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The Role of Technology in Fostering Language Learning Communities: Implications for English Language Teaching

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Abstract

Technology has revolutionized several industries over the past 20 years, altering social dynamics and workplace practices as well as how individuals live and work in society. The swift advancement and growth of information technology has provided a more favourable framework for investigating the novel pedagogical approach. Technology is therefore crucial to the teaching of English. There are special benefits to using multimedia to set the scene for English language instruction. This essay attempts to examine the value of multimedia technology in language instruction as well as the drawbacks associated with its application. Additionally, it seeks to educate English teachers on how to utilize it effectively.

Keywords: Technology, Multimedia, Language, Communication.

Today's teacher faces new responsibilities and challenges in this new period. With the amazing advent of technology, the practice of teaching English has undergone a significant transformation. Technology offers a plethora of opportunities for both engaging students and improving the effectiveness of instruction. One of the main forces behind linguistic and social development is technology. Technology is at the core of the globalization process, impacting education, labor, and culture, according to Graddol (1997:16). After 1960, there was a sharp growth in the use of the English language. English's current status and role include being a language of social context, politics, socioculture, commerce, education, industries, media, libraries, cross-border communication, important curricular subjects, and educational instruction.

English is currently spoken as a second language in some countries, such as India, and as a first language by some people due to its globalization and growth. It is widely respected across the country. English is a significant subject in the teaching medium and is included in the curriculum, indicating that it is more essential than ever in India today. With the number of English language learners increasing, numerous teaching methodologies have been employed to gauge the effectiveness of the educational process. For a long time, genuine materials have been used in movies, TV shows, and radio. It is true that modern technology has successfully replaced conventional educational techniques. It is also a critical factor in the

admission to universities and the hiring of high-paying positions in the private sector. India is home to an increasing number of English language learners, hence several teaching strategies have been put into place to gauge how effective the method is. Multimedia is one way that ELT uses to generate English settings. It has been successfully tested and is widely regarded as an effective method of teaching English in the modern world. It encourages students to participate and learn based on their interests. Students' visual and auditory senses are satisfied when modern trends are elevated through the use of technology. An increasing number of people have studied and utilized English as a result of its global expansion and development.

Since more people are using English, there is a greater demand for trained teachers to teach the language to students. While some educators do employ "cutting edge" technology, most still instruct students using a traditional approach. These customary behaviors don't harm or negatively impact the pupils in any way. In actuality, they continue to show their value. But especially for ESL students who are learning the language for purposes other than amusement, there are plenty of chances for pupils to practice, grow in confidence, and challenge themselves. In order to stay up with ELT and acquire greater self-assurance, they must confidently enter the realm of multimedia technologies.

The 21st century is a time of globalization, thus learning a variety of foreign languages is vital—English being the primary language. English language instruction has been around for a while, and the Internet has contributed to some of its continued importance. According to Graddol's (2000) estimate, there were roughly a billion English language learners in 2000; however, ten years later, that number had doubled. The prediction is for a spike in English language acquisition that peaked in 2010. According to the same report, English makes up more than 80% of the data kept online. Now that there are more non-native than native speakers of the language, variety in the context of learners—including age, nationality, learning background, and other factors—has emerged as a key feature of English language teaching.

The rapid advancement of science and technology has led to the emergence and development of multimedia technology, which is used in English classes to teach English. This technology incorporates audio, visual, and animation effects and creates a favorable environment for reform and exploration of the English teaching model in the coming era. Multimedia technology has been shown to have a favorable impact on student activities and initiatives as well as the teaching of English in the classroom. The development of English has coincided with technological advancements that are transforming communication. It is reasonable to say that the expansion of the internet has contributed to the expansion of the English language at a time when computers are no longer the sole property of a select few but are accessible to everybody.

As a result, there has been a notable increase in the body of research on the subject of using technology to teach English. The majority of these articles firmly believe that technology is the most important component of education. In a way, there has been a strong trend to highlight the unavoidable role of technology in education to the point where it completely replaces the human element of teaching.

Therefore, regardless of our field or branch, if we ignore or dismiss technological advancements, they may never stop and we may never be able to catch up. Because of this, it's critical for language instructors to know exactly what resources are accessible in any given circumstance and to be up to date on the newest and greatest tools. Instructors can deliver more vibrant, engaging lectures by utilizing multimedia technology (new Horizons). There are numerous strategies that can be used in different contexts to learn a language. Some are helpful for business English, spoken English, reading, listening, and interpretation; others are good for testing and remote learning.

Teaching should be based on the idea that new technologies should only be valued in areas and for functions where they offer something distinctly new and helpful. Machines should never be allowed to replace teachers or restrict tasks when older, more effective methods are still preferable. There are several reasons why using the new technology is essential for both teachers and language learners. It's important to note that new technologies are developing and spreading so swiftly that we are powerless to resist their allure and effect.

