

Integrating Technology into English Language Teaching and Learning: Possibilities and Challenges

E. Raghul and Saradha Rajkumar
Department of English, VIT University, Chennai, India

Abstract: The main objective of this study is to explore different technological tools that can be integrated in English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning and the challenges faced during implementing or using them in and out of the classroom. This study is an explanatory writing which details researcher's knowledge and understanding on technologies that can be used effectively for language learning. This study is written following a flexible approach towards a situation to explore the problem and analyzed the problem based on the previous knowledge of the subject. Different innovative Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools like multimedia which includes audio, video, image graphic, etc., computer, software and mobile phone and their benefits and hardware devices such as projectors, smart boards, clickers and digital pen, etc. are also explained and given in detail. This study also focuses on how social networks such as Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter, etc. can be effectively brought in for the purpose of teaching or learning a language. The advantages and possibilities of technology enabled language teaching and learning are explained and elucidated. This study also aims at emphasizing the importance and necessity of technology use in second language learning and also the challenges and difficulties in using them. Different language learning activities which can be conducted with the support technology are specified. The influence of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and how they can be employed to collect language materials with the use of internet to learn vocabulary, meaning and pronunciation of the words with the use of dictionary to learn Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills (LSRW) and to learn other language aspects with the use of different language learning applications and software are highlighted. And impact of technology in creating Learning Management System (LMS) also is discussed in detail. Technology should be incorporated in language teaching and learning and this study details the overall understanding of technologies, their importance, their influence in language teaching and the benefits and challenges faced by the learners and teachers while using them.

Key words: ICT, ELT, MALL, CALL, LSRW, LMS

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communicative Technology (ICT) is an effective tool that should be implemented in English Language Teaching (ELT) to increase the quality of ELT literature to suit the modern technological world. It facilitates efficiency in language learning. Language education professionals and learners have become increasingly comfortable with technology in language teaching as they have more access to and experience with it (Zhao, 2005). Technology development in English language learning contributes a lot both in the quality of education and in the success of language learning. It changes language learning process and promotes communication through technology. Educational technology in language teaching involves the integration of modern technological tools that support and help to produce any language learning. It consists of

technology tools ranging from multimedia tools such as image, text, audio, video, animation, graphics and Internet of Things (IoT) and social networks like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Orkut and e-mail, Blogs and Video conferencing tools such as Skype. All these educational technological tools can be brought under 4 categories they are:

- Hardware tools that support language learning
- Software programs and application that promotes learning

Internet based technological tools which uses internet to connect the world and multimedia tools.

Hardware tools: Hardware tools in education are digital devices that are used to promote language learning including digital overhead projector, audio and video

player, computers, personal laptop, mobile devices, tablets, smart boards, clickers, etc. They support language learning through their use in the classroom. Not all the devices can be used at the same time. They should be used in such a way that they bring success of language learning. Language classroom or language laboratory should have all these necessary hardware tools so that they can be used for language presentation and to teach language with effectiveness. Language labs allow teachers to utilize radical teaching approaches which provide the students space and comfort to learn. Technology based learning like using power point presentation, overhead projectors and language software's and web based teaching etc. can be useful to mould them into perfect professional's (Lakshmi, 2012).

Software programs and applications: There are software programs and application which are used by the teachers and learners to teach and learn respectively. It also enables self-regulated learning among students where students use those programs and applications on their own through their mobiles, laptops, tablets and other personal gadgets. There are separate applications for learning grammar, vocabulary and other linguistic items. Dictionaries with multiple meaning of the words of a particular language and their uses and origins are created as applications which are used by the learners to learn a particular language. There are also bilingual and multilingual dictionaries which are used by the learners of other languages. There are thousands of apps and programs available via internet. Mobile and laptop users can download the language learning apps through different platforms like play store if it is an android device and app store if it is a device manufactured by apple and Microsoft app store if it is a windows-based gadget.

