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## Teaching Language Through Technology: Issues, Challenges and Perspectives

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### Abstract

Technology has brought tremendous changes in teaching and learning process. Both teachers and learners are no more dependent on the traditional methods of teaching and learning. Materials are available in the form of textbooks as well as in the online mode. With the help of technology, novel ways of teaching and learning methods are being used by teachers to make pedagogy/teaching more effective and successful. The motivation of learners is also increasing day by day with the advancement in technology. In the light of the above discussion, this paper will try to highlight the importance and relevance of technology in teaching and learning in modern times. It delves into issues like how technology can help teachers and learners to make their teaching and learning more motivating and interesting. The paper explores the tools and techniques which teachers can use in the classroom to hone different skills among the learners. An attempt would be made to highlight the issues and challenges of teachers in handling and using technology for maximum outcome in teaching and learning. As a sample, the researcher provides a lesson plan for teaching 44 sounds of English language through the use of various gadgets. Finally, the paper will also throw light on the status and scope of technology in different contexts of teaching and learning.

**Key words:** Use of technology, motivation, techniques, outcome.

### Introduction

The advancement of technology has transformed every field. From Social, economic, political and educational, technology has brought a tremendous change in these spheres. It has widened the scope and provided the better understanding of things. In this regard, Graddol is of the opinion that “technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture.” (16) It means technology has become an important necessity of human life. Our daily life related to education, science and culture has become easy and time saving. In the education sector, the integration of technology has brought a rapid change in the process of teaching/learning of English. As pointed out by Richards:

The landscape of language teaching has been transformed in recent years. While only a few years ago the primary context and resources used in language teaching were the classroom, textbooks and the tape-recorder or video player, today's learners inhabit a different world. Interactive whiteboards, mobile devices, computers and the internet are increasingly viewed as integral and necessary component of the teaching and learning process and teachers are challenged to discover effective ways of integrating technology into their lessons. (18)

Hence, the use of different modern gadgets like android phones, laptops, computers, and projectors for teaching purpose is doing wonders in an educational field. In language teaching-learning, the use of technology has proved very beneficial in promoting the teaching-learning ability of teachers and learners.

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Learners are showing a deep motivation by using technology to enhance their language skills. In this context, the integration of technology is being realized as a tool by which teachers and learners can achieve their optimum teaching-learning objectives. It is considered as an important tool in the hands of teachers and learners to exploit and enhance their skills. Both teachers and learners find it interesting than the traditional methods of teaching like use of blackboard, writing answers on the notebook. Though these methods have their own benefits but merely depending on these methods/techniques is making the teaching/learning boring and dull. As pointed out by Daniel "The tools enhance and facilitate the learning process. This gives the learner a reason to use the application, and along the way, the learner understands how the application works. Active learning is rarely a clean, neat process. Students engaged in such a process can create busy, noisy, and messy classrooms. It's important to recognize that this kind of learning takes practice -- for both the teacher and the students." (2287)

Presently, the use of technology is encouraged and advocated by language experts and institutions after a serious study in the form of research projects which have showed great advantages in teaching and learning. Technology provides a considerable scope for teachers to increase and assess the learner's ability. It bridges the gap between what is in the syllabus and what motivates learners to engage them in and outside the class. So, the benefits of using technology appeals students to their visual senses which helps them retain information in a better way. In the language classroom the lessons of phonetics, grammar and body language can be more interesting and enlightening rather than merely delivering through the blackboard, lecture method and notebooks/textbooks. From the above discussion, it can be argued that the integration of technology with language teaching-learning has a great scope to motivate students and make learning more interesting and enlightening. "Digital technologies provide access to language and culture and also a means of self-expression through language." (qtd in Scarino and Liddicoat 66). It is not only a tool to inculcate different language skills but also makes learners conscious of other cultures by watching movies, dramas and documentaries.

The challenges in using technology in the language classroom can be myriad in different contexts. For instance, the application of technology in the remote and rural areas is very difficult for a teacher due to the lack of proper electricity. Thus, the integration of technology can be ineffective without these basic facilities in an institution. Moreover, there is also dearth of trained teachers who can use technology for the maximum benefit. In such environment, students get demotivated rather than motivated. Hence, there is a need that smart classrooms should be established with proper facility like electricity during the working hours in institutions. Moreover, teachers should be trained to use technology in the language classrooms.

