

UTILITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Bhukya Alwar Swamy¹

¹ Department of English, Prof. G. Ram Reddy Centre for Distance Education, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

ABSTRACT

Due to the advancement of technology, teaching and learning methodology has changed completely. Recent developments in technology have been proved very fruitful in English language teaching. There are various websites available on internet that include various language learning activities like quizzes, chat rooms, discussion boards, model conversations etc. The English language teachers today use different techniques like speeches, videos, movie-clippings, advertisements, commentaries, dramatics etc. as their teaching tools. We can find a lot of material related with English speaking on youtube.com. Social networking sites are also very useful as they provide the opportunity to chat in English language. For using technology in language teaching, language labs should be developed in the educational institutes. For practicing out of the class, computer laboratories should be provided to the students. The labs should be equipped with proper updated technology, having computers, speakers, videos and software etc. Non-internet software available in the market can also be used for ELT. Skype can be used for communication with the people at different places. Through this technique, the students get the opportunity to come in contact with the foreign language in a more interesting way. They remain more attentive and active while learning through technology. Language Learning becomes an enjoyable activity. Technology may be used not only in language labs and class rooms but the students should be motivated to spend more time with this language through internet. This paper emphasizes the benefits of using E-Learning tools in English language teaching. It also highlights the various problems in using it and also finds out the solutions to use more and more technology effectively for making second language learning easy and interesting.

Keyword: - Technology, English language teaching, internet, E-learning tools

1. INTRODUCTION

“If someone is learning in a way that uses information and communication technologies (TCTs), they are using E-learning” (Department of

Education and Skills, UK 2003) There is a plethora of E-Learning tools and techniques that can be used by capable teachers to enhance learning and teaching situations. These tools make language learning more interesting, interactive, meaningful and stimulating for the students. These tools are very substantial as they are capable of bringing a change and reform in traditional forms of teaching and learning language. These tools can be used effectively for improving listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the students. Internet has brought a revolution in the field of teaching English language. “Internet provides us with a tremendous wealth of teaching resources. We can easily find the text information, pictures and audio data on almost any topic we like. Powerful tools, such as Google and other search engines, can find a huge amount of information in any subject for us. It is very convenient and most of these information can be obtained free of charge. Part of the content has been turned into multimedia courseware. Learning becomes very convenient and interesting.” (E-learning and English Teaching, Huiwei Cai)

Traditional Methods of English Language Teaching

Traditional method of teaching English included mainly lecturing by the teachers. Students were encouraged to do rote Learning. English was taught as a "Know-ledge" subject not as a "Skill" subject because their main aim was to teach students to pass the examinations only.

Past Trends in teaching English Language (ELT) have changed rapidly. Earlier it was a challenge for the English language teachers to teach English and they used to adapt 'Grammar-Translation Method' in which the teacher used to explain every word to students in the native language to make them understand and learn English. This translation method is still used by many teachers for teaching English language.. So many other methods were also used such as bilingual method, direct method, audio-lingual method, the structural approach and the situational teaching, communicative language teaching etc. but no method was said to be a perfect method.. Moreover, the ELT trends that were very popular in the past have vanished today and have been substituted by innovative ELT methods.

Use of Technology for ELT

"Information Technology is dramatically reshaping the classroom. As we enter the digital age, technology will become an integral part of learning environment at every level of education..."

(Forbairt,1996, P.19).The new era with all-pervading technology in all spheres of life has opened the new vistas, more choices, opportunities and challenges So it has become the responsibility of the teachers to change and update themselves according to the changing era. With the advent of globalization and technological revolution, it has become essential that all students getting professional education are properly skilled in English Language. This is possible only with a proper blend of edification and e- learning tools (modern technologies). Traditional teaching and learning paradigms have been shaken by use of e-learning tools into educational practices. E-learning is a diverse range of technological tools and systems that can be utilized by capable and creative teachers to enhance teaching and learning situations. These tools make learning more interesting, motivating, stimulating and meaningful to the students.

E-Learning Techniques and Tools for ELT Internet-Based E-learning Materials

Internet is a great source of information in the form of articles, courses in English, videos, speeches and conferences etc. The learners can send or receive assignments through e-mails and can also participate in online exams. Teachers can view their students' work online at any time. Learners will not miss their lessons as they can see and listen to the teacher through an online webcam and receive tests, quizzes, and notes from electronic online whiteboards. Schools are interconnected in a network and they do the projects together and prepare materials online. Every school or university has its own website. There are numerous free internet-based software and websites also available on the Internet that learners can use them as E-learning tools and enhance their English language skills.

