

Technological Innovations and Teaching English Language at School Level

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Abstract—Proficiency in English language is a surety for success in today's world. Effective communication is the most important factor when seeking placements. With great changes in the current requirements and the need for chiseled skills in English communication the teaching-learning process has also undergone incredible changes. Traditional methods of teaching English are replaced by advanced technological tools and instruments. English language learners require different set of technical aids at different level. Some aids are useful at the school level and some at higher level, so, it is very significant to note that the selection of the technical aids for English language learners at the school level has to be done very judiciously. Such aids need to be picked up that would meet their demands at school level. This paper is an endeavour to highlight the role of selective technological innovations that can contribute to honing all four skills of English language learners at the school level in India. The selective technological aids include Interactive Whiteboard Technology, Film/Picture Projection, and Language Laboratory.

I. INTRODUCTION

The real progress of a country is measured by the priority it lays on education. So education in every country needs to be a high-priority situation including new changes and innovation to it education process. The disposition to acquire and add technology to it, it is necessary to encourage teachers and students to have better contact with this technology, to reinforce, practice and increase knowledge in different areas and language learning is no exception to this fact. With the rapid development of the Internet, computer use in the classroom also offers additional possibilities for designing communicative tasks such as those built around computer- mediated communication and tele collaboration, including the ability to interact in real time with oral and written communication, to conduct information searches to find attractive and meaningful material.

English language is extremely important area in the educational system and it opens new horizons for the learners. Due to the current status of English as a global language of science, technology, and international relations, many countries around the world consider the teaching of English a major educational priority (Crystal 1997; McKay 2000). It is the need of the time that education system must respond to the development of technological and scientific advancements and the same is true for using these technological advancements in the development of English language skills to prepare a competent manpower for the future. Use of these technological aids can be effectively used for the development of Macro-linguistic skills of English language.

II. ADVANTAGES OF USING SELECTED TECHNICAL –AIDS

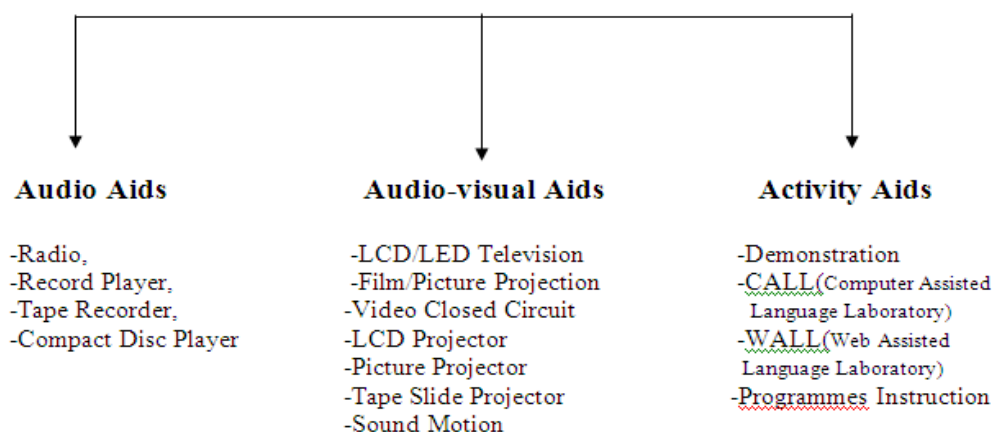
Teaching and learning English has faced changes in methodologies as well as in techniques, with the advances of technology. Teaching aids reinforce the spoken or written words with concrete images and thus provide rich perceptual images which are the bases to learning. When these materials are used in an interrelated way they make learning permanent. They provide for a great variety of methods. They bring the outside world into the classroom and make us teach efficiently. Following are the advantages of using selected technical aids at the school level.

- Sharpens the communication skills of the learners faster than the conventional methods.
- Helps the students to apply the trial and error methods in learning the language.
- The latest technologies bring the world into the class room for the learners.
- Provides a great variety of language learning methods.
- Learner friendly aids develop interest and involvement of school students. Develops greater understanding of the nuances of the language.
- Stimulates self-activity and reduces verbalism.
- Helps to teach proficiently eventually helping in overcoming language barriers.
- Saves time and helps in learning fast and permanent.
- Makes language learning in native like environment and thus picking up correct language skills.

