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ADAPTATION OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: NECESSITY AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

The simultaneous impact of globalization, the spread of English and technological development have transformed our teaching and learning English as a lingua franca in a new way (Warschauer, 2004). As a result, both English and ICT have become essential literacy skills for a growing number of non-native speakers of English to ensure full participation in the information society. In the digital world, where everything is under control of the Internet and Brand-New Technological Inventions, it is difficult to undermine their contribution to foreign language teaching.

In teaching and learning a language like English, we have a lot to choose from the world of technology. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are rapidly changing our world. Whether it's teaching new languages in a personalized way or translating speech and text in real-time, AI-powered language tools from Duolingo to Skype are bridging social and cultural divides in our workplaces, classrooms and everyday lives. Digital translation services are not "perfect," admits Microsoft Education Leader **Mark Sparvell**, but "they offer a means of understanding" that might not otherwise be possible. This rapid rising and development of information technology has offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. As a result, technology plays a very prominent role in English teaching. Using multimedia to create a context to teach English has its unique advantages. This paper tries to analyze the necessity of multimedia technology to language teaching and the challenges to be encountered by using these technologies. It discusses different approaches and techniques which can assist students to improve their learning skills by using technology and to upgrade the technical skills and knowledge of teachers as well.

Key Expressions

ELT, Lingua franca, Global Village, Internet, Multimedia Technology, Creativity, E-mailing, Presentation, Graphics, Animation, Gamification, Pronunciation, Application, Artificial Intelligence.

Introduction

Today the new technologies have transformed the world into a 'Global Village'. It is increasingly becoming clear that the global village would need a global lingua franca and English has emerged as the preferred language for global communication, whereas languages have traditionally been taught from the view point of their cultures, we will now have to think of new techniques and materials so that global language learners can meet the challenges of the emerging global civilization and use the global language for their diverse needs.

Multimedia technology refers to computer-based interactive applications that use both the hardware and software that allow students to share their ideas and information. It is a combination of text, graphics, animation, video, and sound. The language teachers should integrate it into their planning of lesson and assessment in the same way they have been doing with film, videos, and computer-assisted learning strategies. Technology also makes teaching interesting and productive because it has the capability to attract language learners. The use of multimedia technology in the language classroom improves teaching content and makes the best use of class time and also improves students' ability to listen and speak, and thereby develop their communicative competence. It breaks the teacher-centered traditional teaching method and brings improvement in teachers' teaching efficiency. In this way, the teachers of English can take full advantage of Multimedia Technology to teach English in non-native speaking countries.

Significance of the Study

The present research paper is significant for the following reasons;

- 1) Teachers can use multimedia technology to create more colourful and stimulating language classes.
- 2) It triggers the students' imagination and creativity.
- 3) It helps to vary and enhance the learning process and leads to better knowledge retention.
- 4) Educational videos can provide more opportunities for students to engage with the content. Students around the world can learn from course contents made available through videos.
- 5) A recent research study shows that the use of multimedia may improve the vocabulary growth of English language learners through infographics, audios and videos with the rapid development of Information Technology.

Literature Review

With the view to identifying the research gap and strengthening the theoretical base of study, there is a need to adopt technology to teach and learn the English language in an effective way. The English language teachers encounter different challenges like insufficient time to complete syllabus, different levels of English proficiency of learners, a variety of interests and paces of studying and thus, the learners become inactive. So, we need to individualize the study of English in order to get desired outcomes. The research gap gets fulfilled by having defined syllabus/ curriculum, right approach for teaching-learning process, availability of teaching resources, and proper evaluation system are major factors that contribute to bring the best results.

Let's have a glance at how multimedia technologies are expected to be used in Colleges and Universities to teach English language in an effective manner and what challenges are supposed to be encountered.

Adaptation of Multimedia Technology to ELT

1) Engaging Lessons: Gamification and Accessibility



The majority (64%) of students say that accessing training content from their mobile devices is essential. As the world goes remote, students are increasingly joining English classes and completing tasks via their phones. Tech tools are catering to this preference. Smaller screens and varied internet connections and load speeds are forcing English learning apps, platforms, and interfaces to optimize for them. They're also prioritizing accessibility, looking at ways to make English learning content more inclusive on mobile. Take an example of LEAD Masterclass Application.

LEAD Masterclass App has been introduced in schools and colleges where students learn life skills from renowned experts and personalities like R. Madhavan and Chetan Bhagat. App presents a variety of learning resources. It uses different assessment tools to improve students' performance. Students-led Conferences where students become teachers and explain concepts to an audience. They receive Certificates and Badges in their login the moment they complete their task successfully. They feel awesome to be a champion. It develops 5 key skills among students.

