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IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: DIGITAL PEDAGOGY FOR GLOBAL CITIZENS

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Abstract

The advent of technology has significantly impacted language teaching and learning approaches, necessitating a fusion of virtual platforms and traditional resources like textbooks and classrooms. This integration has become indispensable in the constantly evolving global landscape. The emergence of innovative digital models for teaching and learning has opened up new possibilities and experiences. Digital pedagogy is gradually replacing traditional language teaching methods, enabling blended teaching, flipped learning, student-paced learning, learner-centric learning, self-learning, collaborative learning, project-based learning, VAK learning, gamification, and more. To meet these dynamic requirements, various futuristic digital tools for teaching and learning are gaining popularity. This research paper aims to explore the significance, scope, and influence of digital pedagogy in the digital era. Additionally, it investigates the effectiveness of different tools available for making the teaching and learning of the English language engaging and enjoyable, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The paper also addresses the challenges posed by this paradigm shift in English language education for undergraduate students.

Keywords: Technological revolution, teaching- learning experiences, digital pedagogy, digital language learning tools.

Introduction

The digital revolution in many ways has transformed our lives. This transformative power of technology has not only compelled its stakeholders to adapt to the changing scenarios but has opened up avenues and opportunities for growth and productive outcomes. As a result new techniques and pedagogies are emerging, breaking the monotony in the educational field. This breakthrough has transformed language teaching-learning from 'classroom-teacher-talk-chalk' to an engaging, virtual- ICT assisted flipped and blended classroom experience. Today Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) backed by digital pedagogies and digital tools has redefined the language teaching-learning approaches. However, while accepting new methodologies and tools one should not get carried away but take enough caution to rationalise its use

and purpose before incorporating it in curriculum or classroom. For the purpose of making a judicious choice, understanding the scope and meaning of digital pedagogy is vital. Awareness of various digital tools, its functions and purpose also equips and assists teachers in designing lesson plans, content delivery and assessments.

Digital pedagogy is defined generally as the study and use of contemporary digital technologies in teaching and learning. It is applied to online, hybrid and face- to face learning environments. Along with traditional tools, digital pedagogy amalgamates digital tools into its fold and acknowledges them as inherent and viable sources for information and knowledge dissemination. This multimedia-multimodal methodologies provide scope for any learners to enjoy greater liberty and flexibility in learning at their comfortable pace and space. Thereby

placing students at the centre of the teaching-learning process.

Implementation of digital pedagogy and digital tools in classrooms enhances the capacity of language learners to be active agents of learning. Let us examine some of the popular digital pedagogies in the light of language learning which has made teaching-learning enriching and intriguing:

LAB based learning: In this approach students practice hands on every theoretical and fundamental concept after the completion of units. Learners here are exposed to various tools available in the industry, leading to experiential learning. Language learning can happen using various digital tools which can be accessed via mobile phones, computers or by setting up a language lab. English language software can be installed on systems in the lab and learning can happen based on individuals' competency using modules designed as per CEFR levels (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Blended Learning: It is an approach in which traditional teaching learning methods are blended with digital technology. This method can be made use of by language learners as well as teachers. This approach enables effective development of LSRW skills. Various digital tools such as explanatory videos and video clipping of movies, audio books, pictures, graphs, YouTube, podcast, online practice materials and lesson plans made available on British Council, Cambridge University Press, IELTS etc., website can be utilised to develop language competencies and assess student's progress.

Flipped learning: Flipped learning is also a type of blended learning in which students engage in reading relevant materials at home and solve problems or practice exercises during the class. This method helps language learners to internalise the concepts, understand the rules of grammar, refer to a dictionary for meaning and create storyboards or notes on the concepts learnt. They also identify difficult areas and complex ideas in the content that can be discussed during the class.

Student paced learning: This approach allows students to design their own learning schedules according to their interest, learning pace and space. This method reduces stress among the learners in grasping concepts at one go and on par with others. In this mode the role of an instructor is to provide guidance, feedback and tailor the

content to learners' needs. Here creating and delivery of language learning content becomes easy as LMS acts as a repository that allows users to store and track information in one place. It also assists in monitoring students' participation and assessing their performance. LMS (Learning Management System) such as Google Classrooms, Moodle, Edmodo, Blackboard Course Sites, Schoology etc., to name a few are widely used in higher education institutions.

