

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH

PK PANDIA*

ABSTRACT

With the rapid spread of English across the world, English is being learned by more and more people. At present, the onset of technology has dramatically changed the old styles of teaching English. With the emergence of the phenomenon called Globalization which is closely interrelated with science and technology, education field has also been affected greatly. Technology offers a lot of options to make English teaching method more interesting and easier. The modern technological tools help students to get involved and learn the English language according to their interest.

In recent years English Language Teaching has witnessed a rapid growth, fuelled, partially by Internet and other technological tools. In 2000 there were about a billion English learners but ten years later the number doubled. Notably, over 80% of the information stored in internet is in English. At present there are more Non-Natives than Natives using the English language. The phenomenal development of science and technology has enabled the application of Technologies in teaching English, too. Audio, visual, animation effects and other tools come into full play while teaching English. New technologies have set a favorable platform for exploring, teaching and learning English. It is significant for language teachers to be aware of the latest and best technologies and their tools and to acquire full knowledge of what is available in the field of science and technology. Teachers can make use of Technological tools to make teaching more interesting, colorful, stimulating and lively.

KEYWORDS: Technological, Tools, Pros & Cons, Effectiveness, English, Teaching.

Technological Changes and Teaching

'The work of the school master was once comparatively simple but like his rural employers he lacked scientific knowledge and equipment. A rapidly growing technology however, has produced striking changes both in

agriculture and in education.'¹ Technologies are affecting every profession and the teacher of English can't afford to lag behind just due to the knowledge of the latest tools to be used in his teaching.

*Head, Deptt. of English, B.T.T. College, IASE (D) University, GVM, Sardarshahr.

E-mail Id: pkpandia2015@gmail.com

There are many technologies and their tools which are applicable in different degrees to language learning situations. Some of them are useful for teaching grammar and for distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or writing skills. 'In the 21st century no one can exclude or ignore the importance of information and communication technology (ICT), instructional technology and educational technology (ET).'² Technologies related to multimedia are modern and useful which make the teaching and learning experience in classroom more enriching and dynamic.

This is also a fact that good teaching occurs when students get the opportunity to think on their own way in the process of learning and this can happen with the action of the teacher applying the modern technologies in the right way.

Technologies and their tools play a very significant role in dissemination of information, thus spreading education. 'Because of the advancement of the technology the world will shrink and its size will become more small.'³ These technologies will change the life style and the routine of the man 'Each individual will have a private, pocket size, two way television instrument and immediate personal access to a computer serving as his news source. It will be his personal communicator with the world at large, with his bank, his broker, government agents, shopping services and so on.'⁴

There will be a paradigm shift from teachers to learners. 'The language teachers of the future will need to be better prepared than they are today, but there will be greater satisfaction in leading discussions and reading literature in the foreign language with students who have already mastered the basic auditory and linguistic skills.'⁵

Classrooms will be remodeled. In fact technologies are affecting every section of the society and every aspect of life. To cite an instance 'Other applications of nanotechnology would supposedly make our cities obsolete as floating microscopic robots with lots of arms and hooks sticking out from all angles would compose a system that could turn itself into ancient Rome one day and the Emerald city the next.'⁶

The emerging trends of both non-formal education and informal education are indicative of the changing complexion of the classrooms. In the time to come the learner will exercise the right to step in classrooms as per their convenience and choice and benefit from teaching of English to the utmost extent of his potential. There will be maximum application of science and technology to make the learning experience very novel and enriching. Teaching English will be ICT based and the latest gadgets will be used to deliver the content. Like in any field the changes are likely to be in the following manner: 'The future in software is programmes which promise to adapt themselves to their users' personality and work habits so that the term personal computer will take on an entirely new meaning.'⁷

Modern and future technologies such as cloud computing, augmented reality (AR) and 3D printing which are emerging, are very important for the teaching of English. They may lay the foundation for the new way of teaching English. The application of new technologies is innovation oriented and hence it is unpredictable.

