

“Information Technology in ELT (English Learning and Teaching)”

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Abstract

In the span of ten years have witnessed a revolutionary change in Information Technology and have also changed the way of working for various IT companies. This rapid rise in technology has offered a better design to explore the new teaching model. As a matter of fact, technology plays a vital role in English language & Teaching (ELT). Technology has enabled teachers to adapt to various classroom activities, hence enhancing or encouraging the English learning process. English is absolutely necessary for each and every educated person. It has now become a minimum criterion in the placement cell. Learning the English language is not a piece of cake, you really have to work hard for it. Information technology may assist as the real educational structure allowing learners to learn English in a totally different way. IT continues to grow as an important tool to help teachers to facilitate English learning for their learners. In this early stage of this century, the range of technologies available for use in English language learning and teaching has become very diverse. This paper is going to explore the necessity of Information Technology to English Language Teaching (ELT) and also tries to bring out the problems faced by using these technologies. This makes English teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner and with easy methodology.

Introduction

With the spread and development of the English language around the world, English is used as an official language in a country like India. English learners are increasing day by day, different

teaching methodology has been implemented. In this modern world, the idea of English learning and teaching has changed to a great extent and it has also changed the teacher-student relationship. It is no longer the time when the student's role within the class is that of a silent listener and an obedient note taker of all that a teacher speaks. With the advancement of information technology, the world is now on our fingertips; hence it is true that teaching has become a challenging job for the teachers to deliver knowledge to the students: the knowledge that is both educative and interesting at the same time. Now the teacher's concern is not only engaging a class but to aim for effective teaching with concrete learning outcomes.

The old tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of information technology. Graddol was a British linguist state that "Technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture. At present, the role and status of English are 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 is also a crucial determinant for university entrance and processing well-paid jobs in the commercial sector. Since there are more and more English learners in India, different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. One method involves multimedia in ELT in order to create English contexts. This helps students to get involved and learn according to their interests, It has been tested effectively and is widely accepted for teaching English in the modern world.

For decades English and computers have seemed to hand in hand. Computers technology and the programs for learning English which make them easy to English-speaking countries. The

hardware and software reflected the needs of the English language. The early systems for text-based communication were unfriendly to accented characters and almost impossible for languages using non-roman writing systems, while computer operators interacted with programs using instructions in English. English will, no doubt, continue to be spread via software products and digitized intellectual property, but it seems the days of language restriction are over. There are, for example, Chinese versions of all major American programs, including the Windows operating system and Microsoft Word word processor. Interface design and onscreen help now make new software more easily and rapidly customized for lesser used languages. Schools in Wales, for example, are able to use software and operating systems in Welsh. This adaptability of recent software is a significant characteristic. It has allowed new technical vocabulary to develop in languages other than English, while desktop publishing systems have made possible short-run printing in minority writing systems. One of the most important computer-related technologies to emerge in recent decades with implications for language use is, undoubtedly, the Internet. The Internet illustrates the way technologies have been converging: television, telephone, music and document transfer all share the same distribution infrastructure. And new consumer technologies, such as multimedia computers and 'Web TV', bring them together in the home, school, and workplace.

Blend of Technology with English Learning

Technology is an effective tool for learners. Learners must use technology as a significant part of their learning process. Teachers should model the use of technology to support the

curriculum so that learners can increase the true use of technology in learning their language skills. As English has gained its popularity so it has become a need for qualified teachers to instruct students in language learning in the easiest way possible. It is true that there are teachers who use advanced technology for interactive teaching, but the majority of teachers are still teaching in the traditional manner. None of these traditional methods of teaching are bad or unuseful for students. As technologies are changing English learning and teaching (ELT) needs to be upgraded to the next level. In fact, to date, they are proving to be useful also. However, there are many more opportunities for students to gain confidence in practice and extend themselves. It is like how teachers use technology to perform familiar activities more effectively and how this usage can re-shape these activities. It supports classroom teaching by completing assignments on the computer rather than a normal pencil and paper. This enhances the use of technology as well as it allows the students to interact with new information technologies. According to Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, the application of computer technology enables teachers and learners to make local and global societies that connect them with the people and expand opportunities for their learning. They continued that the positive effect of computer technology does not come automatically; it depends on how teachers use it in their language classrooms. According to Susikaran, basic changes have come in classes besides the teaching methods because chalk and talk teaching method is not sufficient to effectively teach English. Raihan and Lock state that with a well-planned classroom setting, learners learn how to learn efficiently. The technology-enhanced teaching environment is more effective than a lecture-based class. Teachers should find methods of applying technology as a useful learning instrument for their learners although they have not