III. CLASSIFICATION OF TECHNICAL AIDS USED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Education and technology today have become inseparable. Educational system leaves no stone unturned to make the best use of technological tools to make the learning effective. This can be seen in all areas of educational programmes. Same is the case with language learning where new gadgets and technological instruments are supporting the teacher in an immense ways. The following diagram is a testimony to the fact that how language learning today is technologically driven.

Classification of Technical Aids



IV. ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN USING THE TECHNICAL AIDS

In order to derive the advantages of using teaching aids, a teacher needs the knowledge of different types of teaching aids available, their place in the teaching-learning process and the methods of their evaluation. Teaching aids supplement the teacher and they do not supplant him. The teacher should be aware of the fact that the major task in teaching the students at higher secondary level is to select the appropriate material to hone their English communication skills. The teacher will play different roles at the following different stages of the language learning process.

Presentation Stage

At this stage the language teacher introduces something to be learned and should make contents clear to the students.

Practice Stage

Here, at the practice stage students are allowed to practice what they have learned at the first stage but the teacher allows the learners to work under his directions so that they may learn things in the right directions.

Production Stage

At this stage the teacher doesn't give the free hand to the students to work on their own and make efforts in acquiring these skills.

Presentation Stage

This stage is a test of students and the skills that they have picked up in the initial three stages. Here the teacher serves as kind of informant or facilitator and gives students the opportunities to make their presentation.

V. CRITERIA TO SELECT EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL AIDS

In today's scientific and technological advancements where there are numerous technologically advanced instruments to train the students in the language it should be taken into cognizance that neither the application of all types of instruments is advisable nor it is possible. Only after careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages only those technical aids should be selected which would be effective in honing the language skills of the students at higher secondary level. Before selecting the appropriate technical aids following criteria must be taken into cognizance:

- Teaching strategy should be appropriate for student level and in line with recent developments of English language learning and teaching.
- The aids should be user friendly and technically sound.
- Presentation should be clear and precise.
- Readability and difficulty level appropriate for the students.
- Graphics fulfil important purposes i.e. (motivation, information) and not distracting to learners.
- There should be no grammar, spelling or punctuation errors on the screen.
- Material or content must be authentic, accurate and up-to-date

VI. SELECTED TECHNICAL AIDS AND THEIR EFFECTIVE APPLICATIONS

In the plethora of technical aids available for learning English language it is of prime importance to select the appropriate aids and to use them effectively for the betterment of students. Judicious selection would not only save the time but also would help the students chisel their communication skills and at the same time the study of other subjects is not hampered at their higher secondary level. Present day's educational set up is technology-based setup that emphasizes students build meaning, based on a high degree of interactivity among students, between students and curriculum, and between students and teacher. Thus the selected technical aids that offer enormous potential in generating these interactions are as following:

- I. Interactive Whiteboard Technology**
- II. Film/Picture Projection**
- III. Language Laboratory**

I. Interactive Whiteboard Technology

Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) is high class technology that offers enormous potential in generating high degree interactive learning among the students. An IWB is a large, interactive whiteboard that is connected to a digital projector and a computer. The projector displays the image from the computer screen on the board. The computer can then be controlled by touching the board, with a special pen. These active classrooms can address different instructional learning in a variety of ways.

Effective Application of IWB Technology in Higher Secondary Class

Effective Application of IWB Technology can address the following five instructional principles:

1st Instructional Principle

Learning builds on previous experiences and therefore, English language teachers need to incorporate English language Students' prior knowledge, culture, interests, and experiences in new learning. IWB classroom can help the students in using nonlinguistic representation, helping students recognize patterns, and giving students opportunities to practice communicating complex ideas. However, teachers can also use IWBs to link the learners' prior experience with new learning by bringing them close to the home culture, interests, and experiences into the classroom through digital images, music, and multimedia.

