

LATEST TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE STIMULATION OFFOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

The objective of the article is to throw light on the significant role of modern technology in stimulating foreign language teaching. Despite many approaches and methods, a foreign language teaching has to overcome many hurdles. While the mother tongue acquisition takes place in a natural setting, foreign language, in many cases remains a foreign language for the learners with certain difficulties in mastering it. The pull of the mother-tongue is a problem to be reckoned with. The problems of learning and teaching foreign languages are highlighted in the article.

The use of the latest technology can help teachers to a considerable extent to facilitate foreign language teaching. The revolutionary strides of modern technology have to be effectively put to use. Modern technology can motivate group learning and distance learning. Weakness can be converted into strength and productivity can be boosted with the aid of modern technology. A multi-media approach is considered a revolutionary approach. The internet is highly useful in foreign language teaching.

Keywords: hurdle, innovation technology, multi-media approach, pull of the mother-tongue, stimulation.

Аннотация

В статье освещены проблемы изучения и преподавания иностранных языков в целом, и рассмотрена роль современных технологий в стимулировании обучения иностранным языкам, в частности. Преподаватели сталкиваются с различными проблемами при обучении иностранному языку, несмотря на множество подходов и методов. В то время как изучение родного языка происходит в естественной обстановке, иностранный язык во многих случаях остается чужим для учащихся, испытывающих определенные трудности в его усвоении. Влияние родного языка – это проблема, которую следует принимать во внимание.

Использование новейших технологий может в значительной степени помочь учителям в обучении иностранным языкам. Необходимо эффективно использовать революционные достижения современной технологии, т.к. они помогают стимулировать как групповое, так и дистанционное обучение.

Ключевые слова: влияние родного языка, инновационные технологии, мультимедийный подход, препятствие, стимулирование.

Introduction

The article advocates the effective use of modern technology in teaching foreign languages, explaining the key factors, which motivate the learners when modern methods based on technology are employed. It also throws light on the major advantages of the technology-based approach. The concept of using various aspects of the latest technology in education has made revolutionary strides. However, the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated the use of technology with online classes becoming the order of the day. Learners and teachers have been confined to online class rooms recently. But for the aid of technology, the field of education from kindergarten to post-graduate level would have come to a standstill. This would have had a very undesirable impact on society. It is heartening to note that the use of modern technology in teaching has been considerably successful in rising to the occasion and meeting the unprecedented challenges.

The phenomenon has been worldwide not restricted to a few countries. United States, Britain, the countries of the European Union, all the Asian countries including India were left with no choice other than resorting to the online mode of education. Many eyebrows were raised against the concept at the beginning stages. However, it can be said that by and large the learners and teachers have got accustomed to the new practice and made remarkable headway, setting aside our worries. It can be even said that some learners and teachers mastered the process easily and continued to sustain their interest.

Meeting challenges in the online scenario

However, any sense of complacency has to be ruled out. There are challenges and they have to be faced with determination. Comprehensive training has to be imparted to both learners and teachers in every aspect of the use of latest technology and online classroom method. As part of the study, the writer has identified the crucial challenges in the use of a technology-based foreign language teaching method. The article, *Task-based Language Teaching in Online Abinitio Foreign Language Classrooms*, which was published in the *Modern Language Journal* has been helpful in this regard. This article focuses on relevant surveys and interviews with both learners and teachers.

The technologically competent teacher will have to master an exhaustive range of skills and competencies. These teachers have to focus on the present scenario with the aim of stimulating to the foreign language learners in order to enhance their language skills. New education tools and their remarkable contributions in the pursuit of foreign language inculcation have been discussed. Blended learning, virtual classrooms, and learning management systems are examples of technology being adapted to language learning by teachers. Effective use of the latest technology can motivate language learners,

especially the new generation of language learners. It is a highly competitive world and the new learners and their teachers have to get updated constantly.

Modern technology and foreign language teaching

Modern technology and foreign language teaching methods have been connected in many ways for quite some time. Especially the last quarter of the twentieth century and the two decades of the twenty first century have witnessed the technological surge in the field of language teaching technology provides learners all over the world with language learning resources. However, it cannot replace the teacher completely. It only helps and complements the role of the teacher. A foreign language teacher has a challenging task. A whole new language has to be taught. The subtle rules of grammar and the different standards of foreign culture pose special problems. With the advance of technology foreign language learning could be made visible. An interactive and real-life manner can be introduced in imparting foreign language education with the aid of modern technology.