LMS-Learning Management System: Learning management system uses web-based software application to take learning process virtually to monitor to administrate and to deliver teaching to receive learning electronically. In this process, teachers use LMS tools to share teaching content to update the learning progress to report student's performances and to provide feedback to the students. Teachers can also provide online assignments which can be completed and be uploaded by the students using the learning management tool to be evaluated by the teachers. Teachers can also grade their performance using the learning management tool itself which in this case can be a digital pen. LMS can also be used to flip the classroom where classroom work can be done by the students in their homes or hostel itself and when they come back for the class the time will be used

for the application of their knowledge in language. LMS application can be integrated with flipped classroom through which we can send materials to the students asking them to come prepared for the class and classroom time can be used effectively for the language learning activities. So, it will be a great support for time management where students will use their given classroom time for language practice. There are many great applications that have been created for leaning management systems. Such applications are very frequently updated and new applications are developed and released in the market. Some of the useful LMS tools that can be used for language learning are Google Classroom, moodle. The materials that are used in LMS for language learning are Multimedia contents such as video audio e-texts, images, animations; etc. It helps the teacher to monitor every student individually and helps to evaluate their performance and to provide feedback collectively or individually. Learners are given individual care by the teacher. Learners can also ask their doubts, opinions and questions to the teacher through LMS application where the teacher will be sorting them out.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL): It is also called computer aided language learning, technology enhanced language learning and computer assisted instruction. It was a method which in the beginning focused on the application of computer in language teaching and learning. But later this term became an umbrella term used to denote the use of technology and e-Learning in language teaching and learning environment. CALL transcends the traditional way of teaching and enables innovation in language teaching and learning. Computers replaces textbook and is used as a tool and a medium to learn the language where the language activities are done through computer and its internet application's (Ken, 2010). Classroom instruction and assessment are done based on student's performance in CALL activities. CALL can be used to promote all language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing and it can also be used effectively to learn grammar and other linguistic elements. Language lab with computers plays an important role in every institution to acquire a target language. Though CALL and MALL seems to be similar with most of their features, they are used differently at different places. Language lab can be used to learn listening skills with audio files such as listening to speeches in target language, listening to songs to learn the tone and pronunciation of the language and the different vocabulary used in a particular situation. Creative writing activities also can be

conducted by using computers with many features and apps available to the users. Users can also access dictionaries to find out words and its meaning to effectively carry on with their activities in the target language. Activities such as resume writing, short story writing and writing movie reviews can be effectively conducted in language lab with the help of computers. With the use of word processors, users can check spelling, punctuation and grammar and can review their writing activities to correct the errors. PowerPoint presentation is one of the major features of computer use in language labs which can develop the presentation skills based on real world tasks in target language. It increases their creative skills and enables them to speak in target language at their presentations. Readily available images and multimedia resources if used effectively enhance the language skills.

Computers can be used to learn writing skills through creative writing with picture to story activities, instruction writing, resume writing by using online resume builder, writing business letters, memo writing and short story writings for blogs, etc. With computers, puzzle games such as Crossword and find a one word web can be conducted for vocabulary learning where the learners learn forming letters with words, phrases by solving clues which lead to the answer's (Avinash, 2016).

Reading skills can be improved through reading activities such as reading jumble and paragraph jumble where the students has to read the given passage with mixed up sentences and paragraphs. Students have to read the texts to fix the sentences and passages to give perfect meaning. Reading comprehension exercises can be conducted using computers where the learners will read the given passage to answer to the questions. Pronunciations can be learned with the use of advanced dictionaries and different available apps with phonetic sounds which are both offline and online. Speaking skills can be learnt with the effective use of computers by conducting online interview through video conferencing and live chat or conducting mock interview making learners to take on the role of both an interviewer and an interviewee, speech activities, group discussion and other speaking activities.

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL): Mobile assisted language learning is one of the methods of technology learning that it is known as MALL in short which aims at language learning through the support of mobile gadget and its software applications. MALL uses handheld Smartphone and its applications to support language learning. With the help of MALL, learners have easy access to language materials at any time and at

any place. There is an increased growth of language learners who use their mobiles to download the materials and to learn the target language, since all the materials are available in their handheld device itself. "The study conducted by Hong and Shin (2015) found that 20% mobile holders use their mobile to play games while 30% users mainly use it for text message and 10% use it for their studies. So conducting game activities and creating chat group among the learners will bring good result in language learning".

