

INNOVATIVE AND AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract – Researchers over the past years have proven the positive effects of using information and communication technology in learning. This research work considers the digital nature of modern students associated with educational technologies and their importance in learning English through the medium best known to modern students. A review of related literature with a sole purpose of measuring the recent research trends on the contributions of innovative technology towards English language learning and teaching.

Index Terms – English as a foreign language, innovative, digital, available, ICT.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology keeps up developing in all aspects of our life. Great majority of people all around the world became involved in using technology in everyday life as it saves time and effort. In this sense, my research paper will address the innovative technologies embedded in teaching and education and its impact on English learning process; How the technology tools facilitate learning in educational institutions and to what level teachers and students are involved. The focus of this article is the measuring of the recent trends on educational English language teaching facilitated by modern innovative technologies. Connectivism is a learning theory which states how globally technology and internet brought up new opportunities for learners to share and study educational and learning information among themselves and across the world. Network is being a medium to exchange knowledge and scholarly innovative ideas that will finally lead to prosperity and development both culturally and socially. In the past years, considerable effort has been made towards integrating technological enhancement and support for learning. These technologies have not only impacted the field of education, but have also expanded and challenged our thinking of what constitute a learning environment. Not only that the learning environment has incorporated computers or internet, but also simulations, games, smart phones and later 3D technologies (Dror, 2008).

One cannot dispute the fact that our lives have hugely been influenced by technology. Technology now assumes a vital place in current human's societal developments. Technology is indispensable in facilitating teaching and learning. Students learning English as a second language will need frequent hearing, speaking, reading and writing in order to improve their skills and experience (Ybarra & Green 2003). It is evident that technology improves learning pronunciations (Seferoglu, 2005), language fluency and performance (Guzel & Aydin, 2016) and skills development (Nomass, 2013). Therefore, in order to undertake this task, language students need to utilizing different instruments which will enable them learn the language effectively and easily.

The goal is not technology itself, yet one ought to understand that technology as a continuous process needs patience, commitment and attention of all the individuals utilizing it. Therefore, users need to appreciate and understand the pros and cons of applying technology to learning. The role of technology in teaching and learning is so enormous that researchers now think that only the mixture of teachers and technology will lead to great learning success (Sharma, 2009).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, various researchers have written extensively on the contribution of technology towards English language teaching and learning. Whereas, the history of technology in education can be traced to Modern library introduction and pencil in the 1600s, the 1800 which marks the revolution of technology saw the introduction of chalk and slates (which is still used in the global south till date), the calculating machine and typewriter. The 19th century sees the introduction of projectors, radio, mimeograph, slide ruler, videotapes, Photocopier, computers and the ending of the century witnessed the introduction of internet and the interactive white board, whereas the 21st century welcomes social networks, smart phones and 3D technologies.

The 21st century marked the era of globalization which makes learning a foreign language of utmost importance. English, being the language behind most technological and scientific developments, economies, administration, literary works and popular entertainment comes first (Graddol, 2006). Teaching English Language has been there for a long period of time and its significance is ever increasing which lead in his study suggesting that by 2000 English learners will reach a billion and doubled a decade later. Considering the wide spread and advancement of English language around the globe, English is considered as the first language in countries like Nigeria, India and in some places as the second.

English language teaching has always been related to technology (Shinghal, 1997). During the past decades, laboratories were being used for teaching and learning English language at various institutions. The laboratories were equipped with radio cassette player, a headphone and a microphone. Despite the fact that these laboratories are a positive step but the process was most of the time found boring and tedious by students.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: SOME INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

In a conventional classroom, the role of a teacher as the only source of knowledge is to provide his students TRUE knowledge and to prove their understanding, the students give feedback to the teachers through reporting. The scenario found in a modern classroom now is completely different. Students conceptualize their ideas, work as a team to solve the problem.

It is not easy for the teachers to manage classrooms now that the lessons are more student centered and multidimensional, where information flows from various directions. It is of vital importance that teachers make their students ready to use computers and concurrently manage other tasks like conducting magazine and book research, gathering data and information from observations, videotapes and so on.

Second Life (SL): Developed by Linden Labs 2003, is a risk free and relaxing computer based online social networking platform design in 3D that provides users with the chance of designing avatars to act as them. SL is gradually being noticed as an optional platform for real life circumstances like teaching and learning (Guzel & Aydin, 2016). SL is now the latest environment for learning languages, students are presented with the opportunity to avoid psychological difficulties brought about by conventional classrooms (Aydin, 2013). Using SL in English learning classes has contributed positively in grammar and task achievement even surpassing conventional classroom sessions. (Guzel & Aydin, 2016).

Smart Phones: Mobile phones such as smart phones, tablets and so on, come with powerful functions almost equal to that of personal computer but because of the portability people often use them more than the computers. With an estimated 4.61 billion mobile phone users around the world in 2016 with the number said to increase by 4% in 2017 and 10% by 2019, one cannot argue that the future of learning is with the phones. Various researches have proven the efficiency of mobile learning. Although high usage of mobile phones by students have shown fall in grade point average (Lepp, Barkley & Karpinski, 2014), learning using mobile phones on the other hand, have shown an increase in academic performance, increase of rate of task accomplishment and rate of learning goal achievements (Chen, Chang & Wang, 2008).