### **Tools and Techniques for Smart Pedagogy-Learning in the Language Classroom**

#### **i. Tools for Smart-Pedagogy:**

Modern technology offers useful tools which ensure us better learning environments for teachers and learners. The various tools which technology provides us include Computer, Smart Board, iPod, Laptop, Tablet, Android Phone and Kindle etc. are taking the place of textbooks and libraries. The incorporation of these gadgets is making teaching and learning process fascinating for both teachers and learners. The use of projectors, interactive white-board is proving very beneficial for learners. Scarino and Liddicoat is of the opinion that, "Technologies provide enhanced opportunities to interact with speakers of the target language in a variety of ways – websites, emails, videoconferences, podcasts, music and video streaming, etc." (56) With the help of social media like Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp and Messenger, learners are motivated for discussion and debates with peer groups without any hesitation. They get easily connected to each other which help them to remain updated and engaged with their class work. This kind of involvement can help them individually to develop a social bonding with each other.

With the help of different search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing etc., learners are able to explore wide range of materials without investing much money and time. As a result, it creates an opportunity for learners to increase the level of understanding about the topics given by a teacher. These tools can also be used by teachers and learners for evaluating and assessing different skills. With the help of these tools, learners get a wide opportunity to shape their language learning skills.

## ii. Techniques in the Classroom:

Techniques refer to the actual presentation/implementation of materials employed by teachers in the classroom. Before entering in the classroom a teacher is loaded with some presumptions which are in the back of his/her mind. The actual representation of teachers are reflected by applying different tools in the classroom in the form of activities, authentic materials, teaching aids etc. For achieving learning objectives, a teacher is equipped with a good lesson plan which is very crucial for his successful teaching and learning outcomes.

Here I am providing a lesson plan to show how a teacher can use technology to teach pronunciation to the undergraduate students at AMU. Through this lesson plan the aim is to suggest the actual implementation of technology in the classroom. How a teacher can employ various techniques to teach pronunciation to the students and reflect the various challenges during the course of teaching and learning? The lesson plan provided here keeps in mind all the contexts like background of the students, efficiency level, heterogeneous class, infrastructure etc. I am offering this lesson plan as a student at the undergraduate level at AMU and the approach and techniques employed by teachers to teach language through technology in the classroom. On the basis of my experience, the lesson plan is being suggested as a model. The limitation of this lesson plan is that it cannot be applied in every situation. It can only provide us some insights and perspective about the use of technology to the undergraduate students at AMU and at other situations. Also, the different techniques suggested in the lesson plan can vary from one teacher to another. The effective lesson plan will be decided by as per the environment of the classroom, background of students, infrastructure etc.

### LESSON PLAN

**Name of the Teacher:**

**Number of students:**

**Level of the students: Undergraduate (BA 1<sup>st</sup> year, General English)**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Duration: 45 minutes</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Lesson No:</b>
<b>Lesson Aim: (General)</b>	44 Sounds of English Language	English	undergraduate	
<b>Lesson Aim</b>	1. Teaching of pronunciation			
<b>Specific objectives:</b>	1. Students will be able to know the 44 sounds of English. 2. Students will be able to learn the pronunciation of the given words or sounds. 3. Students will be able to learn the use of dictionary for pronunciation.			
<b>Assumption:</b>	1. The students might find it difficult to pronounce the sounds correctly. 2. The students might encounter difficulties to pronounce some			

