Technology in Language Teaching

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Abstract - English in this post modern scenario is not only a language; it became a way of life. In the context of globalization, it is used more in areas other than its home land. It facilitates the non-native speakers to grab the opportunities that are posed by international community. So it is obvious that knowledge of English is must and should for any professional student to advance in his career. But second language learning is not as natural as that of first language. There are various factors that affect the second language learning like age, mother tongue influence, etc., which challenge the teachers who teach English as the second language (TESOL). This necessitates the ELT professionals to use the prolific advancements in the technology to teach language. The use of technology has really revolutionized the language learning as well as teaching process. Technology acts as endless resource for authentic materials, grammar teaching, pronunciation, and activities like simulations, role plays, and many exercises. This paper focuses mainly on the Engineering arena, the need to use technology, how to use technology in teaching a language, particularly English, whether technology can replace teacher, advantages and disadvantages in using technology.

Key words: English, Technology, TESOL, ELT.

I. INTRODUCTION

English has grown to such an extent that is omnipresent now, and is one of the basic needs to survive in any part of the world. Even though it is introduced to us by British, we received and owned the language. In India it plays a very crucial role not only as the medium of instruction and in the cirriculum basis but also as the medium for the official communication . English acts as a unifier of the people who belong to various states (with different languages). It helps to build good rapport with the heterogenous people, as far as language is considered, in the organisational environment. This results in an enormous increase of the English aspirants in the country now. It rose to such an extent that knowledge of English is considered as the acid test to be considered as a literate. With the increase in the number of learners, it is the task of the teachers to impart all the four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an effective way. As learners, all over the world, used to use technology like computers, mobiles, **etc.,** to enhance the language teaching and learning experience**,** ELTians all over the world started using new technological advancements in their teaching.

Technology is the use of various techniques, skills, methods and processes in such a way to achieve the desired objectives. Now technology is all pervasive, that we cannot even imagine any field without it. Students all over the world are using computers, mobiles, etc. Graddol (1997:16) states "Technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture." The use of technology in teaching language is innovative and also time-tested process. Now the technological classrooms are mostly preferred by the pedagogic experts. This opened up a new era in teaching that changed the whole setting of the class rooms.

II. NEED TO USE TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING A LANGUAGE

In engineering colleges where teaching and learning environment is more dynamic, the regular way of teaching makes the students feel monotonous. In the scientific environment where the students are well equipped with technological knowledge, this technology integrated teaching will be more beneficial to them. Particularly in teaching a language use of technology will help the students in accordance to their requirement in all the four skills.

- To reduce the monotony of students.
- To make them involved in the learning process.
- To have the first hand experience to listen to native speakers.
- To access recent developments and have globalized interactions.
- To have the comprehensive learning environment(LSRW) .
- To encourage the language learning intuitively.
- To make the learning more personal and flexible without any inhibitions.

III. DOES TECHNOLOGY REPLACE TEACHER?

The role of technology in the modern classroom is vibrant and became the order of the day but the role of the teacher cannot be denied. Technology integrated classrooms or E-classrooms give the awe-inspiring experience to the learner, but all this will not be channelised in a proper way without the proper teacher. Teachers who have a humane aspect, unlike machines which provide us with some information, have an emotional attatchment with their students. Teacher's role in these E-classrooms is very critical as he has to act like a teacher, a facilitator, a mentor, a counsellor, and a motivator. With the use of modern techniques the role of a teacher has become more central. Technology will not replace the teacher but instead there is a change in the duties and responsibilities that the teacher has to shoulder. Classrooms generally contain students with different understanding capabilities, perceptions. So without the teacher, students with different needs cannot be satisfied with the same material provided by online sources. Leaving the students in the virtual class rooms will not give desired results as there is a possibility of getting tangled, perplexed, or diverted and may not reach the desired destination. Technology never replaces or substitutes a teacher. It gives best results only if it is used as an instrument by the teacher. The teaching and learning process will be more enriched if teachers use technology as an aid to their teaching activity.