MALL promotes learner autonomy, since language content is available to the learners anytime anywhere. It leads to independent learning atmosphere and private learning. There are many features available in MALL that contributes to language learning which includes SMS, MMS and language learning applications which can be accessed both online and offline. Online and offline dictionaries are available to the users to learn to check and to update themselves with new vocabularies, their meanings and origins. There are many mobile applications available for different users for learning grammar and other language items. Teachers also can make use of mobile phone when they conduct classroom activities such as timer and stopwatch to manage classroom timing. Mobile helps the learners to acquire the language in many ways such as listening to FM channel, listening to songs, interacting by texting, watching videos in target language and most of the social network apps are available in mobile itself like Facebook, Whatsapp, hike, etc. Two main characteristics of mobile devices are portability and connectivity. As for connectivity, designing the mobile system must have capability of being connected and communicated with the learning website using the wireless network of the device to access learning material ubiquitously including Short Message Service (SMS) and mobile e-mail. Portability enables learners to move mobile devices and bring learning material's (Miangah and Nezarat, 2012). Learners have the freedom to choose the mode of learning, the content they want to learn and the apps they want to use to learn the particular language skill. YouTube is available in the mobile itself to get all sorts of language videos to listen to some of the great speeches and they can also learn by imitating through watching movies. Subtitles are available to read in their first language while watching the movie in the target language. There are many learning games available for mobile users where they acquire the language and play the games simultaneously. Farr and Murray (2016) in their book "The routledge handbook of language learning and technology" state that use of multi-player games in language learning creates an interactive environment where the learners learn the language with

great motivation and learning becomes more engaging. It is an unconscious learning where students learn the language without their knowledge. Mobile also can be used in the classroom to record student's speech presentations and to record their interview activities. Mobile phone's voice recording feature also can be used by the self-regulated learners to record their own speeches to check and correct their pronunciation. MALL produces all the language skills with different learning tools and apps available in mobile which enables hassle free learning. Learner's preference is one of the main features of MALL where learners choose the language content that they want to study.

Social network: Social network is another highly influential form of information and communication technological tool which connects people all over the world by means of social media apps and websites such as Facebook and Whatsapp with the support of internet connection. It is a known fact that people use social networks and spend more time on it. It is better to incorporate social network in language teaching and learning, since it will create a real life atmosphere where students will be learning the language by connecting with their peers and teachers with the tool they use in their real life. According to Thomas (2012), the concepts of using social media in language learning by professionals have three focal points: the environment, the socio/affective outcomes and pedagogy. Facebook group can be created to make students connect and chat with other students. They can also chat with their friends with chat box while the teacher monitors the group activities. Twitter chat about social issues also can be initiated among the students. When we make use of such tools students get motivated and use quality time to learn from Facebook, Twitter and other social network features.

Multimedia tools: Multimedia contents include audio, video, images, graphics, animation and other materials. They play a major role in today's language learning. Learners show more interest in the classroom when the language is learned through multimedia contents. When the teachers use any multimedia material students actively participate and involve themselves in the learning. It motivates them, since they use multimedia devices in their day-to-day life. Students are more willing to learn through audio-video and other multimedia materials than listening to the class teacher. Teachers also find it easy, useful and effective. It creates a better learning than learning with paper-based materials. There are some challenges also in using multimedia contents. The teacher should be careful in the selection of the multimedia contents, whether they are appropriate to the particular group of students and

whether they produce language learning and executable within the given time. These multimedia materials can be used in different language learning approaches to suit the individual method of teaching. Multimedia materials also promote collaborative learning in the classroom though it can also be used to learn individually.

ADVANTAGES AND FEATURES OF TECHNOLOGIES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

There are many features and advantages in implementing modern and innovative technologies in learning English as a second language.

Motivation and interest: Stanley (2013) says that technology can be highly engaging and interactive tool providing a source of real language, both written and spoken in the classroom and motivating learners to produce more language than they otherwise might have done. With the use of technology in English learning, student's motivation and interest can be stimulated. They will show much interest in using digital tools, since they are using it in their modern life. Learners are always interested in using technology more than anything else and this we can use in language teaching to create their interest on the language and their language learning. Learners spend most of the outside classroom time in surfing internet and using mobiles, computers, tablet and social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp to listen to songs to connect with friends to know what is happening around the world. Apart from the time they spend in the classroom they always use all the above information and communication technologies for enjoyment and entertainment. So bringing in all these technologies into language learning can make it more interesting, motivating and entertaining.

