USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE STUDENTS OF TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Niraja Saraswat

Associate Professor, Dept. of English

Swami Keshvanand Institute of Technology,

Management & Gramothan, Jaipur

Abstract

Language and communication skills are considered transforming agents in the evolution of the modern engineer. Yet, there seems to be limited implementation of English courses globally, despite its current lingua franca status. Those institutions that have already implemented multilingual and communication elements will be at the forefront of providing the demands of industry and society. The institutes lacking behind in imparting this education will produce engineers who are not skilled to be employed in industries. The incorporation of several components of the fundamentals of communication in education will facilitate advanced communication skills. However, given the traditionalist nature of many engineering curricula, this may take some time before change is evidenced. The incorporation of language and communication improvement courses is an important element of continuous learning, and will ultimately contribute to the process of life-long learning. This should in turn facilitate advancements in engineering and, indeed, engineering education through streamlining fundamental communication skills. The present paper explores the need of communication skills for an engineer and suggests the use of Technology in learning English for technology students.

Keywords: Communication, Technology, Multimedia, Cooperative learning, Interface, interactive learning

Technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change. Graddol states that" technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education, work and culture. The use of English language has increased rapidly after 1960. At present, the role and status of English is that it is the language of social context, political, sociocultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education". It is also a crucial determinant for university entrance and processing well paid jobs in the commercial sector. Since there are more and more English learners in India, different teaching methods have

been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. One method involves multimedia in ELT in order to create English contexts. This helps students to get involved and learn according to their interests. It has been tested effectively and is widely accepted for teaching English in modern world. Technology is utilized for the upliftment of modern styles; it satisfies both visual and auditory senses of the students. With the spread and development of English around the world, English has been learned and used by more and more speakers. It is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economies and management, new literatures and entertainment genre. It is true that there are teachers who use 'cutting edge' technology, but the majority of teachers still teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are bad or damaging the students. In fact, till date they are proving to be useful also.

However, there are many more opportunities for students to gain confidence practice and extend themselves, especially for ESL students who learn the language for more than just fun. For them to keep pace with ELT and gain more confidence they have to stride into the world of multimedia technology. English Language Teaching has been with us for many years and its significance continues to grow, fuelled, partially by the Internet. Graddol's study (2000) suggests that in the year 2000 there were about a billion English learners- but a decade later the numbers doubled. The forecast points to a surge in English learning, which has peaked in 2010. The same study indicates that over 80% of information stored on the internet is in English. For the first time there are more Non-Native than Native users of the language and diversity of context in terms of learners, age, nationality, learning background has become a defining characteristic of ELT today. With the rapid development of science and technology, the emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, featuring audio, visual, animation effects comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform for reform and exploration on English teaching model in the new era. It's proved that multimedia technology plays a positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of student and teaching effect in English class. Technological innovations have gone hand –in hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate. It is fair to assert that the growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language and that this has occurred at a time when computers are no longer the exclusive domains of the dedicated few, but rather available to many. With this there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of technology in teaching English language. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept technology as the most essential part in teaching. In a sense, a tendency to emphasize on inevitable role of technology in pedagogy to the extent of obliterating human part of teacher by technology part has been very dominant. And as a result if we neglect or ignore technological developments they will continue and perhaps we will never be able to catch up, irrespective of our discipline or branch. For this reason it is important for language teachers to be aware of the

latest and best equipment and to have a full knowledge of what is available in any given situation.

Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures (new Horizons). There are many techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situation. Some are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. The teaching principle should be to appreciate new technologies in the areas and functions where they provide something decisively new useful and never let machines takeover the role of the teacher or limit functions where more traditional ways are superior. New technologies develop and disseminate so quickly that we cannot avoid their attraction and influence in any form.

To cultivate students' interest in study nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information besides, with such characteristics as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities. With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives. The PPT courseware activates students' thinking; the visual and vivid courseware help them to transform English learning into capacity cultivation. And such in-class activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates can also offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students. So multimedia technology teaching has uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice. The multimedia courseware can offer the students abundant information; more plentiful than textbooks, and help them to get vivid cultural background, rich content and true-to-life language materials, which are much natural and closer to life. Not only could learners improve their listening ability, but also learn the western culture. Grasping information through various channels can equip; the students with knowledge and bring about information-sharing among students and make them actively participate in class discussion and communication. Due to large classes it is difficult for the students to have speaking communication. The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. The traditional teaching model mainly emphasized on teachers' instruction, and the information provided is limited due to traditional classes. On the contrary, multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information.

