

Modern Technology: A Potential Tool to Impart English Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

The present paper discusses the Lingua Franca of the world 'English language' and the role of technology in learning and teaching the English language effectively. The 21st-century modern technology has enabled learning and teaching of English very simple. We have a lot to choose from in the world of technology both hardware and software tools: Radio, TV, C.A.L.L, M.A.L.L, CD Rom, Computers, OHP, iPods, the Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, PPT's, Videos, DVDs or VCD's. Technology has brought a revolution in the life of people and completely changed their interaction and work dynamics. Industries were also greatly influenced and couldn't escape the technical revolution. As a result, technology plays a vital role in teaching and learning. Using technology to teach English has a lot of advantages. Learners can get benefit from traditional educational institutions and also from online education. At the English lessons online we can unite to do the desired task. Different software programs, applications are available in learning Vocabulary, Pronunciation skills, Grammar, and LSRW skills. Many students in developed countries are making use of technology to learn the English language. But many more in underdeveloped countries fail to use tech tools for learning purposes due to inadequate tech facilities.

1. Introduction

Globalization has changed the face of the entire world and it has made the whole world a small village, where different people belong to different religions, cultures, and languages started living together. Though their cultures, traditions, and mother tongues are varying with each other, there is a unique language to communicate with everyone that is English. English because of the global language, and non-native speakers of English like Chinese, Indians are using it as a second language, and for Canadians, Australians, and Americans, it is the first language. All over the world, the number of English learners is increasing and so a need rose to implement different teaching methods for the effective teaching of English.

New subjects like 'English for specific purposes' are included in the syllabus for post-graduation studies in many countries. Learning English through Films, Radios has been used for a long time which has replaced traditional teaching. But with the advent of technology, modern teachers are facing new challenges and responsibilities. The traditional methods of teaching are replaced by drastically changing new technology. Technology provides many opportunities for teachers to make their teaching more interesting and learning very productive. Learning the English language with the help of e-books, online dictionaries, and English software is made easy for students. Technology drives very significant, social, and linguistic change. According to Knapper (1988:102) "Technologies can be used as supplements or aids to the principle communication medium" and Ellington et al (1993:2), said that "The principal role of education technology is to improve the overall efficiency of the teaching and learning process". Robyler (1997:31) also said that "Teachers can become more productive through training in technology-based methods and quick access to accurate information that can help them to meet individual needs". Educators, Students, and Parents need to understand the important role of technological tools like tablets, laptops, desktops, and projectors in teaching and learning English today.

Lingua Franca of the World:

The literal meaning of "Lingua Franca" is a common language used by people all over the world. A language attains global status as it influences all the domains of human activity in the world and is also recognized in every country. All languages undergo a perpetual process of evolution and devolution. When we observe history we can understand that a language dominates in one era, seem to vanish in another era, and another language replaces the previous one.

Arabic, French, Roman, and German were the supreme languages in the past. But currently English takes that credit. Now English is undoubtedly the Lingua Franca of the world. In every nook and corner of the world, people are using English. One reason for the spread of English is also the British Empire. All the third world countries show great interest to learn this language to get access to various latest technologies and developments. Globalization demands a common language, and English is the global language now. In many countries, English comes before their mother tongues. Statistics show that for every one native speaker there are three non-native speakers. It is a ratio of one to three. There are many reasons, why English is awarded the status of Lingua Franca.

1. English is the language of first world countries.
2. English is required when it comes to Communication, Business, Service and Technology, Education and Research, Aviation, Entertainment, Mass media, and Diplomatic arrangements.
3. Knowledge of English is greatly required in careers such as medicine and education.
4. Regardless of the country, regardless of the level of education the instruction material in most of the schools is in English.
5. The internet, a vast resource of information, is probably, the best communication device ever created to handle 95% of its communication through English.
6. People learn English because without English they can't survive in the global village.

The Concept of Technology and its Importance in Education:

There are different terms used by Educationalists and Researches to refer to Technology in Education. According to Muffoletto (1994) "technology is commonly thought of in terms of gadgets, instruments, machines, and devices and most educators will refer to the technology as computers". Most of the teachers associated the word 'Technology' with Television and Radio. These are considered as technology earlier but comfortably replaced by computers in all small schools. Ellington et al (1984:13) categorize "Technology in education as audiovisual aids such as the overhead projectors, tape recorders, videocassette recorders, television monitors and computers and overhead transparencies, slides and audio tapes, video recordings and computer programs".

Technology assists teachers in their explanation of abstract concepts and ideas. With the increase in the use of English the requirement for qualified teachers for the instruction of the English language has also increased. The majority of the teachers even today are teaching traditionally. Very few teachers use cutting edge technology in their instruction. The traditional manner of teaching proved to be useful to date. However, there are many opportunities for students now to learn a language on their own via multimedia and the internet.

Tech Tools to Teach English:



1. **BLOGS:** Blogs are one of the popular tools adopted to teach to read and to write. Weblogs provide students an environment where they can extensively use their previous knowledge. It is a learner-centered

environment. It provides an opportunity for writing, but also multiple audiences can access it. Teachers, by using blogs can teach more effectively and learners can learn quickly.

2. **CALL:** Computer Assisted Language Learning in teaching developed due to the micro-computers and internet. It is a very potential teaching tool. Computers make classroom teaching more effective and enliven. The readymade software assists the teachers make teaching very interesting. With the help Multimedia Language Lab, phonetics can be accurately taught. Vocabulary CD's, GRE, TOFEL, IELTS CD's certainly prove to be greatly helpful in the development of LSRW skills. The teachers can concretely provide abstract things through computers. Computers provide a platform between teachers and learners for easy communication.