None can be quite sure what a new twist is waiting for the teaching of English due to these new technologies. 'Education must cease being confined within school walls and lifelong education should become the master concept for educational policies in the years to come.'⁸

Technological tools & Effectiveness in Teaching

The teaching of English language is evolving all the time alongside the advances in technologies. 'The use of manmade technology in acquiring knowledge has gained added importance.'⁹Some modern and future technological tools are mentioned hereunder and their applications are likely to have very far reaching effects on the effective teaching of English.

ONLINE CPD (CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT) AND THE GLOBAL STAFFROOM

The technologies such as the internet and social media have enabled teachers of English from all over the world to form online communities. They act like a huge global staffroom. For instance, Twitter and ELT blogging have opened up a network of people who can offer advice, support and ideas. Participants who are resourceful with their time, ideas, and contacts get a lot in return.

MOBILE LEARNING AND BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)

The mobile technology and the availability of smart phones have made it possible for many of the learners to access the internet and a huge variety of apps on the go. Learners stand benefitted too, from apps like WIBBU English: The Game and podcasts like Luke's English Podcast-Learn British English with Luke Thompson are also helpful in learning English.

Teachers can also enhance their teaching knowledge and skills by listening to podcasts like The TEFL Commute or joining 50,000 teachers from more than 200 countries. They can watch webinars or archived videos of talks by TEFL teachers on EFL Talks.

Tools like WhatsApp and Padlet help build and widen channels of communication beyond the classroom. They can be helpful in remaining in touch with the likeminded people very easily. They help in interacting with each other very effectively.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

At present a lot of innovations in the field of teaching English are occurring and the internet and what we can now do online are among the prominent ones. Face book and especially Edmodo, which create a safe online environment for educationists, learners and guardians to connect, are popular with teachers. Cloud-based tools like Google Docs have also become indispensable. Tyson Seburn is helpful for individual and collaborative writing with students.

The activities related to digital platforms are extensive and growing all the time. A multimedia manual like Digital Video can enable teachers to navigate the complicated, and sometimes overwhelming, world of digital resources. They can create activities, lessons and courses from a range of digital tools.

ONLINE CORPORA

Earlier the use of corpora for large text collections which was used for studying linguistic structures, frequencies, etc. was the privilege of lexicographers. But with most corpora now available online, and quite a few for free, teachers now have access to information about the way language is used in authentic texts and speech.

Now teachers hardly have to panic when students ask them about the difference between jungle and forest or envy and jealousy. And it's not only teachers who can benefit but students also can simply search the words on Google using the internet as its corpus.

COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE ONLINE

The modern technology proves to be a boon to communicate online with people outside the classroom via Skype and similar tools. They have made it possible for students to meet and interact with others in English. This could give much-needed motivation to students who otherwise might not have the opportunity to interact with anyone in English sometimes due to the fact that only teachers speak and don't allow any student to speak. As for teachers, the ability to talk with students face-to-face online has provided a whole new market for Skype lessons and online classes.

ONLINE AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

One of the biggest benefits of the internet for language learners is the sudden widespread availability of reliable resources. This enables teachers to use 'content with messages students want to hear'. Teachers and learners can now access the daily news. They can watch trending videos on YouTube, read the latest tips on Trip Advisor. In short, the possibilities are endless.

But with so much content available to the learners and teachers, choosing the right online materials is very important for efficient and effective learning. Keynote by National Geographic Learning, makes use of TED talks to develop a pedagogically sound approach to language learning, while Language Learning with Digital Video looks at how teachers can use online documentaries and YouTube videos to create effective lessons.

THE IWB (INTERACTIVE WHITE BOARD)

The IWB started appearing in classrooms in the early parts of this century. Now it has become quite common in many classrooms in England and around the world. It enables learners to save and print notes written on the board, control the classroom computer from the

whiteboard. It enables them to play listening activities on the sound system. Learners can use the screen as a slide for presentations, access the internet etc. There are numerous possibilities of such things. It should not be forgotten that merely the addition of an IWB to a classroom does not automatically make for a better learning experience. In fact, if teachers don't use them skillfully to complement teaching and learning, they are little more than a distraction.