- 1) Conceptual Understanding
- 2) Thinking Skills
- 3) Collaboration Skills
- 4) Communication Skills
- 5) Exposure

LEAD Masterclass provides new-age learning to students via the Student Development System which includes Multi-modal Learning, Subject Specific Pedagogies, Unmatched Exposure, School Learning Connected with Home Learning. This is a dedicated Student App for Gamified Learning, Unlimited Practice, Interactive Resources like Videos, iHomework, Practice Tests and much more. Exclusive Parent Section to partner in students' learning journey with important updates and progress reports.

2) Automated Pronunciation and Speaking Feedback Using AI



Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) is powered by Artificial Intelligence. You'll find it in familiar apps and voice assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google Home. While these are very helpful, they are built for native speakers with standard accents. Maybe you've struggled when Siri doesn't understand you, for example. ASR can be an effective tool for teaching English, but a model specifically designed for non-native speakers is necessary. That's where ELSA's AI-powered English Speaking Coach comes in. It lets students speak English

in short dialogues via the app. They then receive immediate, detailed feedback about their fluency, and tips to make corrections. With a 95% accuracy rate and real-time responses, speech recognition AI ensures students have in-context, on-demand guidance.

3) Data Analytics to inform Student Feedback



Like many other tech tools, English learning solutions are data-driven. The collection of information on how, when, and why people use the technology is used to finesse user experiences and the ultimate goal of learning English. For instance, teachers can review when students log in, what tasks they score high in, what areas they struggle with, and what type of content they spend the most time on.

Dashboards provide an overview of the group performance. With this information, teachers can tailor their attention and curriculum more closely to student needs. This data also informs the tools' creators, who can iterate and test new features based on the insights, and make English learning more efficient and enjoyable for students.

4) Context-based Learning



Language acquisition is rooted in meaning. The more students learn in context, the better and faster they develop fluency. While context-based learning was first introduced in the 1980s, it's constantly updated and translated into modern tech offerings. Specifically, tech is generating new ways for students to learn English through practical experience versus theory only. For example, ELSA provides context-based learning for students getting ready for an interview in English. Speech Analyzer prompts students with a series of interview questions that they record and submit their responses to, and in turn, get a speaking score. They can also upload themselves and a friend role-playing an interview, and see their speech converted to text, with notes about their linguistic range and construction. By using technology to bridge the gap between language and experience, students deduce more meaning and are more likely to have a stronger comprehension of English.

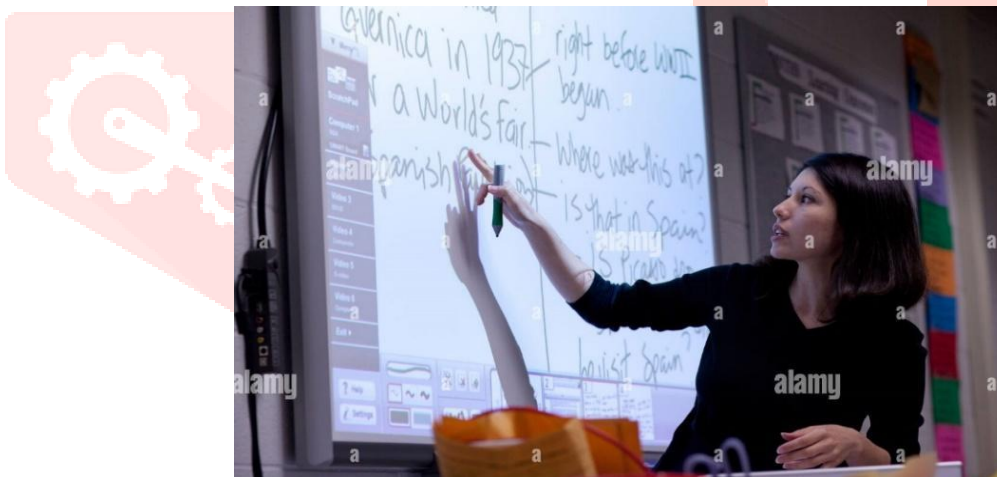
5) Virtual and Augmented Reality



Games, quizzes, videos, and other dynamic content have always played a big role in language learning, but nowadays, this type of content has gone a step further into Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). With VR and AR, students can quite literally step into new worlds, where they interact with environments completely in English. An example would be having students present to a simulated audience at a conference in the United States. This immersive technique prepares students for when they may be in a native English setting, and to “live” in English via the multi-sensory approach.

Using a VR headset had a positive effect on students’ engagement, motivation, and independent English learning, one study found. Interestingly, it also enabled students to follow instructions more closely.

