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## *Use of Modern Technologies in English Language Teaching*

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### **Abstract**

*From dawn to dusk, man is using technology in various aspects for all his works. It is technology that is evolving every day. People have to update themselves for surviving in this hi-tech world. It is the vehicle to get access with this modernized world. More than the process of communication, trade and transactions, today, technology is widely used in educational sectors. Though technology cannot play the vital role of a teacher, it can be used as a supplementary tool for enhancing teaching methods in classroom. As the conventional chalk and talk method seems to be monotonous and boring to the students, teachers emphasize the latest technologies for teaching the subjects. Various software and modern technologies are being introduced to make students to get access to their subjects easily. This study aims to discuss the availability of various technologies, their impact, their practical uses and the problems associated with the application of modern technological tools. In Teaching and learning English language communication skills, we have many to choose from the world of technology: TV, Computers, Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos and so on. This rapid rising and development of information technology has offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. Using multimedia to create a context to teach communication skill has its unique advantages. As a result, technology plays a very important role in teaching communication skill. This paper tries to analyze the necessity of multimedia technology to communication skill teaching and also brings out the problems faced by using these technologies. It also aims to make English teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner.*

**Keywords:** English language teaching and learning, communication skill teaching, multimedia technology, advantages, disadvantages and strategies.

We live in an age of 'technological immersion. Technological inventions have greatly transformed our lives. Human communication has been shaped by new technologies that permeate into every structure of our society. Today, communication is no longer an involuntary act, but an essential trait for survival in competitive situations. It is not merely ability, but a skill that is required to be successful in life. In order to acquire the skills essential for communication, technology assisted learning through innovative techniques could be employed in ELT pedagogies.

We live in a world of High Tech. The technological inventions and innovations have greatly changed social, political, economical and cultural structures of our society. Man is inseparable from the messianic gadgets and their fascinating comforts. They have liberated us from physical discomforts, administrative inabilities, intellectual inadequacies, communication gaps, economical restraints, cultural barriers, moral limitations etc. The machines have determined the way we think, feel and act. Be it the computer and internet technologies, or medical or space technologies, our homes, offices and schools are filled with digital devices and electronic gadgets. Indeed, our modern life is shaped by new technologies.

Human communication has undergone great transformation from Stone Age to Industrial revolution. With the advent of new technologies, it has hinged on from modernization to network communication. Today, communication is no longer an involuntary act but an essential trait for survival in competitive situations. It is not merely ability but a skill that is required to be successful in life. An excellent communication skill is the need of the moment. It is true that a person with a competitive linguistic skill is preferred rather than the one with merely technical skill in any organization. A candidate with good vocabulary, phrases and expression is looked upon. A command over the language, especially English, fetches promotions in career. Owing to globalization, corporate have ventured into outsourcing and international trading for which they require employees with excellent professional presentation skills. The job market requires candidates with remarkable outputs in terms of communications skills, which include listening, speaking, reading and writing competencies and non-verbal communicative factors. English Language Learning needs to focus on preparing the learners for 'performance', which requires a considerable employment or dependency on the outcome-based teaching and learning. Technology does intervene at this juncture to accelerate a significant development of communicative skills with its magical and overpowering assistance.

Technology and English language have an interdependent relationship as they contribute significantly to a successful use of each other in the modern world. English language promotes the spread of

technology in all recess of our lives, as it is the topmost lingua franca of the world. Globalization has speeded up the spread of the language across the globe. Technology in the educational scenario is a conglomerate term that refers to the use of systems that depend on computer chips, digital applications, and e-networks. In other words, it encompasses desktop and laptop computers, electronic gadgets like DVD players, TV boxes, interactive whiteboards, LCD projectors, Mobile devices that use computer chips like cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants [PDAs] and MP3 players.

Technology has to be incorporated into teaching methodologies so that it would facilitate the learners not only to acquire a second language effectively but also to develop electronic literacy skills. The 'traditional' methods of ELT are less preferred to computer and technology assisted methods in effective ELL classes. Thus, "Teaching our students language in its traditional media is no longer enough. Traditional literacy's, such as reading and writing, are now only a subset of the skills a learner is required to develop in order to function efficiently. Increasingly, in everyday and professional life, people need the skills of electronic literacy, such as accessing, evaluating, and utilizing information