IV. WAYS TO USE TECHNOLOGY

Language is born out of human's desire to express themselves. It is different from any subject, so teaching a language should be done in a completely different mode. Moreover, language is not static. it is dynamic in nature. For example, if we take English, it goes on absorbing new words from different languages and also the usage of certain words will change. For instance till recent past we used google as a noun but now we started using it as a verb. So, teaching a language needs different skills and techniques. To make language learning more interesting and appealing teachers tend to use technology. All the four skills of a language, viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing, can be developed by using technology. In language teaching and learning, we have a lot to choose from the world of technology: Radio, TV, CD Rom, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning): Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's, etc. The teacher may use any one of or the combination of these devices or techniques depending on teacher's interests, student's perception levels, students interests, and so on.

The following are some types of classrooms that are generally facilitated with technology.

- e-Class rooms
- Virtual classrooms   and
- Blended classrooms

A. e-Class rooms:

Classrooms now are completely different from that of the traditional four-walled classrooms. Modern classrooms is a platform where the teacher has full access and control of the multimedia materials, audio-visual aids, and computer images. The teacher uses these to increase the effectiveness of his teaching. Tech-savvy teachers love to teach in these classrooms. Students have the realistic view of the concepts that are dealt with in such classrooms. As student recieves it with all the senses, it can be better registered in his mind. The following things are available in e-classrooms.

- Slides displaying
- Ppt presentations
- Charts
- Audio clips
- Animated vedios

B. Virtual Class rooms:

Virtual classrooms provide the students with the environment where they have internet access through a portal or software based. Here the teacher and the students access the internet at a time while the teacher delivers his lecture. Even many universities are on the way to adopt this technique to help the students of distance education. The techniques used in virtual class rooms include:

- Web conferencing
  Which enables the real time sharing of information among two or more systems .
- VoIP(Voice over Internet Protocal)-
  In this the voice as well as multimedia is transferred through Internet protocal networks.
- Streaming video-
  In this, the video materials sent in the compressed form and there is no need for the viewer to download it to view. This is a continuous sending process in which the data is played as it arrives.

C. Blended Classrooms or Fllipped Classrooms:

It is a pragmatic approach in language teaching which is the hybrid of traditional teacher instruction and digital instruction. This requires the physical presence of the teacher but uses the computer mediated instructions. This is the best used in teaching phonetics that we have in Engineering course, where the students receive instructions from the teacher and get the on-hand experience of listening to the correct pronunciation through the language labs. These blended classrooms are

acclaimed to be best as it has advantages of both teacher and technology.

V. ADVANTAGES

The below are the advantages of technology while teaching English Language.

- Technology ensures the attention of the students as they receive with all five senses.
- Accesses to authentic materials.
- Can participate in role play **with registerd speakers .**
- Flexible that fecilitates the students to access from any point.
- Fecilitates to learn at their own pace.
- It interests the Technical students as they use technology in their daily lives.
- In most cases, students are not displayed so that they participate in learning without any hesitation or inhibitions.
- Accesses from remote areas.

VI. DISADVANTAGES

As the coin has two sides, there are also disadvantages in the use of technology while teaching English language in the classrooms.

- Teacher has to be comfortable with the technical issues which may not be possible for some of the language teachers.
- Some times the use of technology may be distracting.
- Computer screen may not give the lively environment as teacher.
- Affordability

VII. APPLICATION

With the view of the advantages we have, by using technology, many universities came up with the concept of English lab, for teaching phonemic concepts, like basic vowel and consonant sounds, stress, intonation and simple communication expressions. In the Engineering scenario, the syllabus includes phonetics, functional coversations, debates, group discussions and presentation skills can be better taught with the support of technology. Here the teacher gives the basic explanation and the students are asked to listen to the software like Globerena, k-van, etc. By this, they have an advantage of listening to the received pronunciation. These softwares also allow the students to participate in the role-plays, simulations so that they can participate without any inhibitions.

IX. CONCLUSION

Now, we are living in a digital world, where every thing is technology based. Technology reached the pedagogic field also. The use of technology in teaching a language has slowly spread to all levels from kindergarten to the post graduation. It is desirable and interesting change that took place in this century. It has it's own advantages and disadvantages. But the use of technology should be in such a way that it goes hand-in-hand with the traditional pedagogic methods. Technology, along with the teacher to guide process of learning makes the learning effective. Both methods are equally essential. Blended classrooms are a better option.

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