3. **MALL:** Mobile Assisted Language Learning helps the students to learn vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation. Millions and millions of students are using smartphones all over the world for different purposes. Mobile phones certainly offer different applications to learn the English language. A majority of learners use their mobile phones to get the meaning of a new word by using the internet and dictionary. According to Vavoula and Sharples (2002) "learning through mobile can be considered in three different contexts: learning when regarding space, to the different places, and in terms of time." Hence, a mobile learning system can deliver education to language learners anytime and anywhere they need it.

4. **OHP:** Overhead Projector is one of the useful tools in teaching the English language. It minimizes the time of the teacher who spends time a lot of time writing on the board. With the help of OHP, teachers can prepare notes in advance and present them without any loss of time in the class. Word tests can easily be conducted through overhead projectors.

5. **INTERNET:** The Internet plays a pivotal role in learning English in the current scenario. It poses certainly a threat to the traditional learning language. It reduces the role of the teacher as a mere facilitator and encourages individual learning. Its innumerable facilities, helps the students acquire knowledge independently. Many students worldwide are making the utmost use of the internet for improving their multi-dimensional skills.

6. **ELETRONIC DICTIONARIES:**

Electronic Dictionaries save a lot of time for the students in their search for a word. Its portability enables the learner to carry it wherever and whenever. It is the main tool in the process of developing English communication skills. The learner not only searches for the meaning of the word but also can use it as a thesaurus.

7. **PPT's:** PPT is one of the most helpful teaching aids that can make comprehension easy. English teachers can teach Grammar, Vocabulary, and Reading comprehension through PPT. vocabulary teaching can be very interesting by adding images on the slides. Tests also can be conducted through PPT's.

8. **iPod:** An iPod is a portable media player designed to deliver audio and video content to the users. Its portability adds to the convenience. This is very useful to the backward students as it provides them an opportunity to go through the lessons repeatedly. iPod can be used as recorders so both language teacher and learner can use this facility. Learners can record their speeches and submit them for the assessment.

9. **MOBILE APPLICATIONS:** Innumerable mobile applications in smartphones are used for different purposes. Most of the applications are user-friendly and well organized in language-related topics like language learning. Most of the learners nowadays are tech-minded, creative, and enjoy using gadgets. Mobile applications like Spelling pal English tutor, Busuu, My word book, conversational English, English grammar in use and Fluent English, etc. are very helpful for English language learners.

10. **SOCIAL NETWORKS:** Social networks have revolutionized in today's classrooms with video streaming, blogging, podcasts, and wikis. Social networks like Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, and Slide share, YouTube, focus on building online communities bound together with common interests and activities. They are known as Web 2.0 technologies, which are defined as "applications and services that facilitate collective action and social interaction online with a rich exchange of multimedia information and evolution of aggregate knowledge". Social networks encourage student to student and student to teacher interactions providing a step for the students to learn English together.

Advantages and Drawbacks of Technology in Teaching English:

Since the increase of use of new technologies in information, language teaching has changed its face in many aspects. But not all those aspects can be viewed as positive. The impact of the use of technology on the way

English is taught has brought not only advantages to it, but also, some disadvantages concerning the availability of technologies to be used, money invested to train the teachers.

Advantages:

1. Learning English through technological tools gives the student self-motivation, enthusiasm, and efficiency.
2. Computer analyses the mistakes done by the student while practicing grammar exercises and reacts differently from the usual teacher and leads the student self-correction and makes him understand the principles behind the correct solution.
3. Technology enables access through the internet and facilitates the ESL learners in getting the lessons at home, instead of going to schools.
4. Technological learning gives the complete opportunity to the language learner to express themselves clearly and directly without any problems of whatever kind.
5. Students learn language skills and get the maximum benefit when they are given immediate feedback. So this teaching through tools gives the student instant feedback and allows the students to learn at their own pace.
6. E-teaching provides the language teachers' access out of working hours when the learner sends his or her queries through e-mail at any time. This feature makes the teacher respond to the queries of the student.
7. Through social networks language teachers can create a platform for ESL learners that they don't have to go to the countries where the native language of English is spoken.
8. Using technological tools in ESL classrooms stimulates the students because they are thought-provoking.
9. Audio and Video aids help the language teachers to teach language skills both as supplementary material for language enhancement and skills practice.

Drawbacks:

1. Language teachers and Students fail to use technological tools in the English teaching-learning process, due to a lack of adequate knowledge in the application of both hardware and software technologies.
2. Technical tools have merely artificial intelligence and they cannot handle unexpected situations. They can't deal with learner's unexpected problems or respond to learner's questions immediately as teachers do.
3. The main disadvantage of learning English through technology is, it incurs much cost and time-consuming.
4. Most of the senior English language teachers may not feel comfortable in using tech tools in teaching English because of tech phobia.
5. While teaching English online, the teacher may not have a concentration on everyone and may lose control over the students.
6. Teaching language through the internet sometimes may become a barrier in the teaching-learning process because of the slow or dis-connectivity of the Internet.

2. Conclusion:

Technology has become a part and parcel of our life in this modern world. It is playing a key role in learning the language. The ultimate goal of technology in language classrooms is to promote English and to motivate language learners. It provides them with hands-on experience to get them involved in learning the language effectively. When one compares the pros and cons of technology one can find a wide range of facilities which are very helpful, supportive, interesting, motivating and comfortable for all types of learners.

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