Technology is known for speed. Its powers are overwhelming. It is precise in diagnosing what is there and what is not, and what is right and what is wrong. It offers readymade solutions and quick fixes. It is cheap and available everywhere. It is easy to handle and difficult to neglect. Perhaps, these elements of its inexorable entity in our daily life could be an advantage to the EFL teachers to employ technology for an effective language teaching inside the class and the learners for an extended learning outside the class. A methodology that employs use of technologies in ELT is known as CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). Technology can provide learners with different learning techniques and styles, additional demonstrations, multimedia CDs illustrating the concepts taught in the class, digital tutorials and the Web with innumerable images, audios, videos and animations, thus, creating a conducive ambience with meaningful contexts.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have greatly contributed to the acquisition of linguistic abilities and communication skills. ICT refers to information-handling tools like computers, satellite and wireless technology and the Internet. These tools have not only transformed the means we communicate but also the manners with which we communicate. ICT plays an indispensable and significant role in the process of language teaching and learning. Especially, technologies have brought an outstanding change in the field of English Language Teaching and Learning with regard

to the way we teach and the content we deliver. Our schools and colleges have adapted CALL in the curriculum and effective pedagogies our woven around them.

Many educational institutions have started employing modern technologies in class and labs, in curriculum and syllabuses, in pedagogies and methodologies. A lecture is devised to be performed with the help of audio-video (AV) aids. There are AV halls, interactive whiteboards and smart classrooms. There are language labs with printers, projectors and internet connections networking all the computer systems through LAN. ICT is used in preparing handouts, to browse for tasks and activities online, connecting with learners outside the class through teleconference etc.

The teachers have the freedom to integrate technologies in their methodology and to choose activities and tasks from internet that are required for their students based on the need and the level of language proficiency. Teachers can adopt technology resources to develop and tailor instructional materials to better meet individual student needs.

Technology has accompanied the process of language teaching and learning for many years. Cassette players and television were traditional primitive technological tools, which were used in language classes as pedagogical aids. Today, when we think about technology, the first teaching aid that appears in our vision is the computer. Likewise, in the field of English language teaching, computer is a good teaching aid, especially since it has been complemented with the connection to the Internet.

The necessity of application of Multimedia Technology to English teaching are

- Offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities.
- Seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students with greater incentives.
- Activates students' thinking and helps them to transform English learning into capacity cultivation.
- Inspires students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice.
- Widens students' knowledge to gain an insightful understanding to Western culture.
- Equips the students with knowledge and brings about information-sharing among students and makes them actively participate in class discussion and communication.
- Enriches teaching content and makes the best of class time and breaks the "teacher centered" teaching pattern and fundamentally improves the class efficiency.

- Goes beyond the time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning and economizes the class time meanwhile increases class information.
- Stresses the role of students and enhances the importance of “interaction” between teachers and students.
- Creates a good platform for the exchange between teachers and students, while at the same time provides a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model.
- Helps students to use the new technology to their advantage, such as manipulating the network to contact teachers and receiving answers by email.

English and Language Arts teachers make their students write in various genres – narrative, creative fiction, poetry and more as they investigate stories, characters and history. With the advent of eBooks, students can not only read content electronically but produce interactive written work of their own, complete with images, audio and video and interactive hyperlinks. Collaboration is more possible than with simple word processing, and student work can be shared with anyone via the Internet, allowing students to create content for classmates and others.

A SMART Board and Active Board are examples of an Interactive Whiteboards. Major benefits of an interactive whiteboard include its versatility, interactivity, multimedia/multimodal presentation and participation potential. Interactive Whiteboards can also help students conceptualize new knowledge through representations of abstract ideas. Furthermore, IWB lessons and activities can be recorded and published in ways that facilitate sharing and collaboration. In all, IWBs are a classroom tool that can help English teachers create engaging, interactive, collaborative, and visual lessons and activities that motivate students to learn.

Images can communicate complex messages, can tell stories and can be a meeting place for students to share in learning. Online photo albums allow classrooms to connect and share with the community outside its walls. Teachers can share pictures from the class with families, or a whole community can share an album together over the course of a school year. Students can use online photo galleries to share work with a diverse audience and get comments from other students. Online image galleries will save money, a trip to the photo processing store and will keep images for as long you'd like.

Online speaking avatars are easy to create and open up many educational possibilities. They can connect visualization with spoken content and creates outlet and fun. They can embed in blogs,

wikis, Web sites, or can email a link. They allow presentations to be performed by multiple members of a group and are of great use for students with social anxiety and English language learners

The recent Internet- based technologies employed in English language instruction is Web 2.0 tools. The most common tools of Web 2.0 include wiki, blog, podcast, social network and video conferencing have demonstrated the capability of the current technology in language teaching and learning. Studies have revealed that wikis are useful tools for learning and teaching as they provide collaborative writing. Likewise, blogs or text formatted journal entries by users, can improve writing skills, promote active learning, and provide feedback for students and teachers. Language learners normally use blogs in their classes to enhance both writing and reading skills. Apart from wikis and blogging, social networking is a good opportunity for language learners to improve their writing and reading ability especially when they type messages or read them.