DOGME (OR MATERIALS-LIGHT TEACHING)

Discovering the Dogme approach to language teaching was 'galvanising' to some teachers of English. A communicative approach that avoids published textbooks for conversational communication between learners and teachers, Dogme heralds a departure from a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom materials.

This is an 'unplugged' approach. This represents a new way of looking at the lesson content, and the chance to break free from self-contained language points for some teachers. This approach also provides more time to student-generated language.

STUDENTS STEERING THEIR OWN LEARNING

Learning has slowly and gradually been shifting from a teacher-centred top-down approach to a student-centred, bottom-up one for these decades. The trend has got momentum in recent years with the rapid flow of information on the internet. This has transformed the teacher's role from that of knowledge-transmitter to consultant, guide, coach, and/or facilitator.

Earlier the 'negotiated syllabus', was the domain of the business English teacher. He would conduct a need based analysis before designing a course to suit the participants. But now it is rapidly recognized that there is

nothing general about the general English learner either. Teachers now involve students in decisions about what to do in the classroom as a matter of routine.

TEACHING SOFT SKILLS AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

As English gets the recognition of being the world's lingua franca, many of our learners are now learning English for effective communication. They are working in various fields of business, trade, education, and tourism. To enable our learners to become better communicators, teachers sometimes go beyond grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. They just want to help them communicate effectively in international forums

Online resources help teachers and learners with soft skills like problem-solving, presentation skills, time management and decision-making. Academic Presenting and Presentations (Levrai and Bolster) look specifically at the communication skills required when making a presentation at academic institution.

Using Technological Tools: Pros

Technological tools are just servants of a good teacher of English. When the teacher of English and the learner know how to put them to the best uses, they can immensely benefitted. 'If we can put the information handing power of the computer at the disposal of the teacher and pupil, we open up the possibility of a revolution in education.'¹⁰ They help him when the role of technology is desirable. They come to his rescue when he finds himself helpless to make certain concepts clear. A good teacher always makes use of all these tools just to enhance the effect of his teaching. They complement and supplement him technologically. But he stills remains the master of the situation. It is rightly

said by the wise teachers, 'It's never the tool, but the user that makes the difference.'¹¹

CULTIVATION OF INTEREST

Nowadays, multimedia technology is more acceptable because it offers various resources as visual animation effects. It makes us more access to information naturally and humanly. 'Audio visual aids are able to create interest in learners by arousing their curiosity towards the subject.'¹² Besides, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and function very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest.

COMMUNICATION CAPACITY

Traditional manner of teaching language has hampered the process of learning and makes students very passive in understanding the structure, the function of the language. This makes it hard to achieve the target of communication. Multimedia technology seeks the integration of all aspects in the teaching and learning language. This dynamic way in teaching and learning language motivates students and builds up communication capacity.

EXPANSION OF KNOWLEDGE

The multimedia courseware can help students to learn in a natural way and give them the opportunity to learn the latest knowledge. This modern tool makes students discuss the latest trends. It also improves their speaking, writing and listening skills

EXPERIMENTATION IN TEACHING

As an academician, it is easy to effectively design and execute a class guided with technology. Whether it's a dramatic change such as teaching with a flipped-classroom, or just adopting a single tool for a specific project or term, educationists can make experiments using the latest technologies. Being well-versed

in technology can also help build credibility with students, and even with fellow colleagues.

BORING WORK AUTOMATED

There are engagement tools that can automate grading for the user and keep track of student's performance.

'Technological devices are able to automate the boring work into a very interesting one.'¹³ Similarly, tools can help the learner streamline grading for writing assignments, discussions, and participation, and answering common student questions, which otherwise can seem daunting due to their objective nature. From apps to organizational platforms to e-textbooks and more, there are many amazing tools that can help the user. Tools are helpful to both students and professors to collaborate, share ideas, stay organized, and more to get the most out of learning.