Student centred learning: It is an approach in which learners are active agents of learning as they plan, implement and assess their learning outcome. They learn how to think, solve problems, evaluate, analyse, argue, form opinions etc. Learner centred approach promotes self-learning and peer learning. These methods in language learning have proved more beneficial than traditional methods. Group discussion, case study, role playing a movie or short play or story, browsing for information on specific topics and analysing it or writing reviews or participate in conversation and discussion offline or online via LMS or virtual platforms not only enrich learners' vocabulary, speech patterns, grammar structure but also promotes research culture and higher order thinking.

Self-learning: In the Self-learning approach, learners identify their learning needs, they set learning goals, find the necessary resources, and evaluate their own knowledge as their learning doesn't happen in a formal way. This method will improve learners' skills or knowledge in a particular area, and helps them apply their learning practically to solve problems or perform tasks. Here online courses such as Khan Academy, Coursera, edX, Udemy etc can be used in learning engagements. Additionally YouTube, TedEd, BBC Bitesize, Google videos, movies, interviews, sports news and reviews, debates and discussions etc can also be utilised by the learners to get an exposure to a variety of information which helps to improve their LSRW skills.

Collaborative learning: Collaborative learning is an educational approach which demands joint intellectual activity. It involves students working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts or find solutions to problems. Using this method, a language learner can develop language competencies by engaging in pairs or groups in language activities such as word building, unscramble, developing narratives, role play, presentations, mock interviews, situational conversation, public speaking, peer instructions, instruction manuals, content developing, brochure making, invitation making etc. Online tools such as Penpal, Google Forms, Quiz.com, Peerdeck, Socrative,

Canva, Interactive Slides, OBS etc., can be used for an engaging learning experience.

Project based learning: In this approach students have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills by engaging in projects based on challenges and problems they may face in the real world. Language learners can identify their challenges in developing language skills and engage in research or case study activity to find solutions to overcome them. Field visit to media centres, theatres to understand use of language in script writing, subtitle writing, report writing, anchoring, News reading or taking up minor translation projects and collaborating with students abroad or editing and proofreading assignments or e-content developing or creative writing engagements can prove fruitful in active language learning.

VAK learning: VAK is a modern teaching method where learners are divided into three categories: Visual (understands through seeing graphs, images and other visual aids), Audio (understands through hearing), and kinaesthetic (understands through feel or activity). In the digital era watching and learning through videos has become a popular medium of teaching. Students grasp fast when they see, hear or feel instead of reading the material. And also, a learner is not limited to any one of the media as they can use even all three mediums of instruction. A language learner can understand a text by listening to audio books, music, podcasts, reading print material or through pictures, videos etc.

Gamification: Teaching through games is one of the essential modern teaching methods that can make learning interesting and fun. This method employs well designed digital and non- digital games to enhance learning experience, language development, critical thinking and problem solving. Language learners can learn vocabulary, narrative, speech, pronunciation etc., through games. Some of the learning online gamification options are mindsnacks, FluentU, Languagenut, the language Game, Duolingo, English Skills, Word search Game, Word Connect, BBC Learning English, English Crossword etc.,

There are many advantages in implementing digital pedagogies and tools in the process of teaching and learning. One can benefit by engaging in learning in CALL without worrying about pace, space or cost. It can reduce travel time and cost and infrastructure challenges for teachers, students and organisations. Availability of updated and standardised programme and course material, liberty and flexibility in selection of content or planning

learning schedule, collaboration, video lectures which can be played multiple time for better comprehension, learning through games and quizzes, creating storyboards, mind maps etc has rejuvenated language learning experience.

However, we cannot ignore its limitations such as lack of internet facilities or good connectivity, device requirements to run the applications, economical constraint in owning devices, lack of technical knowhow, possibility of addiction or health Fig-2 issues due to excess screen time, social and emotional disconnect etc., which can seriously hinder effective implementation in teaching-learning engagements.

A fact-finding study was also conducted to understand the effectiveness of these pedagogies and tools among undergraduate language learners.

A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection. 30 teachers and 80 students responded to the questionnaire and gave their inputs on the same.

Findings and analysis:

Fig-1 gives the data of the teachers using innovative teaching pedagogies in regular classes. It indicates that 63% of the teachers do try to use new techniques of teaching while 37% of them rely on traditional methods in the regular classes. This shows that many teachers are still not oriented and confident enough to try new methods to make their teaching effective.

