A study on using technology in English language teaching and learning

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Introduction

The new era assigns new challenges and duties on the modern teacher. The tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of technology. Technology provides so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvements. Technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change. One method of teaching English involves multimedia in order to create English contexts. This helps students to get involved and learn according to their interests. It has been tested effectively and is widely accepted for teaching English in modern world.

Technology satisfies both visual and auditory senses of the students. With the spread and development of English around the world, English has been learned and used by more and more speakers. According to David Graddol 'it is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economies and management, new literatures and entertainment genre.

Use of Technology in Teaching English

As the use of English has increased in popularity so has the need for qualified teachers to instruct students in the language. It is true that there are teachers who use 'cutting edge' technology, but the majority of teachers still teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are bad or damaging the students. In fact, till date they are proving to be useful also. However, there are many more opportunities for students to gain confidence practice and extend themselves, especially for ESL students who learn the language for more than just fun. For them to keep pace with ELT and gain more confidence they have to stride into the world of multimedia technology.

The Growth of ELT through Technology

The 21st century is the age of globalization and is important to grasp on various foreign languages and English language comes first. English Language Teaching has been with us for many years and its significance

continues to grow, fuelled, partially by the Internet. Studies suggest that in the year 2000 there were about a billion English learners- but a decade later the numbers doubled. The forecast points to a surge in English learning, which has peaked in 2010. Over 80% of information stored on the internet is in English. For the first time there are more Non-Native than Native users of the language and diversity of context in terms of learners, age, nationality, learning background etcetera has become a defining characteristic of ELT today.

With the rapid development of science and technology, the emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, featuring audio, visual, animation effects comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform for reform and exploration on English teaching model in the new era. It's proved that multimedia technology plays a positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of student and teaching effect in English class. Technological innovations have gone hand -in-hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate. It is fair to assert that the growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language and that this has occurred at a time when computers are no longer the exclusive domains of the dedicated few, but rather available to many. With this there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of technology in teaching English language. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept technology as the most essential part in teaching.

In a sense, a tendency to emphasize on inevitable role of technology in pedagogy to the extent of obliterating human part of teacher by technology part has been very dominant. And as a result if we neglect or ignore technological developments they will continue and perhaps we will never be able to catch up, irrespective of our discipline or branch. For this reason it is important for language teachers to be aware of the latest and best equipment and to have a full knowledge of what is available in any given situation. Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures.

There are many techniques applicable in various degrees to language learning situation. Some are useful for testing and distance education, and some for teaching business English, spoken English, reading, listening or interpreting. The teaching principle should be to appreciate new technologies in the areas and functions where they provide something decisively new useful and never let machines takeover the role of the teacher or limit functions where more traditional ways are superior. There are various reasons why all language learners and teachers must know how to make use of the new technology. Here we also need to emphasize that the new technologies develop and

disseminate so quickly that we cannot avoid their attraction and influence in any form

Analysis on Necessity of Application of Multimedia Technology to English Teaching

- To Cultivate Students' Interest in Study

Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information besides, with such characteristics as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities.

- To Promote Students' Communication Capacity

Traditional teaching has hampered students' capacity to comprehend certain language and also understanding to structure, meaning and function of the language, and makes the students passive recipients of knowledge, so it is hard to achieve the target of communication. With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives, The PPT courseware activate students' thinking; the visual and vivid courseware rand help them to transforms English learning into capacity cultivation. And such in-class activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates can also offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students. So multimedia technology teaching has uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice.

- To Widen Students' Knowledge to Gain an Insightful Understanding to Western Culture.

The multimedia courseware can offer the students abundant information; more plentiful than textbooks, and help them to get of displays vivid cultural background, rich content and true-to-life language materials, which are much natural and closer to life. Not only could learners improve their listening ability, but also learn the western culture. Grasping information through various channels can equip; the students with knowledge and bring about information-sharing among students and make them actively participate in class discussion and communication.

- To Improve Teaching Effect

Multimedia teachings enrich teaching content and make the best of class time and break the "teacher-centered" teaching pattern and fundamentally improve class efficiency. Due to large classes it is difficult for the students to have speaking communication. The utilization of multi-media sound lab materializes the individualized and co-operative teaching. The traditional teaching model mainly emphasized on teachers' instruction, and the information provided is limited due to traditional classes. On the contrary, multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information.

- To Improve Interaction Between Teacher and Student

Multimedia teaching stresses the role of students, and enhances the importance of "interaction" between teachers and students. A major feature of multimedia teaching 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. Using multimedia in context creation creates a good platform for the exchange between teachers and students, while at the same time providing a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model. In this way, teachers in the classroom no longer blindly input information and force students to receive it in a passive way.

- Creates a Context for Language teaching

Multimedia teaching creates a context for language teaching. This method makes the class lively and interesting, as well as optimizing the organization of the class. Multimedia has its own features such a s visibility and liveliness. During the process of multimedia English teaching, sounds and pictures can be set together, which enhances the initiative of both teachers and students, When using multimedia software, teachers can use pictures and images to enrich the content of classes, and also imagine different contexts in the process of producing teaching courseware, Students in the class can use multimedia to understand the class in a clear way. Through the whole interactive process, it is apparent that using multimedia in ELT is effective in nurturing students' interest in learning English, as well as enhancing teachers' interest in English teaching. Through Multimedia and network technology we can offer students not only rich, sources of authentic learning materials, but also an attractive and a friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant sounds, which to a large extent overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English.

- To Provide Flexibility to Course Content

In addition, multimedia teaching is also flexible. It is obvious that the context can be created not only in the classroom, but also after class. Multimedia language teaching can also create a multimedia language environment for the purpose of conducting language teaching. English teaching itself must focus on the guidance of teachers and be student-centered, which we believe is one of the principles for language teaching. Students are bound to have some problems in classroom teaching, which can be addressed under the guidance of teachers. In such circumstances, students can use the new technology to their advantage, such as manipulating the network to contact teachers, and receiving answers by email.