Additional resources are provided to teachers with technology tools. The interactive nature can engage the learners if the teacher is resourceful and capable. More opportunities are provided for the application of language. Access even to remote areas, which have net connectivity, interactive and collaborative learning are major advantages. Teacher is helped by technology to complement the traditional methods and deliver the goods effectively. There are tech-based tools like music and videos to facilitate foreign language teaching and learning. Audio listening exercises could be highly productive. Pictures, intonations and gestures could be effectively combined to help learners understand the target foreign language better. There are problems in teaching the foreign language pronunciation. The pull of the mother-tongue, learner's first language is a barrier to be overcome. Technology can go a long way in overcoming the hurdles in this area also.

Educational websites like Quizlet and FluentU focus on many vital areas. Fun activities can stimulate interest in learning grammar, which is otherwise a cumbersome procedure. Collaborative tools such as Facebook and Google classrooms can help learners use the language they are learning in an interestingly interactive way. Various apps on smartphones and tablets such as Duolingo, FluentU and Memrise have made their contributions in language learning. Having influenced every aspect of our lives, technology is a boon for foreign language learning and teaching. Better listening and speaking can be achieved as audio programs help students hear how exactly the spoken foreign language is used by the native speakers concerned. Audio programs can be used on any device with the audio component like computer, tablet or smartphone.

The online process helps distance education considerably. Valuable learning materials can be identified with the help of Internet. Learning can be made more fascinating with the help of power point presentation, audio and video recording and short films. However, technology has to be used in a judicious manner. Dependence on human element with

motivating voice, empathy and warmth of the teacher is very important in imparting worthwhile education.

Pandemic and the popularity of new academic tools

Covid19 pandemic made its appearance in India in the beginning of 2020. It has upset our education system considerably. Educational institutions were shut down all over the world and the only way out was recourse to the online mode of teaching and learning. It is reported that approximately 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries were affected by the onslaught of the pandemic. Both developed and developing countries in the world had to cope up with the new challenging situation. Indian education system was disrupted and authorities were swift in switching over to the new mode with the help of technology.

Digital educational tools

All educational institutions have been developing useful software with the aid of latest technology. Many digital; educational tools are available for teachers and students today. What is important is that they must be properly utilized to achieve the desired ends. FluentU is effective in making language teaching highly personalized. FluentU's online immersion programme is effective both inside and outside the classroom. An interesting part is FluentU's 'Learn Mode', which converts videos into language learning lessons and it is significant that the lessons are fully personalized. Video clips can assist the language teachers considerably. FluentU has videos for different skills. Definitions based on the context, audio pronunciation and numerous examples are highly helpful. FluentU also provides inspiration for long-term projects with a creative approach.

Edmodo is a remarkable technological tool. Socrative is a system of student evaluation. Project is specially created for multi-media presentation and helps the foreign language learners to understand the learning material with comparative ease. Ted-ed is a creative technique with the collaboration of teachers, students and animators. The pronunciation of the target language is facilitated through this. CK12 is a website that enables access to academic books and foreign language texts. Class dojo helps improve student behavior. With the feedback from students, teachers realize the difficulties faced by students and takes corrective steps. Educlipper is an educational tool, which facilitates the exchange of study materials among teachers and learners. Animoto is a software used for teaching which helps understanding the content of foreign language easily and fast. Sound Note is another product of technology, which is helpful in learning pronunciation for the foreign language learners.

Podcasting is a way of distributing audio files through the Internet. After downloading the podcast or audio file, it can be listened on a computer or transferred to portable devices like I pod, portable Media Player, a mobile phone or a Personal Digital Assistant. This offers flexible delivery of learning resources. The introduction of podcasting facilitates the use of audio resources in learning and teaching. Besides, podcasting is easy and

cheap. Modern tools of technology are put to widespread use around the globe for foreign language teaching and academic training. It is inevitable that educational system should move towards adoption of modern technology. The impact of the pandemic Covid19, which continues to disrupt the traditional mode of teaching, has accelerated the adoption of technology.

Technology in language learning used in educational institutions the world over has made mastering foreign languages easy. Students consider the technological tools effective and attractive. Voice recognition and multi-media exercises that are interactive help students become active, involved learners. Online educational platforms facilitate making list of students, management of different courses, evaluation and even administrative functions. Student accounts can be activated, groups can be formed and regular communications made with ease. There are applications to monitor student's progress. Teachers can design various tests also. Learning foreign language in a classroom is more productive and effective.

