Language and Technology: Emerging Trends in Technological Pedagogy

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Introduction

Technology is becoming ubiquitous in the classroom pedagogy. Latest technological aids are thronging the corporate world. Technologies are being mobilized for learning by the academicians across the world. Technology's interactive capabilities, such as providing immediate feedback and increasing learner autonomy, in addition to the capability of simulating real-world situations via audio-video, and graphics [1] makes it learner-friendly pedagogical aid.

As English is a second language in India, presenting it in such a way which not only, calls learners attention but captivates it as well has become challenging issue for a language teacher. It is here that technological pedagogy plays a vital role because it has a huge potential for improving language education and making teaching interactive and student-friendly.

Definition of Technology

Technology, from pedagogical purpose "encompasses a wide range of tools, artifacts, and practices, from multimedia computers to the Internet, from videotapes to online chatrooms, from web pages to interactive audio conferencing."[2] Educational technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using and managing appropriate technological processes and resources."[3] In the words of P.R. Lowenthal and B.G. Wilson:

> Educational technology includes other systems used in the process of developing human capability. Educational technology includes, but is not limited to, software, hardware, as well as Internet applications, such as wiki's and blogs, and activities. But there is still debate on what these terms mean.[4]

Gamut of Gadget-geared Pedagogical aids & their modus operandi:

1 <http://jabba.edb.utexas.edu/it/seclangtechrev.pdf> Web. 23 Feb. 2015

[2] Zhao, Yong. "Recent Developments in Technology and Language Learning: A Literature Review and Meta-analysis" Calico Journal, 21.1 (September 2003): 8

3 Richey, R.C. "Reflections on the 2008 AECT Definitions of the Field." TechTrends, 52.1 (2008): 24-25

4 Lowenthal, P. R., & Wilson, B. G. "Labels do matter! A critique of AECT's redefinition of the field." TechTrends, 54.1: 38-46

Gadget-geared pedagogical aids have extensive gamut comprehending, in their fold, a wide range of gadgets such as computers, laptops, projectors, white boards, mimeos, CD/DVD player/recorders, cassettes players/recorders. Computers facilitate PPT-geared audio-visual clips, PPT-geared graphico-diagrammatic presentations, movies and Internet-based clips/websites. Besides, digital Projector is yet another aid which is either connected with computer or laptop. Overhead projector with transparencies is yet another aid.

- **Computer/Laptops**

When using computers in the classroom, the internet is another way to reinforce the course content or to display specific publications available on the World Wide Web. One good attribute of using the internet is that information can be displayed from other sources. Moreover, personal web pages can be created. With a computer in the classroom, teachers are able to demonstrate a new lesson, present new material, illustrate how to use new programs, and show new websites.[5] Following computational activities can make language learning an innovative, interactive and attention-grabbing experience:

  o   PPT-geared audio-visual clips
  o   PPT-geared graphico-diagrammatic presentations
  o   Movies
  o   Internet-based clips/websites etc.
  o   Other CDs (IELTS etc.)

While designing above-stated audio-visual aids, care should be taken that simplified drawings are used. Besides, information given should be matched with the pace of learning. Moreover, titles and questions should be used liberally. In addition, selective use of audio effects should be made• What's more, text on computer screen should be legible from a distance of two meters. Furthermore, bold face type letters should be used. Most importantly, learner friendly interactive multimedia systems should be designed.

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5 Levine, Lawrence. "Using Technology to Enhance the Classroom Environment." THE Journal. Web. 23 Feb. 2015
< http://thejournal.com/articles/2002/01/01/using-technology-to-enhance-the-classroom-environment.aspx >

- **Projectors**

Overhead projectors are used as a visual aid to display information for students. They facilitate material or diagrams to be displayed to large classes enabling more time for teaching or class discussions. Transparencies are made to display diagrams. The overhead projector is easy to use and can be easily integrated into the classroom.

- **Interactive Whiteboards (Mimios)**

Mimios-enabled interactive white board, once connected with computer, laptop or LCD, help teacher operates from anywhere in the classroom. Mimio pen, packaged along is just like a digital chalk. Once trained, teacher using it can write with it smoothly without having to wade through keyboard-enabled labyrinthine of commands. Features like screen clipping, screen annotation, spotlight tool and recorder help make pedagogy even more interactive, interesting and innovative and its technological edge ropes even the disruptive element as well.

An interactive whiteboard provides touch control of computer applications. These enhance the experience in the classroom by showing anything that can be on a computer screen. This not only aids in visual learning, but it is interactive so the students can draw, write, or manipulate images on the interactive whiteboard.[6]

- **CD/DVD Payers**

In the new millennium students are usually very familiar with audiovisual language and multimedia equipment.[7] Movies and educational documentaries on DVD/CDs grab their attention and make learning long-lasting. It is believed that Visual perception contributes to about 90% to all human learning. Maximum attention span of an adult learner is 20 minutes. To sustain attention and interest various stimuli are necessary. [8]

- **Class blogs and wikis**

Web 2.0 tools that are presently being put into operation in the classroom. Blogs help students maintain a running dialogue, such as a journal, thoughts, ideas, and assignments. They also provide for student comment and reflection. Wikis are group focused. They allow multiple members of the group to edit a single document and create a truly collaborative and carefully edited finished product.