Self-regulated learning and learner autonomy: There are technology devices which promote self-regulated learning where the learners learn the language independently. They use internet tools and some programmed applications which are designed for language learning purpose to learn the language in their own way in their own time. It is an intrinsic motivation which stimulates them to learn the language. It promotes self-paced learning in which learners learn the language according to their ability to learn. Private learning is one of the main features of technology enabled language learning where students learn the language through computers with internet and even through mobile devices. Technology use in language learning promotes learners autonomy where they choose the style, the content, the time and the place of learning.

Flexibility of learning: One of the important features of technology use in language learning is flexibility of learning among the learners. They choose the teaching module that suits them, the time they want to learn at, the place they want to learn from the content they are willing to learn and the skill they want to focus on, etc. It creates a learner centered atmosphere which encourages flexibility of learning. Learners have freedom to choose their individual learning styles that suits them. Learner's preference is given important in technology mediated learning.

Stress and anxiety free learning: Stress and anxiety are top reasons learners choose for not participating in language learning. Inferiority complex, depression, lack of communication, lack of background knowledge of the language, attitude of the teacher and peers and fear of failure creates stress and anxiety among the learners which can be reduced through technology mediated learning. Students learn both individually and collectively without stress and anxiety. The role of the teacher in technology mediated language learning becomes monitoring and facilitating where teachers play a less role in students getting stress or anxiety. And there are technologies which offer learning without the teacher.

Engages meaningful learning: Technology enabled language learning engages meaningful learning among the language learners where the technologies that are used by the learners in their real life are implemented. Social media, mobile, tablet and computer are some of the great examples which the learners are using in their normal life. Instead of forcing them to sit in a classroom without using these technologies, they can be incorporated into language learning curriculum which will fetch a better outcome in language learning. Social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Skype and Twitter can be used effectively by creating a Twitter list for the particular class where the particular group's interaction and comments through tweets can be seen by the people in the list. Through Twitter list students can post a question to their peers and get comments and teacher and students can communicate to share the information when needed. Social media helps to build up students-teacher and student-student relationship by connecting them socially and emotionally. They involve themselves in meaningful interaction. It will be a great tool to develop learner's communicative language where students learn to speak and get to know each other through their interaction. A teacher can share the learning materials to the groups can post assignments and can get the response too. Broadcasting group can also be created in Whatsapp

where only teacher can share materials and send feedback but students cannot. Skype can be used to interact with teacher or peer group students through video conferencing which automatically promotes language learning. Teacher can also share her views and can respond to students doubt through Skype. Use of these technologies makes learning meaningful and engages student's active participation in acquiring language.

Learning through multimedia materials: Multimedia contents contribute at a greater level in language learning. Multimedia materials include audio, video, image, graphics and animation, etc. Every learner at some point of time uses any one of these multimedia tools to learn the language skills or language grammar and other linguistic items. Use of multimedia tools is considered to be one of the effective methods of learning a language. Audio and video files are used in language classroom to develop all the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students watch a video or listen to an audio clip or observe image files to communicate to develop story writing to present on the stage. PowerPoint presentation and word processing are effectively used in the classroom. It motivates the learners and helps to get their attention in the classroom. Learners involve themselves more when multimedia tools are used to teach. Language acquisition also takes place through watching movies and events in television, listening to songs and FM channels. Integrating multimedia in classroom teaching creates a great impact on the learning of the target language.

Eliminates language learning barriers: Language learning through technology eliminates barriers to language learning and creates a positive learning environment. Students who learn the language outside the classroom through internet and e-Learning resources will not be affected by classroom barriers such as language barriers which include speaking, reading and other language forms, climate barriers such as attitude of the teachers and other students, delivery barriers which include stage fear, inferiority complex, nervousness and fear of failure and cultural barriers which include gender, religion, age, caste, social status and different first languages. Most of the students have any one of these or all these barriers in the target language classroom. e-Learning or private learning through technology will eliminate all these barriers to language learning and create positive mindset towards learning. Technology mediated learning creates low stress learning environment providing supportive learning environment. There are many other features and advantages which

