

21.

The Integration of Multimedia Technology in English Language Teaching: A Global Perspective

Kusum Bhatia*

*Assistant Professor, Govt. PG College Ambala Cantt. (Haryana)

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic is proved to be a global health crisis. It has threatened millions of people across the world. The government of most countries have taken huge initiatives to face the challenge of Covid-19. The government of India has also taken necessary measures to protect its people from the threats caused by pandemic. 'The Janta Curfew' was imposed and people were suggested to stay at homes during lockdown, schools and colleges were suspended due to the speed spread of this virus. It is true to say that education plays a vital role in nation-building. Education is considered as the foundation stone and the backbone of a nation. Under these circumstances, educational institutions can be suspended but it is impossible to put a halt to the flow of education itself. The 21st century is an era of globalization and gigantic technological advancement. Technology has made a tremendous change in making teaching more interesting and productive. It has brought a huge revolution in the field of education, during this pandemic crisis. Multimedia technology is one of the technological tools that have enabled the teaching and learning possible.

The word multimedia is derived from two words: 'multi' which refers too many, and 'media' is the plural of medium means conveying information through different means. So, Multimedia is the computer-controlled integration of multiple forms of media, which includes text, audio, still images, animation, video, graphics, drawings etc. Multimedia is an interactive computer-based application that enables the users to integrate and manipulate data from two or more forms of media (text, graphics, animation) and to present it effectively on desktop computer. The exponential growth of Multimedia applications over the last decade has brought a phenomenal change in the fundamental concept of information storage, transfer and presentation. Multimedia technology plays a significant role in leveraging the learning capabilities of human

beings, as, this amalgamation of words and pictures stimulate the cognitive power of learner. In order to keep education relevant to the present times, the academicians and professionals also realized the utmost requirement of computer-based multimedia learning. Several studies have shown that the use of multimedia materials in the classroom leads to tremendous improvement in learning and retaining abilities of students. The main reason behind this is, when a teacher use multimedia material in the classroom, he/she thus presents information in two modalities-visual and auditory. According to cognitive theory of multimedia learning, when the visual and verbal material is represented coherently, it leads to better encoding and easy retrieval. Apart from this, multimedia applications help in presenting a topic to the students in an interesting manner. It also boosts the understanding of the students, as they are able to comprehend the complex topics with the help of rich media material.

The use of Multimedia technology has also replaced the traditional classroom teaching. In the traditional classroom lecture method, a teacher stands in front of the students and give instructions to them by using equipment's like chalk, blackboard etc. But the new technologies have created the concept of multimedia classroom in present education system. There are many advantages of multimedia classroom teaching. It makes the learning more interesting and playful with the use of equipment's like print texts, films, animated videos. Multimedia classrooms are always livelier and more interesting. While the traditional classrooms are 'teacher centred', these multimedia classrooms are 'student-centred'. It provides a chance to the students to solve their problem by themselves. But it can never be said that the use of multimedia can replace teachers as well. A good teacher can facilitate learning by combining multimedia application and teaching methodology. The use of multimedia provides a chance to the students to actively participate in discussions. It also enhances the learning capability of students as they can practice and learn by themselves through multimedia repeatedly.

At present the role of English language is so diverse that it has become a language entrenched with social, political and cultural ideologies. It has also become an important medium of curriculum and a language of imparting education. The present role and status of English has also increased the number of English learners. This trend of English language teaching assigns new challenges and duties on modern teachers. On the one hand, it is considered a matter of honour and prestige to study in an English

medium school. But on the other hand, there are a huge number of students who are afraid to learn English. It is a huge challenge for the teachers to make the learning of language interesting by introducing creative and interesting methods. The language teachers make use of new technologies with an aim to make it more interesting and productive. It is fair to assert that the technological innovations have facilitated the growth of English language to a large extent.