2nd Instructional Principle

Under this principle the learning takes place in a social setting and therefore, English language teachers need to provide opportunities for the student-interactions. For example, opportunities for students to use an IWB to present and discuss their own work with other students, or become involved in a class-wide activities, e.g. a class activate, improves their attention and engagement in the learning process

3rd Instructional Principle

When the knowledge is imparted in a variety of contexts it is always likely to support learning across students with diverse learning needs and so the teachers need to integrate language learning strategies in different contexts. In this regard it is seen that active classroom technology-features can compensate for many differences in background that the students bring to the classroom and helps develop engaged learning environments that encourage students to learn.

4th Instructional Principle

Properly organized, planned, connected and relevant information not only supports students learning process but also helps them develop higher-order thinking skills. So, the teachers need to actually contextualize instruction and use such strategies like graphic organizers that support the learners' development of higher-order skills. Active classrooms also allow instant and accurate playbacks, which help the learners to access specific segments of material much more easily. Video materials presented through IWBs can also bring natural and context-rich linguistic and cultural materials to the students while the Internet—accessed through an active classroom—can enable them to access authentic news and literature in the target language.

5th Instructional Principle

After the process of IWB based learning is over the feedback and active evaluation of learning furthers students' understanding and skill development. The result is that English language teachers need to incorporate short-cycle assessments into the lesson plan that provides learners some measure of how they are progressing through the learning process.

The purpose for using IWBs in the classroom is to enable access to and use of digital resources for the benefit of the whole class while preserving the role of the teacher in guiding and monitoring learning.

II. Film/Picture Projection

Film/Picture Projection is an excellent tool for teaching through task based learning. English speakers with best pronunciations and vocabulary feel that they owe their proficiency to watching English movies.

Effective Application of Film/Picture Projection in Higher Secondary Class

The purpose behind teaching English language through movies is to ensure that students learn pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structures, modulation and delivery of words in an effective way. It is significant to pick the right kind of movies. The choice depends on the age group of the students. For children cartoon movie would be effective while Teenagers would probably enjoy seeing contemporary action or love stories while adult would enjoy wider range. For young children of higher secondary class a movie with interesting content and native touch would be beneficial as it may contain much speaking material worthwhile for proficiency in English language. The exercises associated with the video materials

are conducted before, during, and after the video presentation, which are known as the stages of *previewing*, *viewing*, and *post-viewing* (Gower, Phillips, and Walters 1995). These stages are designed to maximize student understanding of the subject matter, which will in turn increase motivation and involvement.

Previewing Stage Activities

Previewing activities activate students' prior knowledge and raise their expectations relating to the content of the video. At this stage the teacher can prepare vocabulary lists, reading texts, and comprehension questions about the video so students will start reflecting about what they know of the topic.

Viewing Stage Activities

Viewing activities give students practice in both content-based and form-focused tasks that require them to use top-down and bottom-up processing. Activities include answering multiple-choice questions, filling in the blanks, drawing inferences, and listening for the gist.

Post-viewing Stage Activities

Post-viewing activities give students the opportunity to evaluate and comment on the video and the associated activities. Students answer various open-ended questions about the video in terms of their personal enjoyment and the relevance of the content. At this stage they are required to reflect and write about the content of the video, which encourages them to think critically about the subject. At first they can write their comments in their native language, but they are progressively required to express themselves in the target language

III. The Language Laboratory

The language laboratory is an audio or audio-visual installation used as an aid in modern language teaching.

The modern multimedia Language Laboratory i.e. (**CALL & WALL**) is a type of system comprising a master console with computer (teacher position) which is connected through LAN to a number of rows of student booths (Student Station), typically containing a student Computer, headset and microphone. The teacher console is usually fitted with all the students' port and the teacher can monitor each booth without moving from his place. The teacher can see the screen of the student, monitor the students' progress, correct them on the screen, enter into dialogue with all or individual student.