Need for using Multimedia Technology in English Teaching

The stereotypical traditional teaching methods and environment are out of favor these days, while multimedia technology with audio and visual animation effects naturally and humanely increases our access to information. Additionally, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and works incredibly well, greatly enhancing students' motivation and interest in their studies as well as their participation in class activities.

It is difficult to attain the goal of communication since traditional teaching has hindered students' ability to comprehend specific languages as well as their understanding of the structure, meaning, and function of the language. The multimedia technology aims to integrate teaching and learning and gives students more incentives, with teachers' instructions guiding students' thought patterns and driving their emotions. Students' thinking is stimulated by the PPT course materials, which also assist them in transforming English language learning into capacity building. Additionally, in-class activities like debates, group discussions, and topic discussions can increase the chances for student and instructor interaction. Thus, training kids multimedia technologies has specifically influenced their ability to think positively and communicate in social situations.

More information than textbooks, multimedia course ware can provide students with rich content, a vivid cultural backdrop, and authentic language resources that are more realistic and relatable to real-world situations. Students could learn about Western culture in addition to honing their listening skills. Understanding material through a variety of sources can provide students with knowledge, encourage information exchange among peers, and encourage active participation in class discussions and communication.

The use of multimedia in the classroom can enhance the curriculum, maximize student engagement, disrupt the traditional "teacher-centered" model of instruction, and significantly increase student productivity. It is challenging for the kids to communicate verbally in huge classes. The use of the multi-media sound lab makes the cooperative and customized instruction a reality. Due to the structured nature of traditional classrooms, the traditional teaching model placed a strong emphasis on the instruction of teachers and gave minimal information. On the other hand, multimedia technology transcends place and time, produces a more vibrant, authentic, and visual learning environment for English, encourages student initiative, and saves classroom time while increasing the amount of knowledge covered.

The importance of "interaction" between professors and students is emphasized by multimedia teaching, which also highlights the role of the students. The development of students' communicative competence-their capacity to listen and speak-is a key component of multimedia instruction. The teacher's function as a facilitator is especially important during this phase. In addition to offering a language environment that enhances the conventional classroom teaching approach, the use of multimedia in context creation provides a good platform for teacher-student discussion. Teachers can no longer merely impart knowledge to pupils in the classroom and expect them to accept it passively in this way.

Some teachers have a tendency to rely solely on multimedia teaching, even if there are many other instruments that can serve the same purpose in teaching. However, this does not mean that

multimedia can replace any other kind of instrument. It should be noted, however, that while multimedia offers distinct advantages for instruction, other types of teaching instruments still have features and functions that cannot be compared. For instance, listening content is still broadcast via the recorder. Therefore, rather of only pursuing the newest technique, teachers should select relevant media and tools depending on the needs of the classroom, integrate multimedia tools with traditional ones, and fully utilize their virtues.

It's possible that some educators have the false belief that they would use multimedia technology exclusively in their instruction. Additionally, it is thought that when multimedia technology is used more, the classroom environment will improve, students will participate in class more actively, and students will have easier access to the curriculum. Although the students appear to be interested in learning, in reality, they would rather just observe. In actuality, pupils pay more unconscious attention. Students learn less from the language materials the more that is interfered with during transmission of the instructional content. It is not feasible to proficiently instruct kids in linguistic expression during class hours. It is evident that even with its benefits, multimedia technology aids in instruction.

It is a step in the entire teaching process when it comes to practical instruction. The goal of introducing multimedia technology to current education is to enable students to fully utilize speaking and listening resources in English and enhance their overall skills. This can be achieved in practice if multimedia technology is implemented appropriately in English instruction. As a result, this results in students receiving systematic instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; it also greatly enhances the effectiveness of teachers' instructions; it helps students acquire foundational knowledge and language skills in the classroom; it enhances their ability to express themselves in English; and it establishes a solid foundation for their communication in the language.

Hence, a setting where learning can be facilitated and learning itself can occur is the ideal goal of both conventional and computer-assisted cooperative language learning classrooms (Shi, 2008: 76). While encouraging students' desire and interest in learning is undoubtedly one of the main objectives of multimedia language instruction and can be a useful strategy for engaging students in the process of learning a language, the foundation for creating an ELT context should be the transparency and accessibility of the instructional resources. In the process of optimizing multimedia English instruction, students will be encouraged and assisted in communicating with one another rather than becoming overly reliant on their mother tongue. With regard to technological advancements, we anticipate that multimedia English instruction will continue to grow in the future. Learning English will take less time, but it will be more student-centered. As a result, it guarantees that instruction will be of higher caliber and that students' applied English skill will be effectively developed, hence advancing their communicative competence.

To sum up, we think that this approach can significantly enhance students' ideation and practical language abilities, which is beneficial and useful to guarantee and fulfil an efficient teaching and learning outcome. With the exception of a few issues, multimedia technology can be used successfully in ELT classes provided teachers possess the necessary computer skills. In addition to make students from turning become technophobes, this will assist teachers in overcoming financial challenges when establishing the infrastructure.

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