You Tube

You tube videos can be used by the teachers as a tool for improving Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing skills of the students. The teacher can select a video appropriate to the level of the students and can show these videos to the students. Listening skills can also be enhanced through YouTube as news headlines are available to watch on YouTube. The teacher can ask students to listen to the news headlines and put those headlines in order.

Skype

Using Skype provides unlimited possibilities for the teachers and students to connect with each other anywhere in the world. It provides immense opportunities for the students in a foreign language class to connect with classes in other countries to practice their language skills. Through Skype the teachers can provide mentoring or homework help to the learners. The Students can read, present, or perform for other students and also collaborate with other students on writing or research projects. They can also participate in professional development activities within or outside the school district.

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of a hand held mobile device (Chinnery, 2006) Shield L. & Kukulska(2008). Students can learn grammar through mobile phones using short text messages and accessing websites, which are developed to explain sentence structure and English idioms. Besides a smart phone is capable of doing various tasks like browsing through online web pages or playing online or offline video and audio clips which all can be used in English language learning. Hence it can be used as an ideal portable audio-visual aid for learners.

Podcasts

A podcast is a periodic series of digital media files that a user can prepare and the new episodes can be downloaded automatically through web syndication to the user's personal computer or portable media player. (Merriam-Webster, 2015) . The word is taken from the combination of "iPod" (a brand of media player) and "broadcast." Hence the uploaded files are usually audio or video, but they may be created in other file formats such as PDF. Podcasting, previously recognized as "audio blogging", has its origin dating back to the 1980s. With the invention of internet and digital audio devices such as the iPod, podcasting began to catch hold in late 50 Using E-learning Techniques and Tools for Enhancing Main English Language Skills 2004. (Hammersley, 2004).

Advantages of E-Learning Tools in ELT

E-learning can turn the pedagogical strategies to student-centered, focusing on fostering linguistic sensitivity and improving listening comprehension and ability of expression so as to enable students to master English as soon as possible. Language acquisition does not depend on grammar and invalid exercises, but on student's own constant practice. That is the E-learning Pedagogical Strategy. (E-learning and English Teaching Huiwei Cai)

E-learning will greatly improve the efficiency of learning English. It is quite good for reducing the burden on the students. And it is also very helpful for those students who want to go abroad for exchange or further studies.

Disadvantages of E-Learning Tools in ELT

What is still sometimes an issue is the reliability of these technologies for classroom use. This can discourage teachers from making use of technology as often as they would want to. It's compounded by the fact that, if these teachers are working in schools, they are faced with classes of learners who may, on the surface at least, appear to be more digitally competent than their teachers are. Learners can therefore challenge their teachers, in ways that put the latter off using the technologies that could potentially make such a difference to what happens in the classroom. (The benefits of new technology in language learning by Gary Motteram, 18 September 2013 - 11:22)

CONCLUSIONS

As English has turned into a universal language, its presence and value in the world has expanded enormously in the past decades. But if language teachers teach as they taught earlier, then the required goals of learning English Language may not be achieved in the present global scenario. Thus the recent trend in teaching English is the use of modern technological tools. As we are dreaming and proceeding towards 'Smart India' E-learning tools have become an integral part of our survival. In today's era "Teachers need to integrate technology seamlessly into the curriculum instead of viewing it as an add-on, an afterthought, or an event." (Heidi-Hayes Jacobs)

REFERENCES

- [1]. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212667812001888>, E-learning and English Teaching Huiwei Cai

- [2]. http://eltvoices.in/Volume6/Issue_4/EVI_64_5.pdf (Chinnery, 2006) Shield L. & Kukulska (2008).
- [3]. Jacob Tharu, 2006. "A second look at English as a window on the world that has changed," Communication Curriculum in Higher Communication: Challenges & Opportunities.
- [4]. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/the-benefits-new-technology-language-learning> (The benefits of new technology in language learning by Gary Motteram, 18 September 2013 - 11:22)
- [5] <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/b>, <http://www.tewtjournal.org/>