SUPPLEMENTING LEARNING EXPERIENCE

It shifts the classroom experience from the verbal approach to a more collaborative environment. It has a wide range of experience from research to inviting remote speakers virtually and beyond. Creating presentations, learning to differentiate reliable from unreliable sources on the Internet, maintaining proper online etiquette, and writing emails; these are all vital skills that students can learn in the classroom.

BENEFIT OF DIGITAL WORLD

Using technology in the classroom prepares students for a future deeply rooted in technology. It is not affordable to deprive the benefits of the digital world. This is possible at the cost of being left lagging behind. Technologies enable teachers to know where students are missing and they can focus on the missing part of the students. Instead of sitting through hour-long lectures of material they've

mostly learned, technologies can enable them to learn what they need.

PERSONAL CONVENIENCE

Apps enable students to make progress at their own pace. Many of apps are adaptive. It means that questions and problems will get easier or more difficulty, depending on students' performance. Technologies can be upgraded to meet students at their precise learning levels. Besides, a wide range of technologies available imply that students in the same classroom might be using different systems to learn similar material. It depends on the teachers' and students' interests and suitability.

MULTI LEARNING MODALITIES

Incorporating technologies into the educational institutions implies that students have exposure and access to multi ways of learning. It is practically possible that some students do thrive in a lecture environment while others might be great independent learners, who can collect information from educational software. Providing students the opportunity of different ways to learn means they are at liberty to explore and try different techniques. In the end, they can learn the best strategies for themselves as individual students.

HELPFUL IN MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

Technologies make it possible for students with special needs to thrive in academic settings. From adaptive word processor apps to programs that speak for children who struggle with language, technologies enable students to communicate and thus help them in getting involved with their teachers and classmates.

EASY DATA COLLECTION & DISTRIBUTION

Apps and platforms enable teachers to integrate all the information they might need to know about a student, for example, attendance

record, performance on quizzes, performance in English language, activities in special education. With this requisite information, teachers can easily find out how their learners are performing as a whole class, as a subgroup, and as individuals. They can provide intervention as and when required.

ATTITUDINAL CHANGES

Multimedia tools enrich teaching content and improve class efficiency. 'Several innovative projects have already demonstrated the combined impact of radio, television, films, the print and traditional folk media in bringing about attitudinal changes.'¹⁴ The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. Multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, create more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information and brings about attitudinal changes.

PURPOSEFUL INTERACTION

Multimedia teaching stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. A major feature of multimedia is to train and improve students' ability to listen and speak, and to develop their communicative competence. During this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is particularly prominent.

LANGUAGE TEACHING EASY

This method makes the class lively and interesting, optimizes the organization of the class, sounds and picture can be set together.

When using multimedia software, teacher can use picture and images to enrich the content of classes. This allows students to understand the class in a clear way. Through multimedia and network technology we can offer students not

only rich sources of authentic material, but also an attractive and friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant sounds. Multimedia teaching is flexible. English teaching itself must focus on the guidance of teachers and be student-centered,

USING TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS: CONS

As long as the technological tools serve the teachers of English, they are good. But when sometimes teachers are reduced to being just spectators and tools become the dominating master of the situations, they become a liability both for the teacher and the learner. Because technologies are the products of men and when they don't recognize the presence of their masters they are bound to have side effects. 'Neither ET nor ICT can replace the human element in teaching. Only a live teacher can develop the critical side of learners' personality like self-esteem, confidence, positive thinking, social cohesion and concern for human values.'¹⁵ The modern science and technology will also give rise to a plethora of problems.

Due to rapid changes in science and technology much of knowledge and skills considered to be useful in a conservative and static society will be rendered useless and irrelevant. Whatever was considered good in the past may not be regarded the same in the changed and changing context. In the name of technology some people deprive others of their due. 'The citizens of today are claiming rights over the citizens of tomorrow, threatening their well being and at times their lives.'¹⁶

EMERGING AS CHALLENGE

Technologies are emerging as a way to replace teachers in the future. It is not a misplaced concern. For example, the sectors such as the auto industry, agriculture, and manufacturing industries have all mechanized many parts of their process and the retrenchment of workers

is quite common. Some people rightly think that teachers will become obsolete, as the latest developments in the education are powerful enough to deliver content, evaluate them. They can set students on a new course of learning, all without teacher intervention. This is posing a great challenge to teachers.