The virtual white board enables teachers to share images, videos, sound clips and apps in a virtual classroom environment. It can also be utilized for bringing virtual guest lecturers into the classroom making use of video chatting software like skype. The present scenario is witnessing a drastic change in the approach to teaching with interactive smart boards and tablets fully loaded with apps suitable for language learning. Modern technology opens the door to hands-on learning in the traditional classroom. Grammar lessons have become highly interactive and conversational practice has become more lively. Tablets can be used as devices for note taking. Quizlet is a site that helps create a wide range of materials for learning, which can be accessed on Android and IOS devices. Flashcards can be created and interactive activities for teaching grammar and vocabulary can be made exciting with drills and games through Quizlet. Imovie is a remarkable app for ios and Mac users. It helps create short films and intuitive editing. It can be effectively used to improve the quality of speaking-based lessons in English teaching. "The English We Speak" is a brief podcast based on vocabulary that is hosted by the BBC. This is very useful for improving the vocabulary of learners. Virtual Field Trips can be very interesting and exciting for learners. They could be fascinating literary adventures for the learners into the world of great masters of literature like Shakespeare.

In short, modern technology can be used in endless, interesting, exciting and effective ways to teach foreign languages.

As the new digital educational tools have revolutionized the educational scenario, it is also heartening to note that it has strengthened the educational system, which was caught unaware by the pandemic that came unexpectedly, and yielded satisfactory results.

In the midst of the Covid19, crisis, the International Literacy Day was observed on 8 September 2020. The International Literacy Day was first observed after the declaration to this effect, by the UNESCO's General Conference in 1966. It is observed

to promote literacy around the world. According to the UNESCO statistics, 773 million adults and young people around the world still lack basic literacy skills. The lockdown because of the Covid19 pandemic has been almost throughout the world and it has been also recognized that more than ninety percent of learners and teachers were adversely affected. Quite significantly UNESCO announced the theme of International Literacy Day as “Literacy Teaching and Learning in Covid19 Crisis and Beyond” for the International Literacy Day 2020. (Times of India September 8, 2020) Latest digital educational tools have to transform India’s education system for the benefit of the country’s population. At present, India is the second largest English speaking country in the world and English is the generally accepted global language of communication. Competency based English language teaching is the need of the hour as far as India is concerned. Latest technology can be utilized for this purpose and the result will be highly productive.

Problems of learning and teaching foreign languages

The article tries to bring into focus the problems of learning and teaching foreign languages as well. As English proficiency of vital importance in getting good employment, let us look at the problems encountered by the learners in acquiring English language skills. English grammar has its own complexities and getting a mastery of English grammar and structure poses certain problems for the learners. English vocabulary is a crown as well as a curse. It is a crown because it is very vast and provides the opportunity to learn many alternate options and improve the learner’s fluency and accuracy. It is a curse in the sense that unless the person is able to use the right word in the right context, he or she will not be able to communicate properly. There is every possibility of being misunderstood also.

The slangs and colloquialisms of English also present problems for learners. Pronunciation is another crucial area. A foreign language will have certain sounds, which are not there in the learner’s mother-tongue. English patterns of stress and intonation are of great importance. Similarly, every foreign language has its own distinct features.

Conclusion

The main objective of the article is to throw light on the significant role of modern technology in stimulating foreign language teaching. In spite of many approaches and methods that are practiced by various experts in the field, foreign language teaching has to overcome many hurdles. While the mother-tongue acquisition takes place in a natural setting enabling the learner to pick it up easily, foreign language acquisition is beset with innumerable problems. The first language or mother-tongue would have formed certain indelible impressions in the brain. After this stage only, the foreign language or second language is introduced and its adoption is affected by the interference of the first language or mother-tongue. Differences in sounds, variations in structures and the pull of the mother- tongue are hurdles to be reckoned with and overcome in foreign language learning.

It is heartening to see that modern technology has been used effectively for the last couple of decades to overcome many stumbling blocks in foreign language teaching and learning. It is very important to impart exhaustive training for teachers of foreign languages in the use of modern digital tools. Awareness regarding the availability of the useful digital tools to master foreign languages has to be created among the learners of foreign languages. Improved versions of technological tools are introduced frequently. Foreign language teachers have to update themselves with the improved versions that keep coming at a fast pace. This is essential to stimulate foreign language teaching and realize the desired results. Undoubtedly, the teacher's attitude and ability to motivate are of paramount importance.

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