracking, collaboration and communication tools.

Based upon the views expressed by these student the following results have been assessed.

- 80% of the students use technology in their daily life.
- 98% of the students believe that their mobiles and the computer can improve their English Vocabulary.
- 94% of the students believe that technology in the classroom increases students' interaction with learning.
- 90% of the students believe that their teachers encourage them to use technology for learning English Language.
- 83% of the students believe that using computers will help them to develop their writing skills.
- 92% of the students assure that their college has a good source of technology for learning English language.
- 86% of the students believe that the use of technology will improve their listening skills.
- 93% of the students believe that using technology can help them to improve their speaking skills.
- 53% of the students prefer using technology to learn English language.
- 98% of the students that using technology can help them to learn English language than other ways.

The results of the case studies showed that most of the students prefer the use of technology, particularly computers and mobile phones with free software and apps. A course with

multimedia software and the internet made it successful. Here it is found that, the exercises and topics which included up-to-date information were more relevant, interesting and thus more motivating for the students.

In addition to the multimedia technology, there are many tools available to support writing and authoring for different audiences such as cartoons, storyboards, presentations, blogs, websites and extended prose.

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