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Expanding Imagination through Audio-Visual: Application of New Technology in Teaching of English

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In this changing phase of globalisation, it is the need of the hour to learn more than one language. It helps one to relate more to others in the global society. It bridges the gap between different cultures and societies. Webster's Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, defines Audio-Visual Aids as "training or educational materials directed at both the senses of hearing and the sense of sight, films, recordings, photographs, etc used in classroom instructions, library collections or the likes" (Majumder). He further adds that: "along with books, teachers may use related pictures, audio clips, videos, power point slides, posters and so on in the classrooms." (Majumder) But still there are a few basic difficulties in the way of learning English language—Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Grammatical errors. In the words of Flora Lewis, an American journalist: "Learning another language is not only learning different word for the same thing but learning another way to think about things." (Lewis) and, she goes on to say: "If you speak or are learning a foreign language, you have probably experienced such moments when you suddenly realise how this other language casts a new light on some concept or idea." (Lewis)

When people learn a foreign language, they also learn how different societies think, feel and experience. Students of new generation according to Prateek: "learn best by observing and copying the behaviour of adults. It is therefore clear that learning is more effective when sensory experiences are stimulated" (Majumder). By dint of hard work a learner can accurately absorb its original expression. There are many factors that facilitate easy access in learning a foreign language—exposure, resources and sensibility of the learner. The famous linguist, philosopher and cognitive scientist Noam Chomsky says about languages: "A language is not just words. It's a culture, a tradition, a unification of a community, a whole history that creates what a community is. It's all embodied in a language." (Chomsky)

We sometimes have a myth that a child has more ability to learn a language. The reason behind this is that a child has an exposure to that language and has the ability to listen and capture the words spoken around him. Same is true for a learner who wants to learn a second language. He must have maximum exposure to that language. "The objective of using audio-visual aids is to enhance teacher's ability to present the lesson in a fun, easy and efficient way for understanding of the students. Audio-visual material make learning more permanent and lasting since students use more than one sense." (Majumder) The use of visual and audio means availability of various resources in the process of learning a foreign language. Earlier, in the conventional forms of learning when the cognitive load of the text books was too high, there were limited resources for creative thinking and life skills in learning a new language. But, nowadays a vast panorama of resources is available to hone the language skills. Technology has played a vital role in enhancing the language learning.

In the modern scenario, there are numerous on-line courses available where a learner can find ample opportunity to learn a foreign language. Introduction of Language Labs has also paved an effective way in learning English language. A lab equipped with latest gadgets helps the students to clear their language doubts unhesitatingly and uncompromisingly. It boosts their language skills and make them confident by improving their deep learning abilities. The advancement of extensive use of latest technology to facilitate English learning creates an innovative platform which contribute a wide range of improvement in teaching methods. "A resourceful English language teacher with an eclectic approach is desirable in English as a foreign language classroom. An eclectic approach is characterized as a pluralistic approach to language teaching because it involves the use of a variety of language learning activities." (Mathew and Alidma)

To achieve the desired goal English Language Lab proves to be a vital asset in this direction. Reshu Manglik, content writer at Globus Infocom opines that: "English Language Labs are fully-equipped laboratories to facilitate language learning in a fun and interactive manner. In the traditional methods, students used to learn a foreign language using books, notes and teacher's instructions. However, those methods turned out to be less fruitful." (Manglik) English Labs are thought to be a greatest contribution in teaching English. But this must not give the impression that this type of teaching did not exist before this new normal Covid-19 situation. It was very much there in the education department with a new holistic vision towards teaching. Department of Higher Education had already tried to establish the English Language Labs in every college within its ambit. But this must be