learned technology and are not able to use it as a computer expert. According to Susikaran, basic changes have come in classes besides the teaching methods because chalk and talk teaching method is not sufficient to effectively teach English. Raihan and Lock state that with a well-planned classroom setting, learners learn how to learn efficiently. The technology-enhanced teaching environment is more effective than a lecture-based class. Teachers should find methods of applying technology as a useful learning instrument for their learners although they have not learned technology and are not able to use it as a computer expert. The application of technology has considerably changed English teaching methods. It provides so many alternatives as making teaching interesting and more productive in terms of advancement. In traditional classrooms, teachers stand in front of learners and give lecture, explanation, and instruction through using blackboard or whiteboard. This method must be changed concerning the development of technology. The usage of multimedia texts in the classroom assists learners to become familiar with vocabulary and language structures. The application of multimedia also makes use of print texts, film, and internet to enhance learners' linguistic knowledge. The use of print, film, and internet gives learners the chance to collect information and offers them different materials for the analysis and interpretation of both language and contexts. Dawson, Cavanaugh, and Ritzhaupt and Pourhosein Gilakjani maintained that using technology can create a learning atmosphere centered around the learner rather than the teacher that in turn creates positive changes. They emphasized that by using computer technology, language class becomes an active place full of meaningful tasks where the learners are responsible for their learning. Drayton, Falk, Stroud, Hobbs, and Hammerman argued that using computer technology indicates a true learning experience that enhances learners' responsibilities. Technology encourages learners to

learn individually and to acquire responsible behaviors. The independent use of technologies gives learners self-direction. According to Arifah, the use of the internet increases learners' motivation. The use of film in teaching helps learners to realize the topic with enthusiasm and develop their knowledge. Learners can learn meaningfully when technology is used in the process of learning through using computer and internet. When learners learn with technology, it assists them in developing their higher order thinking skills. It can be concluded that the true combination of multimedia and teaching methodology is very important to attract learners' attention towards English language learning.

The growth of ELT through Information Technology

21 st century is the age of globalization and is important to learn various foreign languages and the

English language comes first. English Language Teaching continues to grow, fuelled, partially by the Internet. Graddol's study suggests that in the year 2000 there were about a billion English learners- but a decade later the numbers doubled. The same study indicates that over 80% of the information stored on the internet is in English. Today, there are more foreign than Native learners and speakers of the English language. And there is diversity in terms of learners, age, nationality, learning background has become a defining characteristic of ELT. In the new era, with the accelerated development of science and technology, the emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, featuring audio, visual, animation effects comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform

for exploration on English learning & teaching model. It is proven that multimedia technology plays a vital role in promoting extra-curricular activities. It is true that the growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language and that this has occurred at a time when computers are no longer the exclusive domains of the dedicated few, but rather available to many. With this, there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of technology in teaching the English language. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept technology as the most essential part of teaching. In a sense, a tendency to emphasize the inevitable role of technology in pedagogy to the extent of obliterating human part of a teacher by technology part has been very dominant. If we ignore technology, they will continue to grow and maybe we will never be able to catch up. For this reason, it is important for language teachers to be aware of the latest information/multimedia technologies that are useful for building ELT. Teachers can use Multimedia Technologies to give more heights to their lectures and can make it colorful hence making interactive English learning session. The teaching principle should absorb new technologies in the areas where they provide something decisively new and useful for learners. This will have two benefits firstly, it will never let machines take over the role of the teacher and secondly, it won't limit traditional ways of teaching. There are various reasons why all language learners and teachers must know how to make use of new technology. We will discuss further in this paper.

Analysis on Necessity of Application of Multimedia Technology to English Teaching

A) To Cultivate Students' Interest in Study

Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally, access to information besides, with such characteristics as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities.

B) To Promote Students' Communication Capacity

Traditional teaching has hampered students' capacity to comprehend certain language and also understanding to structure, meaning and function of the language, and makes the students passive recipients of knowledge, So it is hard to achieve the target of communication. With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives, The PPT courseware activate students' thinking; the visual and vivid courseware rand help them to transforms English learning into capacity cultivation. And such in-class activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates can also offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students. So multimedia technology teaching has uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice.

C) To Improve Teaching Effect Multimedia teachings enrich teaching content and make the best of class time and break the “teacher centered” teaching pattern and

fundamentally improve class efficiency. Due to large classes it is difficult for the students to have speaking communication. The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. The traditional teaching model mainly emphasized on teachers' instruction, and the information provided is limited due to traditional classes. On the contrary, multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information.

D) To Improve Interaction Between Teacher and Student Multimedia teaching stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of “interaction” between teachers and students.

A major feature of multimedia teaching is to train and improve students' ability to listen and speak, and to develop their communicative competence, During this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is particularly prominent. Using multimedia in context creation creates a good platform for the exchange between teachers and students, while at the same time providing a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model. In this way, teachers in the classroom no longer blindly input information and force students to receive it in a passive way.

E) Creates a Context for Language teaching Multimedia teaching creates a context for language teaching.

This method makes the class lively and interesting, as well as optimizing the organization of the class.