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6 Wikipedia. "Educational Technology" 2015. Web. 23rd Feb. 2015.
 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_technology>

7 < http://www.mediaeducation.net/resource/pdf/eventsOnWorkshopsGutiEN.pdf>

8 < http://www.scribd.com/doc/11631190/6-Effective-Use-of-Audio-Visual-Aids>

Application of technology in language and literature

There are numerous ways English and language arts teachers can integrate technology into classroom instruction. Teachers of language arts and literature can use the Internet, digital media tools, and common software applications to enhance student learning.[9] Given below are the technological applications that have the most relevance in language and literature pedagog

- Language

  Application of technology in language can be viewed in Multimedia language lab which is well-resourced with a number of modern equipments like computers, headphones, LAN facility, audio and video system, digital multimedia control, wireless headsets, microphones, interactive response pads camcorder, English language learning software etc. The importance of application of technology in language can be judged from the following observations of K.V.Madhavi:

  > The methods of teaching and learning English have changed significantly. Much importance is laid on linguistic competence, communicative proficiency, grammatical precision and vocabulary building. Language teaching and learning becomes integrated and efficient with the introduction of computers in the teaching of English. An important role is being played by the English language laboratory in acquiring listening, speaking, reading, writing, eloquence in pronunciation, clarity and accuracy in communication, assessing speech, acquisition of aural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, cultural awareness, web based materials, broadcasting, videotaped off-air recordings in the target language etc.[10]

  o Phonology

    Audio-lingual aids, such as clippings from movies, clipping from CDs and dictionaries, can be used to teach phonology. PPT-geared simplified charts of the IPA and of articulatory models can be displayed on a LED or a projector or a computer. They can be supplemented with PPT-geared audio-visual clips. Internet can be explored in this respect.

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9 < http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/subject/int_tech_lit_la.phtml>

10 Madhavi, K.V. "Application of Technology in a Language Classroom: Improving Listening Skills Using Study Skills Success Software at Undergraduate Level" Journal of Technology for ELT, 1. 4: (October, 2015)   ISSN 2231-4431

- Morphology

PPT-geared simplified charts of the roots of words can be displayed on LED or projector or computer. They can be supplemented with PPT-geared clips. Internet can be explored in this respect.

- Syntax

Syntax – the rules and principles that govern the sentence structure of any individual language – can be taught using simplified grammatical charts with the help of PPT Presentation. Internet can be explored in this respect.

- Literature

A significant amount of literature can explore and exploit the potentials of technology with regard to teaching and learning language even more effectively.

- Drama:

Movies on most of the English dramas are available. They can be bought and shown to students in a language lab. For instance, the movie on "As You Like It" by Shakespeare can be shown to students in a language lab. Dramas clippings are also available on U-Tube and elsewhere on the Internet.. They can be shown either online or even offline after downloading.

- Poems

Similarly, poems spoken by the native speakers are also available on U-Tube and elsewhere on the Internet. They can be played either online or even offline after downloading so that students can listen to nuances of the rhythm pattern from the text spoken by the native speakers. This can go a long way in making language teaching practical.

- Novels

Movies on most of the English novels are available. They can be bought and shown to students in a language lab. For instance, the movie on Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austin

can be shown to students in a language lab. Novels' clippings are also available on U-Tube. They can be shown either online or even offline after downloading.

Conclusion

It has widely been observed that language learning is a multifaceted social and cultural phenomenon, even more so when it involves new technologies that promote a variety of social interactions (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). Technology helps teachers create visual aids for teaching, improve access to resources, such as online literature libraries, review and comment on student work more efficiently, integrate video clips into presentations and broaden choices for students to demonstrate learning. Apart from focusing on the benefits and potentials of technology, the pedagogical design of language learning instructional activities should be crafted. The realization that "...technology is essentially impotent without creative and imaginative application" (Bailey, 1996, p. 73) ever strong in the nineties[11] should be improved upon with resolution that a language teacher should shoulder the task of making technology interactive, interesting and learner-friendly.

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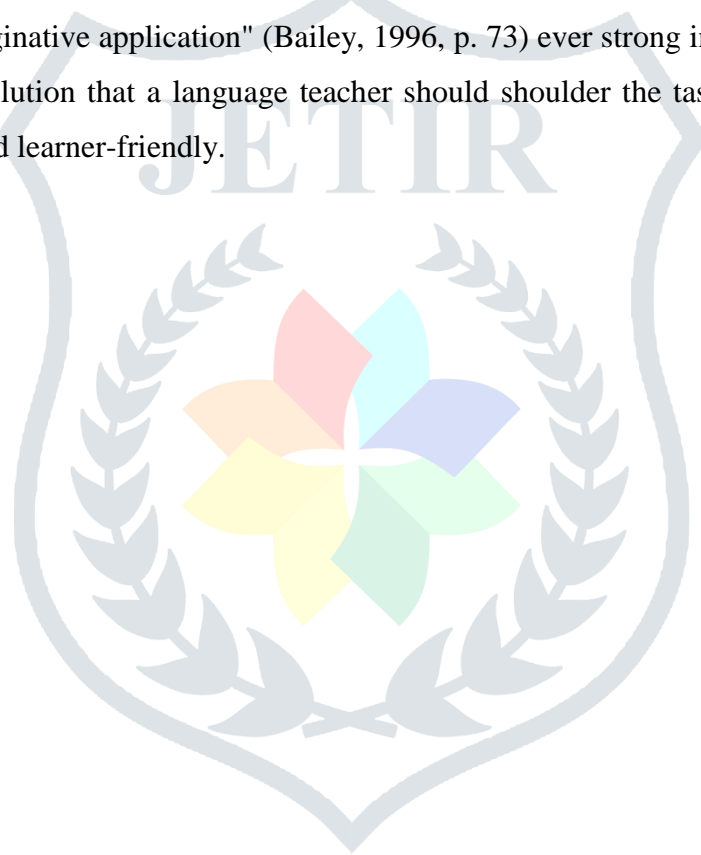
11 Liu Min, Moore Zena, Graham Leah, & Shinwoong Lee. "A Look at the Research on Computer-Based Technology Use in Second Language Learning: Review of Literature from 1990-2000." University of Texas, 2012. Web. 23rd Feb. 2016.