CAUSE OF A DISTRACTION

This creates this hallucination that you have the technologies at hand but the matter of fact is that a number of technologies are yet to be available. Creating expectations and guidelines for the students and sticking to them is important. It is better to use technology that students already have (smart phones, laptops, etc.) for good and valuable learning experiences, rather than pretend like those devices aren't present in your class.

SOCIAL DIVIDE

The use of technologies will affect students' (and everyone else's) ability to verbally communicate. 'If unimaginatively used, ET and ICT can create a digital divide, which may result into a social divide. Educational planners have to take note of this danger.'¹⁷

However, if assignments in class are created imaginatively in which both technological tools as well as oral presentations and collaboration are used, this can teach students to be dynamic in learning and interacting with others. Thus this divide can be addressed to some extent.

DEPENDENCE

Multimedia technology is an assisting instrument to achieve the projected teaching effect, while if totally dependent on multimedia devices during teaching, the teachers may be turned into slaves to multimedia and cannot play the leading role in teaching. The notion of Creative Education is to be fully comprehended that modern educational technique serves as

an assisting instrument rather than a target and that should not dominate class. They are substitutes to effective teaching and learning.

LACK OF PRACTICE

It also result in lack of communication between teachers and students, replacement of teachers' voice by computer sound, and teachers' analysis by visual image and students have few chances for speaking communication, ... students are made viewers rather than the participants of class activities.

MENTAL ABILITY AFFECTED

Due to over-demonstration and pre-arranged order, the course ware lacks real-time effect and cannot give feedback. Thinking capacity should be the major objective in teaching and using of multimedia technology and it should not take up the students' time for thinking, analyzing and exploring questions.

MALPRACTICES

The technology encourages to give objective assignments that eliminates the role of subjectivity. Consequently the students can feel encouraged to resort to malpractices like mass copying and doing some task in a very mechanical manner.

UNEQUAL ACCESS

There will be students who do not have the means of technologies at the same level. Sometimes the devices are with the students but then the quality of sources may not be top-notch. Disparities in resources can lead to different outcomes.

MORE LABOR INTENSIVE

Using technologies can require more labour on the part of the user to adapt in the classroom. In many ways though, using technology can become as natural to you as any daily activity.

Everybody cannot be equally expert in using the technology.

WASTAGE OF TIME ETC

Students are and likely to get busier in tweeting and Snap chatting thus paying scant regard to academics. The learners' innate curiosity, coupled with their tech savvy could lead to more online socializing in environments where devices are easily available.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism has been adversely affecting teachers earlier too. The latest technologies enable students to easily access essays, reports, class notes, tests, etc. online, making it difficult for teachers to know if the work their students have got is original or copied from any source. There are some soft wares to detect plagiarism but no system can be perfect.

AVAILABILITY

All the students have the means of technologies available outside of the classroom to the same extent despite the library or the institution being an option. Using technology in the classroom is fine but all students may not have access to the devices at the equal footing. This will further cause disparities. But when educational programmes are designed for homework, at home intervention, or even flipped learning, student access to the Internet must be taken into account.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of student information and data is very important. But the latest gadgets, apps and technologies have come a long way in exposing everything to the public domain. This can pose a threat to the individuality of students. Student data is invaluable within the classroom walls, but with the advent of future technologies teachers can't ensure the privacy and confidentiality of students.