Theoretical Foundation of Multimedia Assisted English Language Teaching:

The theoretical foundation of teaching English through multimedia is based on constructivist learning theory. This theory is an offshoot of Cognitive Learning Theory. The Constructivist Learning theory is based on the concept of knowledge. The theorists are of the view that the entire world is an objective reality, but its understanding is a personal decision. They are of the view that knowledge can never be considered an ultimate truth. It keeps on revolving and rechanging itself on the basis of individual perceptions. Constructivist theorists believe that a learner can never be a passive recipient of information but an active receiver of information who constructs meaning out of it on the basis of his/her experiences, background and so on. Constructivist theorists also emphasize the importance of situation or context in learning. Adequate learning is possible when the learner is put into real life situation. It is only then the learner actively participates in a situation and explore new dimensions. On the basis of his prior knowledge, he is able to construct something new. So, the constructivist theorists are of the view that a teacher should perform the role of facilitator or helper rather than an imparter or deliverer of knowledge. In recent times, with the colossal technological advancements, the traditional English teaching methods have become outdated. The core concern of constructivist is to encourage active learning, improve self-learning ability, reduce the gap between classroom learning and real life. The series of ideas which are put forward by theorists can play a significant role in reforming traditional English Teaching. Thus, the advancement of technology has facilitated the multimedia assisted English teaching. There are two most important characteristics of multimedia assisted English teaching. One is visualization and the other is concretion. A brief of the above is as follows:

1. **Visualization:** In the tradition classroom, the language students find it boring to learn English language. But the multimedia classroom provides such platform to the students that they learn by doing. It provides a chance to the students to indulge in various discussion, debates which ultimately enhance their vocabulary and also widen the horizon of their knowledge.
2. **Concretion:** Earlier, teaching is always teacher-centred. But with the advancement of technology, new equipment's are used to make the learning more interesting and real by putting the students in real-life situation.

Advantages of Multimedia Assisted English Teaching

According to the Ministry of Education, the main purpose of English language teaching is to cultivate the ability to listen, express and comprehend English amongst students. There are a number of advantages of Multimedia assisted English Teaching. A brief description of these is as follows:

- There are a number of abstract concepts in English language which a teacher can only explain to students. But with the use of multimedia tools, it becomes easy for the teacher to turn these abstract concepts into concrete realities.
- Multimedia technology cultivates the interest of students in English language learning by providing them information in a lively way by crossing the time and space boundaries. The students feel as if they are in real life situation and indulge themselves completely in activities.
- Multimedia aided classrooms also helps in enhancing the communication skills of students. Through various audio-visual modes, the students participate in discussions and debates and ultimately learn the structures and functions of a language.
- Whereas, the textbooks provide limited knowledge to the students. The multimedia courseware makes the students familiar with practical aspects of a language. It provides an insightful understanding of the cultural background of a particular region through its language.
- Multimedia teaching also facilitates student-teacher interaction. In the traditional classroom, the entire teaching is teacher-centred. A teacher keeps on

giving the instructions to the students, whereas, multimedia teaching provides a platform for the exchange of ideas between a student and a teacher.

- Multimedia technology also provides an opportunity to the teachers to enhance their efficiency by employing new pedagogical strategies in their teaching.
- This technological advancement provides a platform to students to enhance their language skills by utilizing innovative ELT techniques like English songs, dramatic, sports commentaries, movie clippings, advertisements etc.
- The main purpose of English teaching is to cultivate the listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Multimedia courseware provides a good opportunity to the Mute English students to talk with virtual characters set by various technological tools. Thus, the students are able to improve their communication skills and correct their mistakes by participating.
- According to the constructivist learning theory, a learner accumulates more knowledge if a certain study scene is created before him/her, rather than just following chalk and talk method. Multimedia classroom facilitates this constructive study environment.
- The use of multimedia technology not only equips the students with the language itself but also provides them huge amount of information about the real-life language material.
- Multimedia classroom provides a conducive environment for language teaching. When the teacher show pictures and audios of native speakers to students, the students feel motivated and participate enthusiastically in various activities. Thus, it makes the language class livelier and more interesting.
- It also provides an opportunity to teachers to teach English outside the classroom through various asynchronous tools such as e-mail, conferencing system etc.