make technology mediated language learning as one of the effective methods of language learning. Students find out their own learning ability through e-Learning and try to develop themselves to be a better competitor in the outside world. Through technology they learn, commit mistakes, learn to correct on their own, produce correct forms of the language. Learners motivate themselves to put forth a lot of hard work which makes them successful in learning the particular language. Technology enabled language learning creates self-determination among the learners. Through technology the attitude and approach of the learners towards language get strengthened. Yulin (2013) defines the impact of technology that 'it provides lifelong and authentic learning environment and produces communicative competence'. Virtual classroom and distance or open learning is some of the features of technology supported language learning. There are plenty of sources and materials available for language learning which stimulate students to go with technology mediated language learning. Resource materials can be accessed anywhere at any time. In addition, using advance technology, the teacher may recommend digital-based tests by ushering in paperless community of student learners. The correction time can be used more productively to encourage and groom them in preparation for their digital world.

CONCLUSION

Every approach and method to language teaching has its own advantages and disadvantages. The focus should be on successful use of these methods in producing language learning among the learners with the continuous process of eliminating the limitations by facing the challenges. Technology should be adapted to the situation wherein language learning happens. The environment which promotes technology should be created. Only with the effective use of technology and making it as main curriculum, the challenges and limitations can be eliminated. Information and communication technology in English language teaching has the potential to bring out successful language learning by improving the quality of learning with the use of variety of technological tools. Language teaching should use ICT to suite the modern world needs and to make language learning more effective. And technology enabled methods such as CALL and MALL should be incorporated with other curriculum and should be one among the learning resources. It should be both as a standalone approach to language teaching and as an integrated tool with other approaches to make a better

language learning. More theoretical frame work should be produced and awareness should be created among the teachers to use technology. And giving proper training to the teachers will change their attitude towards the use of digital tools will change their perceptions and will motivate them to prepare well for the class. Time management can be followed only when the teacher has the knowledge of technology that will be used and aware of method and procedure to be followed when using those technologies in the classroom. Lack of preparation will lead to low time management skills. Lack of time management will lead to poor learning. Technology use is more effective when it is integrated with other language learning approaches. It is necessary that technology should be used in language classroom properly following all the strategies to creating a positive and effective learning climate for language learning.

LIMITATIONS

Every approach to language learning has its own pros and cons to which technology mediated learning is not an exception. There are many limitations and challenges in implementing technology mediated language learning. It has not been fully explored to implement e-Learning or using digital tools in language classroom. Most of the researches that have been done on the use of technology in language classroom are not yet practically explored by the educationist. Though management and teachers try to bring in technology into language classroom, many question its effectiveness and authenticity because of the lack of proper theoretical framework for some of the technologies in modern education. Not all the institutions are willing to use technology for language learning. One of the main reasons is the increased educational cost. No institution is interested to spend money in purchasing digital tools or to create language lab because of the importance given to other major subjects. Lack of awareness to different technologies in the market is one of the limitations to implement technology in language learning. Lack of training, lack of knowledge and skills among teachers on technology are also the main concerns in using technologies. Most of the teachers do not use them in classroom because they do not know how to use it. Technology also makes students non interactive. Without human interaction language cannot be learned. Students always work with technologies to learn the language and forget to interact with other students or even with teachers. Communication skill like speaking cannot be developed among the students if they do not interact with others. 'Lack of awareness, lack of quality of e-Content,

difficulty in engaging students online and language barrier are some of the challenges in incorporating e-Learning (Aldowah *et al.*, 2015). Lack of technology based curriculum also is one of the challenges to use technology mediated language learning. It takes a lot of hard work and time to create a technology based curriculum which make the teachers to reject it and follow the conventional curriculum they will have for the language teaching. Teacher's approach and attitude plays a major role in not implementing the use of technology. Time management is another challenge teachers and learners face in teaching and learning through technology mediated language learning. Teacher's lack of preparation and poor time management will bring poor result in learning. Learners in their private learning sometimes will fail to manage their time and would stick with learning one aspect of language and not focus on learning other elements. They will also lose interest at some point of time which may force them to watch or do other entertaining things and it stops their focus in language learning. And there are institutions which do not provide language laboratory and internet facilities. Private learners also fail to learn the language if they do not have a smart phone, computer, tablet and other gadgets. And there are colleges where bringing or using mobile is strictly prohibited. Use of technologies in language classroom involves all these challenges and limitations which force the learners and teachers to choose traditional method of learning or teaching or to choose any other learning methods.

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