	sounds because of some regional influence.				
<b>Anticipated problems:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students may remain silent.</li> <li>2. Some students may feel shy.</li> <li>3. Some Students might find it difficult to pronounce some sounds.</li> </ol>				
<b>Time</b> (Duration of 45 Minutes.):	<b>Stage &amp; Aim</b>	<b>Interaction and Pattern</b>	<b>Teacher's Activity</b>	<b>Learners' activity</b>	<b>Materials:</b>
5 (Minutes)	<b>Step 1. Warm up:</b> Have you ever listened anybody who speaks good English?	Teacher's talk 40%, students' talk 60%	Will listen the responses from the students.	Students will listen and give responses.	Laptop/Mobile Phone, Language Lab, worksheets, Smart Board.
20 (Minutes)	<b>Step.2</b> Teacher will distribute the worksheets on the 44 sounds of English.	Teacher's talk 40% Student's talk 60%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher will begin his/her lesson by introducing the 44 sounds one by one by playing the Phone/Laptop</li> <li>2. Teacher will clarify the doubts of students wherever students face problems.</li> </ol>	1. Students will listen carefully the video.	
15 (Minutes)	<b>Step 3.</b> Now students will be asked to practice the same sounds in groups.	Teacher's talk 50% Learners' talk 50%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instructions will be given regarding the exercise.</li> <li>2. Teacher will assist the students wherever students mispronounce any sounds or words.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will answer the worksheet.</li> <li>2. They will respond and discuss the answers with a teacher.</li> </ol>	
5 (Minutes)	<b>Summing Up</b>	Teacher's talk 80% Students' talk 20%	Conscious students about the importance of	Students will listen carefully to	

			pronunciation and the ways for improvement.	the teacher.	
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The lesson plan presented above is a roadmap for a teacher to present their teaching through technology. A teacher can modify his lesson plan as per the strength of students, infrastructure, background of students and as per their attitudes. The implementation of this lesson plan can give us an idea regarding the benefits of technology and its challenges and the necessary work to be done in future. As shown above, the lesson plan does not specify the strength of the students and suggests the implementation of this lesson plan at the undergraduate level at AMU and other situations.

#### **Challenges for Teachers and Learners:**

The main problem in Indian colleges/universities which teachers and students are facing is the heterogeneous classroom, poor infrastructure in schools, colleges and universities. The problem compounds when a teacher has to face a heterogeneous classroom. It is very difficult for any teacher to teach and control the classroom where there is a huge gap as for as student's efficiency and level of understanding is concerned. In this situation, it becomes a great hindrance for a teacher to present his/her material in an effective way.

From the above discussion, it can be argued that sometimes a teacher can encounter problems while using technology in the classroom. If a teacher is not well aware how to employ technology in the classroom, it can badly affect the teaching outcomes. It can affect the motivation and interest of students. So, there is a need to train teachers and make them conscious about the new trends and aspects of smart teaching/pedagogy so that they can deal with the difficulties faced in the classroom. There should be yearly orientation courses for junior and senior teachers to update their knowledge with the latest and best tools to be used in teaching. The aim of all this is to make teachers overcome their problems which will give some relief for course/syllabus designers for improvement in exploring the better techniques and strategies for teachers to follow in the classroom.

Moreover, it is not an easy job for a teacher to handle a blended learning in a less advanced technology environment or in a large classroom if not organized carefully. As a student of ELT at AMU, I personally observed that teachers in the classroom were unable to attract and motivate the students towards effective learning because of their limited knowledge of technology and poor infrastructure inside the classroom. Secondly, teachers in India focus more on the theoretical knowledge rather than making the practical application of things. So, there is a need to make teachers conscious about the different aspects of smart teaching/pedagogy.

The other challenges by using technology are that it can affect the students' creativity, thinking process if not employed carefully in the classroom. A teacher has to make a balance by organizing the material in such a way to make the best use of students' creativity and thinking process. A teacher should not only give information to the students and learners should not become passive learners.

It is also being argued that the use of technology can reduce the importance of teachers in the future. But the fact is that a learner cannot achieve what he/she wants to achieve unless they will not be guided a teacher. The incorporation of technology does not mean that it will devalue the teacher. It just becomes a facilitator between a teacher and a student.

#### **Conclusion**

Thus, the use of technology nowadays plays an important role in teaching-learning process. It offers a lot to meet the needs and demands of teachers and learners to excel in their carriers. But there is a need to train teachers how to make use this technology in a better way.

There should be a proper guidance of teachers regarding the new instruments which can be incorporated in the teaching-learning programs. It is also the responsibility of teachers to aware themselves about the new methods and techniques in technology.

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