6) The IWB in Education



The IWB started appearing in classrooms in the early parts of this century and has now become a staple of many classrooms in Britain and around the world. It allows us to save and print notes written on the board, control the classroom computer from the whiteboard, play listening activities on the sound system, use the screen as a slide for presentations, access the internet, and so on. The possibilities seem endless. As teacher David Dodgson explains, some people ‘love the shiny stuff’, believing that simply standing in front of an IWB is effective integration of education technology.

7) Film & Videos

Using short and feature-length videos is an engaging way to work on skills like vocabulary and comprehension. Videos help to expose students to the use of natural English. Young children really enjoy short cartoons and animated movies, and older students can learn about current events through news broadcasts. ESL Partyland has free resources that include vocabulary worksheets and discussion questions to accompany films like 'Bonnie and Clyde', 'Vertigo' and 'Dead Man Walking'. The site also offers a film survey to assess your students' interests before choosing films, and film reviews that can be adapted for any level of instruction.

8) Apps



Learning English can be very difficult and frustrating at times. Apps on iPads and tablets are great ways for students to practice English and have fun while doing it.

9) Podcasts



Students can listen to podcasts to improve their comprehension. There are multiple podcasts tailored specifically for English language learners. Teachers will help students to create podcasts to sharpen their speaking skills. With just a microphone and a computer, students can create reports and presentations. Video podcasts are an attractive option for students, and some classes can have their own YouTube channels.

10) Blogging



Class blogs provide great forums for students to practice their writing skills. Live Journal, Edublog and Blogger allow you to create blogs for free. One of the reasons that students find blogging appealing is that it is more of an authentic writing experience, as a wider audience typically has access to read posted entries, which means students tend to put more effort into their blogs. Teachers can get students to write about specific topics that they find interesting, or students can provide commentary on current events and social justice issues. The more they practice their writing skills, the more proficient they become, so regular blogging is recommended.

11) Digital Platforms

Digital platforms like Facebook & Edmodo, Online Corpora, Online CPD, Global Staffroom, and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Programs like Presentation Software, Electronics Dictionaries, and E-mailing offer a better pattern to explore the new teaching model.

Digital Education in India

Digital tools now gained a pick-up in every field of education. Improvements in infrastructure, electricity and bandwidth access along with funding will be required to drive growth in the long term. Digital technology in India has been evolving over the last few years, changing the way students learn concepts in school. The traditional chalk and talk method have paved the way for more interactive teaching methods as schools and colleges are increasingly adopting digital solutions to keep themselves abreast with the technological changes. As the current generation of students is well-versed with laptops, iPad, and smartphones, these innovative methods of teaching guarantee more participation from students. To cater to the school students' needs, education providers such as Educomp, Tata Class Edge, Pearson, and Teach Next have been coming up with interactive software to aid teachers in classroom teaching. However, usage of digital technologies in institutes of higher education is still in its nascent stages and efforts are being made to fine-tune these technologies to adapt to the needs of College and University students.

Challenges in Teaching English Today

Challenges before the English Language teachers in India are enormous and apparent. They should be able to cater to the practical needs of learners, to make them competent enough to interact with one another and also to retrieve information from all over the world. English has a base in several countries and is considered as the most suitable and convenient tool for International Communication. The people who have proficiency in this language could access a large number of jobs and also were seen holding high positions in many National and International Organizations. In the earlier days English was just like a Library language, but now that notion has changed totally. At present the challenges visible before the English language teachers in India are diverse and it is necessary for them to shape up accordingly to meet the demands of the day.

The challenges that the teacher most of the time encounters are:

- 1) Lacuna in Education System
- 2) Lack of Resources
- 3) Limited Support from Competent Authorities
- 4) Language/ Semantic Barriers
- 5) Allocation of Insufficient Time
- 6) Overcrowded Classrooms
- 7) Facing a Mixed-ability Group of Learners

Summing-up

In the era of competitive world, where the majority of the students are attempting GRE & TOEFL, good listening and speaking skills have become an absolute necessity. Communicative approach has been totally neglected by teachers and learners which has become a global demand where students are supposed to communicate across the globe. As language changes geographically due to dialectical variations, the teacher should take adequate steps to teach their student about neutral accent and their importance while communicating. Students are also now facilitated by software to practice pronunciation through phonetics. To achieve the goals of language learning today every college should be provided with a Language Lab, sophisticated equipment like Computers, LCD Projectors. In addition to these, our faculty too should update their knowledge, skills and should acquire thoroughness over their syllabus to meet the demands of globalization since English is seen as a key educational investment in this world.

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