Social Media: Social media has the advantages of allowing students, researchers and people in general interact and communicate in ways that ignore institutional limits. To prove this, in September 2012 students of journalism at Northern Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University utilized cell phones and social media to cover a convention in Charlotte North Carolina. The course did not just enable the students to acquire constructive and great understanding of the work, but also presented them with old and upcoming theories in communication and ideas related to social media in the modern world. Social media applications like Facebook and Twitter have millions of subscribers around the world and the number is increasing. Among the users of these social media are the university students which help them to communicate interactively with the community and university colleagues and teachers for scholarly educational learning purposes. Tobi, Ma'ou, & Ghazali (2013) state that the ubiquity of online social network undertook a research to find out if the use of social media has a significance on both the social and mental strength of Malaysian students. The researchers found that it had a good positive influence on the health of the students. Media has been a part of teaching English for quite a long time (Solanki, 2012). Media such as Books, Newspapers, TV, Radio present teachers and students with practical and creative ideas (Nawaila & Bicen, 2019). Choosing the right media to be applied to a particular class can be tasking, but when done right, not only does it motivate, encourage, excite and make learning interesting and fun but hardly leaves anybody untouched (Biagi, 1996). Various studies have been conducted to show the integration of media into classrooms for instance, considering media as the frequently used in classroom. He conducted a research that tries to answer the question how can media and classroom media presentation aid students in speaking and retention. She found out that media helps in visualizing teaching, increasing students understanding, fluency and accuracy.

Chat/Messages: Almeida d'Eça (2002) has defined chat as "a two-way synchronous form of computer mediated communication (CMC), a dialogue in real time as we keyboard or speak our words, an online conversation between two or more people by means of a computer". In USA alone, 4.1 billion messages are sent per day, and 368 billion in China. Making chat the most preferred means of communication by far. Gonzalez (2003) in his work where he classified educational chats and went ahead to confirm that chats can be used to develop teachers event planning, student tutoring and web 2.0 tools exploration. Chats are underutilized means for teacher development and language learning. Lots of knowledge constructions take place through chat that teachers need to be aware of considering the emphasis constructionist give to collaboration and learning via social interaction, chats are the perfect place for this type of learning.

Technologies have been in language teaching and learning for ages dating back to the period of blackboard and radio (Kazemi & Narafshan, 2014), but for learning using advance technologies to be successful, they should be properly integrated into the curriculum (Stanley, 2013). Lots of teachers are found to possess positive attitude toward technology, although they are equipped with little technological knowledge (teachers being digital immigrants) which according to (Kazemi & Narafshan, 2014) is enough to start applying technology in classroom. But most of the teachers prefer using it for personal reasons and at the lowest level. Different teaching methods apply to different language learning situations. Some methods are good for Business English, some for distance education and test, some for interpreting, listening and reading. Modern instructors now have duties and challenges. The English Teaching method has definitely been changed with the current technologies. Indeed, technology presents such a significant number of alternatives for making teaching more productive and interesting. It is an important linguistic and social changer. Nomass (2013) presented in her research the role of technology in learning and teaching English language. She went further to enumerate techniques and approaches which can serve as an aid to students in enhancing their learning abilities while utilizing technology.

To begin with, teachers need computer skills to start thinking of putting the modern technological gadgets in our classrooms. Although computer courses exist in our curriculum, it's not sufficient. More consideration ought to be put on courses that will train students on how to apply the internet and computer in the classroom. The greatest hindrance to applying technology in English classes are the limited resources, teacher's skills, feeling and attitude towards ICT and the type of application and software available (Mumtaz, 2000). Most of the teachers teaching English as a second language are ill equipped with out dated books that even natives will find complicating and students only study to pass examinations not to use it outside and the medium of communication during instruction is mostly not English (Cui & Wang, 2008). Teachers mostly take to using ICT either if the institution forces them to or there is abundance of ICT resources or the teachers are well equipped in ICT skills (Mumtaz, 2000). He went on to say that teachers do not want to use technology because they either lack the ICT skills, lack the sufficient manpower, device shortage or time and funding issues. In any case, Davis (2000) stated that schools are adjusting to accommodate societal needs of technology and to accommodate the ever-increasing need of resources.

III. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly indicated that using technology in teaching and learning English language has been increasing in the last three years. This shows the global tendency toward integrating technologies in the educational institutions across the world. The trends also prove that learning through the implementation of technology is increasingly developing in the modern world.

Normally, the reason for both modern (computer influenced) and conventional classroom is to give room for effective and efficient teaching and learning process. Powerful technological features and functions can offer to its user's great potentials for teaching and learning especially linguistics (Cui & Wang 2008). Technology has nowadays become imperative in the process of learning second languages. The reason that make modern technology even more important is because of the conventional technologies being deemed theoretical, unexciting, unmotivational, slow and teacher cantered (Nomass, 2013).

Despite the fact that all the researchers agreed to the massive contributions of technology in teaching English, but one should note that it comes with a cost. It was found that in some researches where there were control and experimental groups, instruction received was not closely matched, therefore proposed that for future research, more care ought to be taken to make sure the controlled groups are not disadvantaged. Regarding the technological development, we are of the opinion that, in the future, the integration of technological innovation in teaching English will further increase and that student-centered methods of teaching will be adhered in the learning process. Less time consuming leading to better competence in communication. Teachers and students should not be using technology just for the sake of it being technology but rather consider technology as a tool for students' academic advancement and medium of instruction.

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