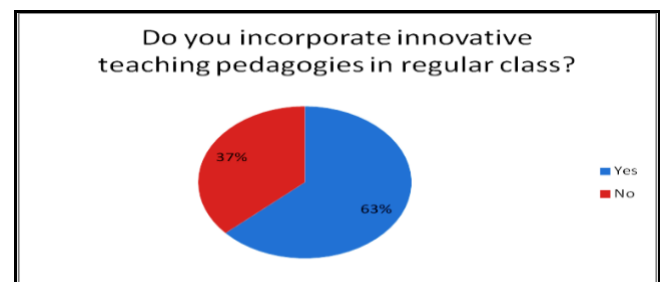


Fig-1

From fig-2, we get to know about the teachers' perception of incorporating technology in teaching and its effectiveness in making the students understand the concepts easily. While 70% of the respondents answered in the positive, 23% of them answered in the negative. At the same time, 13% of them were not sure of the effectiveness of technology in teaching.

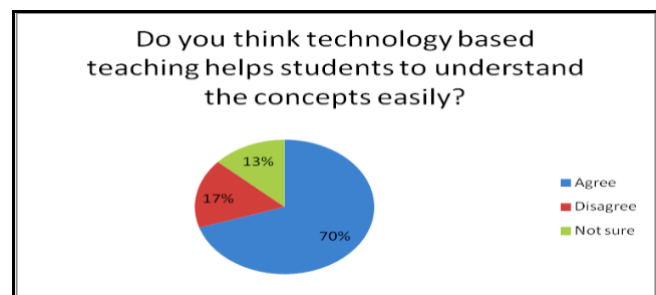


Fig-2

Fig-3 helps in understanding the barriers faced by teachers in incorporating new teaching pedagogies in regular classes. 17% of the educators expressed that they are not given sufficient training to use technology in the classroom whereas, 30% said that there is a lack of gadgets like computers, projectors etc. 13% of the educators also said that the high cost involved in purchasing these gadgets makes it difficult for them to use technology. Nearly 23% agreed that they are not aware of new technology and the difficulties involved in learning it makes it less likely to make use of it in classrooms. About 17% of the teachers are of the opinion that lack of student co-operation and support makes it difficult to try new pedagogies in teaching.

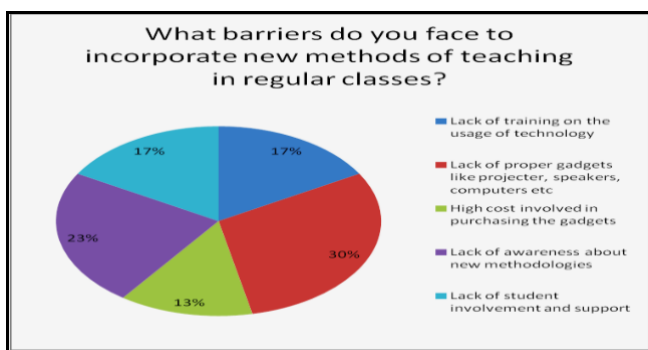


Fig-3

In the fig-4, we get to understand students' view on the effectiveness of teaching using technology. Around 56% of the students accepted that technology helps them to grasp the concepts in a better way, 26% of them do feel that it has any impact on their understanding of the concepts. Nearly 16% are not sure of the impact technology has on their comprehension skills.

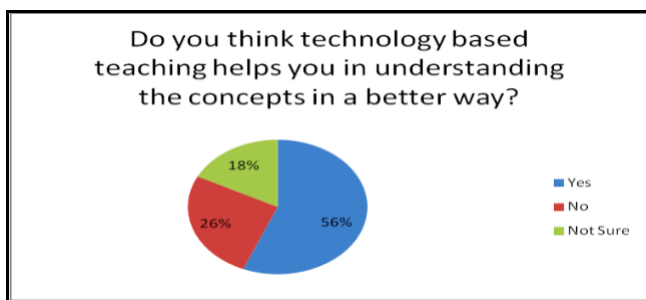


Fig-4

Recommendations

On the basis of the survey conducted, we can infer that a majority of the teachers as well as students opined that incorporating new pedagogies and technology based teaching makes the teaching-learning process more interesting and effective. Therefore, project-based teaching, blended learning, self-study exercises, experimental and experiential learning should be made a part of the curriculum to develop higher order skills among the

students. These methodologies also make the learning process student-centric giving more scope for the students to participate actively in the teaching-learning process.

Conclusion

From the above study, we can conclude that technology has got a great impact on 21st century educational experience. The New Education Policy of 2020 also emphasises on making learning student-centric with a blend of traditional and new methodologies in teaching. Emphasis is laid to develop online courses, MOOC and other online sites to enable students develop the habit of self-learning and collaborative learning. This shows the importance of technology to bring about quality and effectiveness in teaching so as to cater to the holistic development of the students.

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