Disadvantages of Multimedia Teaching

Though multimedia technology facilitated the language teachers to improve their efficiency and make learning more impactful and productive, but there are many disadvantages of Multimedia assisted English Language Teaching:

- One of the biggest disadvantages of multimedia English teaching is to neglect cognitive laws. Sometimes a teacher makes an extensive use of flowery and fancy courseware in order to prevent the student's tiredness. But at the end, a teacher neglects teaching objective as well as teaching content.
- Sometimes a teacher makes use of multimedia teaching extensively without realizing that this method is an auxiliary one and is not the whole of English teaching.
- The teachers who feels helpless to adapt to the new technological tools, starts using old bottles to new wines method. They are so impercipient that they were unable to leave traditional habits and ideas. It ultimately reduces their quality and persuasion of teaching.
- Another drawback of technological advancement is that, at times a teacher is unable to realize that these tools are to be used as supplementary instruments rather than as a target.
- The role of a language teacher is to cultivate the thinking and spontaneity of students by framing questions based on real life situations. But this pre-arranged multimedia courseware lacks real-time teaching. It does not give an opportunity to students to explore real world.
- Though the technological tools provide an opportunity to the students to understand the content easily. Yet it restricts their abstract and logical thinking.

Recommendations:

The integration of language teaching with multimedia technology has contributed immensely in effective learning. But there are many aspects of technology that hampered the education. There are a number of recommendations that can be initiated to make language teaching productive. A brief description of these recommendations is as follows:

- Multimedia technology should be adopted as an assisting tool by the teacher to make his/her teaching more interesting. A teacher should play the leading role and should not overuse these tools.

- A teacher should integrate multimedia technology with traditional teaching tools. Because traditional teaching aids are equally important and these can't be completely replaced by modern technological tools.
- The role of teacher in classroom is not only to disseminate content through power point presentations. A teacher should motivate the students to actively participate in various activities and also encourage them to use their own mind and creativity.

An educationist said: "If a teacher uses undeveloped teaching idea and methods even though he uses modern teaching media, we can say that the students are infused by teacher and computer together instead of teacher." So, it can be said that the modernization of teaching media is not equal to teaching optimization. Technological advancement can provide better teaching and learning platforms but it can't replace a teacher. The need of the hour is that a teacher should change their pedagogy using multimedia technology and enhance the interest of students in English language.

Works Cited

- Aloraini, Sara. "The Impact of using Multimedia on students' academic achievements in the college of Education at King Saud University" *Journal of King Saud University-Languages and Translation*, Vol.24, no. 2, July, 2012, pp. 75-82.
- Goodwin Jones, B. "Emerging technologies, language in action: From webquests to virtual realities. *Language learning and Technology*." Vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 9-14.
- Heinze, A, and Procter. "Communication and Information Technology Education." *Journal of Information Technology Education*, vol. 5, 2006. pp. 235-249.
- Incedayi, Necdet. "The Impact of using Multimedia Technology on students' Academic Achievement in the Bakirkoy Final College." *International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Education*, vol.5, no. 1, Jan.2018, pp. 40-47.
- Warschauer, Mark and Carla Meskill. "Technology and Second Language Teaching." *Handbook of Undergraduate Second Language Education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000. Print.
- Wingard, R.G. "Classroom Teaching Changes in Web- Enhanced Courses: A Multi-Institutional Study." *Educause Quarterly*, vol. 27, no.1, 2004, pp. 26-30.

Young, Carl A. and Jonathan Bush. "Teaching the English Language Arts with Technology: A Critical Approach and Pedagogical Framework." *Contemporary Issues in technology and Teacher Education* 4.1 (2004): 1-22, print.