A podcast is typically an audio file that one downloads and listens to. Podcasting has a significant potential as a modern learning tool for English learners. It can be used to record English teacher's lesson or a student conversation. It can be used to create a homework assignment or even be part of a test. Students can use podcasts to interview each other about what they learned during the week. They can create a newscast, hold a debate, or run a radio show. Students could read their own essays or stories. Podcasts can also be used to record guest speakers and make their presentations available online. It is already widely utilized in language learning, especially for offering authentic content and the act of recording it. Myriad types of authentic podcasting are available for English language learners. For example, "English caster" provides a list of podcasts specifically created for English language learners. Furthermore, in this regard some researchers like Stanley (2005) created a podcast applicable for teaching in EFL/ESL classes.

With the usage of technology, students learn basic skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking - better and faster. Students develop the technical skills required to use the Internet for communication and information gathering. They acquire geographic awareness based on understanding the global nature of Internet connections and communications. Students who have the opportunity to use technology to acquire and organize information show a higher level of comprehension and a greater likelihood of using what they learn later in their lives. Students who regularly use technology take more pride in their work, have greater confidence in their abilities and develop higher levels of self-esteem.

**Technology can be a great asset in ESL classrooms, offering authentic writing activities and endless resources on grammar instruction, lesson plans and other central topics.**

Computers, tablets and e-readers can all be instrumental in learning English, offering interactive and motivating activities for students of all ages. The following are 10 different ways that ESL teachers can use technology to teach English in a way that will make lessons more engaging and appealing:

## **10 Ways to Use Technology in ESL Instruction**

### **1. Film and Video**

**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. 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.

### **2. 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. For practicing grammar rules, apps like Grammar Up allow students to test their knowledge on specific topics (verbs, prepositions, etc.). The app also keeps track of students' progress and allows them to skip questions by shaking the tablet. Best Colleges Online offers a list of 16 apps for ESL students, ranging from basic letter instruction to pronunciation guides. Students can also play classic games like Scrabble and Boggle on mobile devices.

### **3. Digital Field Trips**

**Students absorb a great deal of information through experiential learning, but field trips are not always an option with limited school budgets.** Digital field trips provide more authentic ways for students to absorb new information. There are many options on the Internet to learn about virtually any topic. Middle School Net offers links to a wide array of digital field trip possibilities.

### **4. Podcasts**

**Students can listen to podcasts to improve their comprehension.** They can also create podcasts to practice their English speaking abilities. A free download of iTunes gives teachers access to hundreds



of free podcasts on a range of topics. There are multiple podcasts tailored specifically for English language learners. Teachers can also have students create podcasts to give them opportunities to practice 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 even have their own YouTube channels.

## 5. Web Quests

**Web quests are a fun way for students to use the Internet to build English proficiency.** Students are given a task and rely on their content knowledge and grasp of English language to complete it. Teachers can create their own or visit Web Quests to access tutorials and databases of pre-created web quests.

## 6. Online Games

**Students can master spelling, grammar and other English skills by playing games on the computer or mobile devices.** Fun brain has educational games and books for Pre-K to eighth grade students. Star Fall has multiple games for younger students to increase English literacy skills. Digital versions of hangman, Scrabble and Boggle are also entertaining for all ages of students. Many of these games can be put up on interactive white boards to get full class participation.

## 8. Skype

**Skype is a great way for students to practice their speaking and listening skills with other people from any location..** Students can have question-and-answer sessions with authors of books, attend video-conferences and virtual field trips, interview professionals, and connect with students from other cultures and countries. Skype can even be used to conduct parent-teacher conferences or connect with students' family members who may be abroad!

## 9. Blogging

**Class blogs provide great forums for students to practice their writing skills.** 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 (weekly or daily) is recommended. Blogs also provide good opportunities for family members to see what their children are working on in class!

## **Conclusion**

“Ideally, the purpose of both the traditional and computer-assisted cooperative language learning classrooms is to provide a space in which the facilitation of learning, and learning itself, can take place” (Shi, 2008: 76). 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 student-centered but less time-consuming. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students’ applied

English skill can 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. Barring a few problem areas multimedia technology can be used effectively in classrooms of ELT with proper computer knowledge on the part of teachers, overcoming the finance problems in setting up the infrastructure and not allowing the teachers to become technophobes.

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