Multimedia has its own features such as visibility and liveliness. During the process of multimedia English teaching, sounds and pictures can be set together, which enhances the initiative of both teachers and students. When using multimedia software, teachers can use pictures and images to enrich the content of classes, and also imagine different contexts in the process of producing teaching courseware. Students in the class can use multimedia to understand the class in a clear way. Through the whole interactive process, it is apparent that using multimedia in ELT is effective in nurturing students' interest in learning English, as well as enhancing teachers' interest in English teaching. **F) To Provide Flexibility to Course**

Content:

In addition, multimedia teaching is also flexible. It is obvious that the context can be created not only in the classroom, but also after class. Multimedia language teaching can also create a multimedia language environment for the purpose of conducting language teaching. English teaching itself must focus on the guidance of teachers and be student-centered which we believe is one of the principles for language teaching. Students are bound to have some problems in classroom teaching, which can be addressed under the guidance of teachers. In such circumstances, students can use the new technology to their advantage, such as manipulating the network to contact teachers, and receiving answers by email.

Analysis on Problems Arising from Application for Multimedia Technology to English Teaching In spite of advantages of application of multimedia technology to English class teaching has to improve teaching effect and university students' overall capacities, there are many problems existing in practical teaching, such as:

A) Major Means Replaced by the Assisting One

Application of multimedia technology is an assisting instrument to achieve the projected teaching effect. While if totally dependent on multimedia devices during teaching, the teachers may be turned into slaves to the multimedia and cannot play the leading role in teaching. It is observed in practice that a lot of teachers are active in multimedia technology application but not proficient enough to handle it confidently. In class, they are standing by the computer and students are fixing their attention only on the screen, and therefore, there is no eye contact between teachers and students. The trend of modern information and technology teaching appears to the extremity regardless of the essence of the traditional teaching. And hence, the notion of Creative Education is to be fully comprehended that modern educational techniques serve as an assisting instrument rather than a target: and that should not dominate class. They are substitutes to effective teaching and learning.

B) Loss of Speaking Communication English language and English

Analysis by the teachers is effective in conveying knowledge to the students from English pronunciation to comprehension, improving students' English thought patterns and oral expression. Whereas, the introduction of multimedia technology featuring audio, visual, textual effect fully meets audio and visual requirements of the students and enhances their interest, but it also results in lack of communication between teachers and students, replacement of teachers' voice by computer sound, and teachers' analysis by visual image and students have few chances for speaking communication. With the favorable atmosphere by

the mutual communication between teachers and students fading away, and sound and image of multimedia affecting students' initiative to think and speak, English class turns to course ware show and students are made viewers rather than the participants of class activities.

C) The restriction of Students' Thinking Potential

It is clear that language teaching is different from science subjects, for language teaching does not require demonstration by various steps, rather, the tense and orderly atmosphere is formed through questions and answer between teachers and students, Teachers raise impromptu and real-time questions and guide the students to think, cultivate their capacity to discover and solve problems, however, due to overdemonstration and pre-arranged order, the courseware lacks real-time effect and cannot give feedback. It ignores emphasis and importance in teaching; it also neglects instruction in students' 'thinking', inspiring their paths of thinking, strengthening their capacity contemplating and solving problems. In this way, it should be noted that cultivation of students' thinking capacity should be the major objective in teaching and using of multimedia technology and it should not take up the students' time for thinking, analyzing and exploring questions.

D) Abstract Thinking Replaced by Imaginable Thinking The Process of cognition goes through perceptual stage and rational stage.

It also applies to studying process. It is our hope that teaching makes students adopt the outlook cognition from perceptual recognition to rational apprehension, and greatly leap from perceptual thinking to rational thinking; Therefore it is the major objective in teaching. To enhance the students' abstract thinking, the multimedia technology makes content easier, and with its unique advantages, it can clarify the emphasis in teaching. While if the image and

imagination in students' mind were merely showed on the screen, their abstract thinking would be restricted and logical thinking would waste away. At present the decreased students' reading competence has become a major concern for reason that, textual words are replaced by sound and image, handwriting by keyboard input. All in all, the multimedia as an assisting instrument, cannot replace the dominant role of teachers and it is part of a complete teaching process. Besides, it is not a mechanic imitation of teaching, rather it integrates the visual, textual demonstration with teachers' experience to contribute to the programmed, automatic and continuous teaching project so as to enhance the overall improvement of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing.

7. Conclusion

“Ideally, the purpose of both the traditional and computer-assisted cooperative language leaning classrooms is to provide a space in which the facilitation of learning, and learning itself, can take place” It is true that one of the ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the language learning, Context creation of ELT should be based on the openness and Accessibility of the teaching materials and information. During the process of optimizing the multimedia English teaching, students are not too dependent on their mother tongue, but will be motivated and guided to communicate with each other. Concerning the development of technology, we believe that in future, the use of multimedia English teaching will be further developed. The process of English learning will be more studentcentered but less time-consuming. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students' applied English skill scan be effectively cultivated, meaning that students'

communicative competence will be further developed. In conclusion, we believe that this process can fully improve students' ideation and practical language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfill an effective result of teaching and learning.

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