In this age of science and technology changes are occurring at a very fast speed. At times the teachers find it very difficult to cope up with the situation in their classroom. They can't do justice to their students without the command over the technologies. As such it becomes imperative for the teachers to be equipped with the latest technologies for effective teaching. 'The modern science and technology can be useful if they are utilized properly.'¹⁸ But the problem arises due to the fact that at present 'man does not possess the wisdom to use this scientific and technological power properly'¹⁹ This lack of wisdom is due to the fact that the delicate balance between using and not using the technological tools is not maintained successfully. 'The extreme position is to see E.T. as a sure cure for all educational ills. They feel that E.T. can help in increasing access, promoting retention and ensuring high achievement. The other extreme position, in the words of Susan Markle, is that E.T. has been over emphasized, over priced and under productive.'²⁰

CONCLUSION

Technologies are there as teaching aids. They are capable of solving problems but at the same time they may give rise to problems. The role of trouble shooting may be swapped with trouble creation. The first letter of man and machine is m but man should be at the helm of affairs, not vice versa. Educationists find technologies useful but sometime a headache in different situations. Technologies provide students and teachers an opportunity to learn and teach in ways their prior generation never had. The students today have quick access to answers and research. However, this access is also affecting them physically, emotionally, socially and psychologically at times. Like anything in this world the technologies have got some inherent merits and demerits. There is little doubt to say that the future is the age of

technologies. As applicable in every walk of life nothing can be entirely advantageous only. When technologies have got a large number of advantages, they are bound to have some disadvantages as well. The matter of fact is that the future technologies in the field of education are a hard reality of the day and how the future generation makes best use for mankind or puts them to misuse for the discomfort of the future generation, is to be decided by man only. It's up to educators, administrators, and leaders to decide whether the good outweighs the bad or vice versa.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Bhatt, B.D. (1994). Modern Encyclopedia of Educational Technology, Vol- I, Kanishaka Publishers, Delhi-110053 (pp 60).
- [2]. Ibid (pp 160).
- [3]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter on Understanding Futurology of Education by Dr Devendera, pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India) (pp 14).
- [4]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter Problems and Challenges of Future by Deepika Kumar, pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India) (pp 26).
- [5]. Bhatt, B.D. (1994). Modern Encyclopedia of Educational Technology Vol-1, Kanishaka Publishers, Delhi-110053 (pp76).
- [6]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter When Everyone will have Everything. By Jagdish R. Malhotra., pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India). (pp 77).
- [7]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter Challenging Options for the Next Century by KumKum Tandon, pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India) (pp 81).
- [8]. <http://www.unesco.org/education>.
- [9]. Bhatt, B.D. (1994). Modern Encyclopedia of Educational Technology, Kanishaka Publishers, Delhi-110053 (pp1 (Preface).
- [10]. Bhatt, B.D.(1994). Modern Encyclopedia of Educational Technology, Kanishaka Publishers, Delhi-110053 (pp 2).
- [11]. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/ten-innovations-have-changed-english-language-teaching>.
- [12]. Hathi, Urmil H. (1994). A Study of the audio visuals aids in secondary schools of the Gujarat state, I.E.A. Vol-1 (1), Jan.2001.
- [13]. Khemchandani, Beena S (1998). A study of the use of technological devices of academic counselors at IGNOU study centres of Ahmedabad district-A case study. Journal of Higher Education, Vol.21 (2), 273-277.
- [14]. Rao, Digumarti Bhaskara (1996) Encyclopedia of Education for All Vol-V, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi-2.
- [15]. Dewal, O.S. (2006), Sixth Survey of Educational Research (1993-2000) Vol I, NCERT, Delhi.(pp 160).
- [16]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter Things most Likely to be In the 21st Century by Professor S.P. Rohella, pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India) (pp 70).
- [17]. Dewal, O.S. (2006), Sixth Survey of Educational Research (1993-2000) Vol I, NCERT, Delhi.(pp 160).
- [18]. The Futurology of Education (2007), Chapter Problems and Challenges of the Future by Deepika Kumar, pub: International Publishing House, Meerut (India) (pp 27).
- [19]. Ibid (pp 27).
- [20]. Dewal, O.S. (2006), Sixth Survey of Educational Research (1993-2000) Vol I, NCERT, Delhi, (pp 160).