Language Laboratories have undergone tremendous changes right from the beginning till modern times. The first type of language laboratory was **Conventional Laboratory**. The conventional lab has a tape recorder and a few audiocassettes of the target language to teach the learners. The teacher plays the tape and the learners listen to it and learn the pronunciation.

As it is used in a normal classroom setup, it is prone to distractions and this type of laboratory is no longer common. Then came **Lingua Phone Laboratory** where learners are given a headset to listen to the audiocassettes being played. Here distractions are minimized and a certain amount of clarity in listening is possible. Then came the latest and popular version of language laboratory i.e. **Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL)** CALL uses the computer to teach language.

The language course materials are already fed into the computer and are displayed according to the features available in the system. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the Internet. These are called **Web Assisted Language Laboratories (WALL)**.

Effective Application of Language Laboratory in the Higher Secondary Class

There is a lot of software available on the market that can be used in the multimedia language laboratory to help students acquire all skill of English language i.e. listening, reading, writing and speaking.

For Higher Secondary students **Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL)** would be effective rather than WALL because school students have to learn English language along with other subject in their curriculum. Various software is available with which various levels of learning is possible according to the needs and levels of students. The aim of using CALL is to make students familiarize with language and then help them to learn the language according to their needs. It is recommended to the basis software of **Learn to Speak ENGLISH (Book + 4 CD-ROMs Pack) (Author: BPB Multimedia)** this is a complete language learning software (4 CD-ROMs) + a reference book. It features * Vocabulary building exercises * Exercises on Perfect pronunciation * Exercises on Grammar * Progress Tracking * Real word conversations * Flexible study plans * Sophisticated speech recognition * PDA & Talking dictionary with translations * Learning through games and Puzzles. This is the basic software which would help the students at the Higher Secondary level to gradually learn the language skills.

1st CD Stage

1st CD has two parts i.e. **Pronunciation and Basic Course**. At this stage the teacher can telecast the course content and material to the students' port using the Teacher's console and help the students understand the rules of pronunciation and introduce them to the Vowel combinations, consonants, and consonant combinations. The second section of the first CD carries orientation, pretest, basic words and simulated conversations. Now students are asked to pronounce the words learnt and check through the software the correctness of their pronunciation. There is a short test after the exercise to see the level of correctness in the pronunciation.

2nd CD Stage

The second CD carries **Extended Course Menu**. This course menu carries various course and exercises as per the needs of students. It has three parts Travel, Business, and Everyday life. This exercise gives the language skills needed to communicate in typical Travel situations, Business situations and Everyday life situations. Here the teacher can also divide the class into small section and ask them to participate in a dialogue by following the situations they have learnt.

3rd CD Stage

This stage can be used to copy certain exercise that is available online. Internet Lessons are effective but the teacher needs to telecast that material from the Teacher's control rather than giving the complete freedom to students. Controlled online exercises can be of immense use in learning the language skills.

4th CD Stage

This last CD has **Cultural Movies** describing about the culture, tradition, society, of the USA. These cultural movies can be used by the teacher to help the learners read the text of the story about the city, then watch the movie on the screen with the text written on one side of the screen where the movie is run on the other side of the same screen. Then the teacher can ask the students to record their understanding on the paper and then check how much they were able to learn from this task based learning.

Other than this basic software of **Learn to Speak ENGLISH** pack various other software like **Renet, Aristoclass, Hiclass, Globarina, Console OCL-908W, Histudio MHi Tech, Online Software** can be used at later stage once students are able to freely operate the basic software modules and exercises.

VII. CONCLUSION

Though no aid can itself be complete to chisel and sharpen the language skills at higher secondary level but the selected technical aids can help them start their learning gradually. At a later stage more advanced technological aids can assist them sharpening their language skills. But at the school level they can be shown the path to move on. Thus it can be said that with the use technical aids teaching and learning English language has gained special attention and it has spread across the globe. This sort of dominion can only come by virtue of using technical aids to accelerate the process and obtain better results, To day with Internet as an immense source of information circulated in great volume in the world it is significant to select the appropriate tools and instruments supporting English language learning.

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