

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AND USE OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Garima
M.phil. Student
Department of English
K.U.K

Introduction:

Language acts as a type of instrument to express our feelings, thoughts, and ideas effectively in various communicative situations. People speak their first language very naturally but it is the second language which requires a diligent, conscious, and systematic effort to acquire or master it. A language, especially second language, cannot be mastered unless it is taught in a skillful manner from the beginning. English can be considered second language of India and teaching of English in this country dates back to the early 19th century. Since then, there have been many changes in manner of teaching English but the required level is still not achieved. There are many solutions proposed meet the challenges by English being a second language and use of multimedia technology is one of the solutions.

As the use of English language has increased so has the need for qualified instructions to instruct learners in the language. It is true that there are who Instructors use 'cutting edge' technology, still the majority teach in traditional manner. These traditional manners though useful, all not up to the mark in changing society. So technology is needed to provide better learning system to learners. So that they can learn English language more skillfully and more easily.

Globalization is one of the important features of 21st century and English being an inter- national language is important in this era of globalization. English can be taught easily with the use of emerging science and technology¹. The emergence and development of multimedia technology and its applications which includes teaching, featuring audio, visual and animation effects comes into the full play in English class teaching. This sets a favorable and easy platform for exploration and reform on English teaching model in this new era. It is scientifically proved that the multimedia technology plays a very positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of students in English class. For this reason it is very important for teachers of language to be aware of the latest and best technology and also have a full knowledge of how the technology can be used in any situation.

There are various techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situations. Some techniques are useful for testing and distance education while some are for teaching business English, spoken English, listening, reading or interpreting. But we should be careful not to let machines take over the role of a teacher. We should also limit functions of technology where traditional ways are superior. Now we need to analyse the necessity of application of Multimedia technology to teach English language. There are various reasons for this which are discussed below:

To Arise Students' Interest in Study

These days, the traditional teaching methods and environment are not popular. While the multimedia technology which features audio and visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more accessible to information, besides, with such characteristics multimedia technology offers a sense of reality which greatly cultivates students' interest and hence their involvement in class activities.

To Boost Up Students' Communication Capacity

Traditional leaching methods have hampered students' capacity to grasp certain language (English) and also the understanding to meaning, structure and function of the language. This makes the students passive recipients of knowledge. But with teachers' instructions leading the students' thought pattern and also motivating the students' emotions, multimedia technology seeks to integrate learning and teaching and hence provides the students greater incentives.

To Broaden Students' Field of Knowledge

The multimedia technology can offer the students vast body of information; more plentiful than books and helps them to get the display of vivid cultural background, true-to-life language materials and rich content which is closer to life and hence natural.

To Improve Teaching

Multimedia teachings enrich the teaching content and break the teacher centered teaching pattern and thus improves class efficiency. Due to large number of students in classes it is difficult for students to have speaking communication. The use of multimedia sound labs is that they materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching.

Improves Interaction Between Student and Teacher

Multimedia teaching's quality is that it stresses the role of students and also enhances the interactions between the students and teacher. Multimedia teaching aims to train and enhance students' ability to listen and speak and hence to develop their communicative competence. During this whole process, the teacher's role is to act as a facilitator. Using multimedia in context creation constructs an excellent platform for the exchange between teachers and students.

Creating the Context for Language Teaching

Multimedia teaching constructs a context for language teaching. This manner makes the class lively and very interesting, at the same time optimized the organization of the class. During the whole process of multimedia English teaching, pictures and sounds can be set together, which greatly enhances the initiative of both students and teacher. Teachers can use pictures and sounds to enrich the content of classes. Students in their class can make use of multimedia to understand the class in a clear way. As Zhang points out that through network technology and multimedia we can offer the students not only rich sources of learning materials but also a friendly and an attractive interface, pleasant sounds and vivid pictures, which to a large extent can overcome the lack of language environment and arouse students interest in learning English language.²

Provides the Flexibility to Course Content

Other feature of multimedia teaching is that it is flexible. The context can be created not only inside the classroom but also after the class. Multimedia language teaching has also ability to create a multimedia language environment with the objective to conduct language teaching. In class students are bound to have some problems, which can perfectly be addressed under the guidance of a teacher. In such a circumstance, the students can use the multimedia technology to their advantage, such as contact teachers through the network and receiving the answer through the E-mail.³

Problems arising on application of Multimedia Technology in English Language Teaching. As we know that everything has its pros and cons, same is the case with multimedia technology. Multimedia technology has its advantages, which we discussed above, but it also its disadvantage which we will discuss now:

Majority of Means are replaced by assisting ones

The application of multimedia technology is an assisting instrument in order to achieve the projected teaching effect. If totally dependent on this technology the teachers may turn into slaves to multimedia technology and cannot play a leading role in teaching. It is also observed that a lot of teachers in our country are not proficient in handling this technology, the teachers are standing by the screen and the students are fixing their attention only on the screen. Hence no eye contact between the students and teacher.

Speaking Communication Loss

English language and analysis by teachers are very effective in conveying knowledge to the students in class from English pronunciation to comprehension, improving the thought patterns of students and oral expression. While the introduction of applications of multimedia technology such as visual, audio and textual effect fully meets the students' audio and visual requirements and also enhance their interest but it reduces the communication between students and teacher. The atmosphere of communication between students and teacher is fading away and the sound and images of multimedia are affecting the students' initiative to think and speak.

Students' Thinking Potential is Being Restricted

In traditional teaching the teachers raise important and real time questions and hence guide the students to cultivate their thinking potential. But due to over demonstration through multimedia and pre-arranged order of material, the course work lacks the real time effect and hence cannot give feedback. It neglects the instructions in students' thinking, inspiring their paths for thinking, strengthening their capacity for contemplating and solving the problems.

Abstract Thinking is Being Restricted

Students' abstract thinking is being restricted and their logical thinking is being wasted away by showing all the material on the screen. Students don't compel themselves to think as they have the ready-made material available on the screen. At present due to multimedia technology, the students' reading competence has decreased due to textual words being replaced by sound and images and handwriting by the keyboard input. We have discussed both the advantages and disadvantages of multimedia technology in English language teaching. Now, we must discuss some strategies for the existing problems, which are listed below:

- ❖ In Classroom teachers' interpretation shall not be overlooked. Multimedia is a instrument for assisting teaching and therefore despite its extraordinary effects it should serve the teacher not dominate him in the class.
- ❖ While working or utilizing the courseware, teachers should encourage the students to use their thinking capability and join actively in class practice not merely depend upon the multimedia
- ❖ Multimedia technology should not be overused. Because excess of everything is bad.

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."4 It is absolutely true that one of the long term goal of multimedia language teaching is to promote the motivation and learning interest among students but students and teachers both should not be heavily dependent our multimedia. There should be a balance between multimedia and traditional teaching, for the excess of everything is bad and balance is the rule of nature.

References:-

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