Multimedia teaching stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. A major feature of multimedia teaching is to train and improve students' ability to listen and speak, and to develop their communicative

competence. During this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is particularly prominent. Using multimedia in context creation creates a good platform for the exchange between teachers and students, while at the same time providing a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model. In this way, teachers in the classroom no longer blindly put information and force students to receive it in a passive way. Multimedia has its own features such as visibility and liveliness. During the process of multimedia English teaching, sounds and pictures can be set together, which enhances the initiative of both teachers and students, When using multimedia software, teachers can use pictures and images to enrich the content of classes, and also imagine different contexts in the process of producing teaching courseware, students in the class can use multimedia to understand the class in a clear way.

 Through the whole interactive process, it is apparent that using multimedia in ELT is effective in nurturing students' interest in learning English, as well as enhancing teachers' interest in English teaching. As Zhang points out through Multimedia and network technology we can offer students not only rich, sources of authentic learning materials, but also an attractive and a friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant sounds, which to a large extent overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English. In addition, multimedia teaching is also flexible. It is obvious that the context can be created not only in the classroom, but also after class. Multimedia language teaching can also create a multimedia language environment for the purpose of conducting language teaching. English teaching itself must focus on the guidance of teachers and be student-centered which we believe is one of the principles for language teaching.

In spite of advantages of application of multimedia technology to English class teaching has to improve teaching effect and university students' overall capacities, there are many problems existing in practical teaching. While if totally dependent on, multimedia devices during teaching, the teachers may be turned into slaves to the multimedia and cannot play the leading role in teaching. It is observed in practice that a lot of teachers are active in multimedia technology application but not proficient enough to handle it confidently. In class, they are standing by the computer and students are fixing their attention only on the screen, and therefore, there is no eye contact between teachers and students. The trend of modern information and technology teaching appears to the extremity regardless of the essence of the traditional teaching. And hence, the notion of Creative Education is to be fully comprehended that modern educational techniques serves an assisting instrument rather than a target: and that should not dominate class. They are substitutes to effective teaching and learning .Whereas, the introduction of multimedia technology featuring audio, visual, textual effect fully meets audio and visual requirements of the students and enhance their interest, but it also results in lack of communication between teachers and students, replacement of teachers' voice by computer sound, and teachers' analysis by visual image and students have' few chances for speaking communication. It is clear that language teaching is different from

science subjects, for language teaching does not require demonstration by various steps, rather, the tense and orderly atmosphere is formed through questions and answer between teachers and students. Teachers raise impromptu and real-time questions and guide the students to think, cultivate their capacity to discover and solve problems; however, due to over demonstration and pre-arranged order, the courseware lacks real-time effect and cannot give feedback. It ignores emphasis and importance in teaching; it also neglects instruction in students 'thinking , inspiring their paths of thinking, strengthening their capacity contemplating and solving problems. In this way, it should be noted that cultivation of students' thinking capacity should be the major objective in teaching and using of multimedia technology and it should not take up the students' time for thinking, analyzing and exploring questions.

All in all, the multimedia as an assisting instrument, cannot replace the dominant role of teachers and it is part of a complete teaching process. Besides, it is not a mechanic imitation of teaching, rather it integrates the visual, textual demonstration with teachers' experience to contribute to the programmed, automatic and continuous teaching project so as to enhance the overall improvement of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is known that teachers are supposed to simulate situations based on teaching and guide the students to communicate in English. Beside traditional writing on blackboard is concise and teachers can make adjustment and amendment to it if necessary. Furthermore, experienced teachers know well that a perfect courseware is an ideal project in mind, and that in practice, they need to enrich the content on the blackboard with emerging of new question raised by the students. It should be noticed that although multimedia has its unique advantages in teaching, the characteristics functions of other forms of teaching instruments are still incomparable. For example, the recorder still plays a role in broadcasting listening material. So teachers are supposed to choose appropriate media and instrument based on the requirements of teaching and integrate multimedia instrument with traditional one and fully perform their merits.

Conclusion "Ideally, the purpose of both the traditional and computer-assisted cooperative language leaning 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,

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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