openly admitted that teaching in English Labs was not very much popular across the state. The Language Lab, which is meant primarily to emphasise efficient Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills (LSRW), where the learning has to affect the students. The Audio-Visual equipments of English Lab turn out to be wonderful gift of blended learning that can create miracle in future. Take, for instance, the 'Grammar', 'Phonetics', 'Business Writing' and 'Tense Buster' software in the 'Clarity English Success Program' is remarkable for its better learning outcome among the students. It broadens the students' horizon in handling their learning skills. "Electronic gadgets like Smart-boards, LCD projectors and Digital Labs empowered teachers to make the teaching-learning process interactive and interesting. The English curriculum at undergraduate level also recommends the use of audio-visual aids for effective classroom instruction." (Mathew and Alidma) According to the findings of the study done by Prateek Majumdar it is noted that "almost all the students came with the idea that, use of multimedia visuals aids makes the class interesting and encourages them to learn." (Majumder)

There is always a wide disparity between traditional and blended technical learning, between its conception and execution, and between its ambition and achievement. The implementation of language learning with the help of technical tools is always hampered by latest infrastructure in establishing the labs. Modern technical aids are designed to facilitate traditional English language instructions. It is not limited to online teaching Apps but rather associated with traditional English teaching in Clarity English Software to acquire better potential in learning English language. "The use of modern technology in teaching English is broadly understood to encompass an innovative application of methods, tools, materials, devices, systems, and strategies which are directly relevant to English language teaching and lead to the achievement of the desired goals. Thus, while technology is now generally accepted as an important educational and auxiliary tool across a range of teaching and learning contexts, it is particularly true of English language teaching since it affords a number of potential opportunities to enhance both the content and delivery of the pedagogies typically associated with traditional English language instruction." (A) To impart advance teaching it is necessary to adopt the latest technology such as social media platform like You-tube, Google classrooms, animated videos on English language, Google quizzes, android phones, multimedia devices, computerization etc.

Easy access to Net-surfing plays a significant role in accelerating English teaching and learning. Audio-Visual aids reduce the complex nature of teaching English language and simultaneously enable the students to gain language proficiency and recall their lessons by attaining language skills. In terms of e-learning engagement of students in learning certain genre seems uplifting. Amid lots of technical hurdles in this New normal era, the use of technology in teaching English proves to be a stupendous success. "Technology has become ubiquitous in all forms of contemporary life. Since the teaching process cannot be atomized from this global trend, this study further considers the impact of recent English teaching technology as compared to traditional practices which arguably render students passive, and prone to boredom. Indeed, this study demonstrates that the introduction of modern technological assistance yields timely learning progress and improved student proficiency across all English language skills including writing, reading, and conversation." (A)

As English is a foreign language, the students of rural background find it difficult to understand the basic concepts in it. Therefore, it becomes a hard nut to crack to learn everything in English. Focusing on the importance of audio-visual aids in teaching English language Jemima Daniel very aptly points out that: "In the teaching of language, the main purpose of the use of audio-visual aids is to enable the teacher to make his lessons effective and interesting. In the teaching of English the teacher uses the direct method. Therefore, it is for the teacher to give a clear idea to the students through audio-visual aids. Such type of teaching makes the idea permanent in the pupils mind." (Daniel) As she continues to say: "Books and other printed materials have been the basic tools of teaching for centuries, and they are still of great importance. History suggests that the basic conditions which strongly encouraged study and experimentation with visual aids were excessive verbalization in teaching." (Daniel)

Hence, the significance of the Audio-visual aids in the process of language learning. The English labs go a long way in making teaching learning process a grand success with an objective to provide learning platform to students by dissemination of e-content to learners and empower them. Language learning is, in fact, an assemblage of knowledge which unfolds its maximum learning outcome "as a flower unfolds its petals". In order to get perfection in a language one must live and breathe that language and add emotions to it. It is clear from the genuine efforts of department of higher education to introduce English Language Labs in colleges for teaching English as a foreign language. According to Edward Lee Gorsuch: "It provides a cultural mirror in which we can more clearly see our own

society." In conclusion, it is stated that such labs are, in fact, the dire need of the hour. Almost every department in the temples of learning should have labs of this type to make the study of respective subjects really significant.

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