



Humanising Teaching Language And Literature Through Efficient Use Of The Digital Platform

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Abstract

Advancements in technology in terms of Artificial Intelligence, Softwares, Mobile applications, etc has taken the disciplines such as education, cultural studies, film studies, comparative and multidisciplinary research to a level higher. Considering the contemporary society and the increasing competition in various spheres of learning and application, one cannot deny the role of technical and technological evolution. Specifically, in the field of education, we increasingly notice the inevitability of the impact these advancements in varied forms from email to e-learning to virtual classrooms or smart classrooms.

In the contemporary, the two separate entities, technology and communication has almost become inseparable. This means that they share mutual dependence and contribute to each other's growth and destruction. The present paper tries to analyse and evaluate the role of technological advancements in teaching and learning the important aspects of communication: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing . Further it attempts to trace the effects of modern educational trends, distinguish it from the traditional practices, thereby locating the role of technology in the process.

KEYWORDS: *Artificial intelligence, Softwares, Mobile applications, Contemporary society, Virtual classrooms.*

The English language has evolved from being the medium of colonial governance to an almost inevitable means of global communication in recent times. Similarly, foreign language learning, especially, English has progressed towards a more significant position from being merely a status symbol of the past. In this regard, the contemporary approach towards language acquisition is such that it fits and fixes the needs of the global learners with invariable levels, backgrounds and purposes.

In the Indian context, we find that the traditional methods of language teaching and acquisition are gradually yet steadily *replaced* by more modern and learner-oriented methods. However, the modern student-centred aspects are being predominantly seen as mere aiding elements and not the mainstream teaching modes. Traditional methods rely predominantly on the course/grammar texts that induce language through rules, whereas modern methods rely on approaches that practically enable the learner to deduce the structures through usage. Language or literature classrooms have evolved from being mere conjunction of fragmented structures in understanding the whole to an overall bird's eye view of the language system that enables understanding of its individual entities. Recently, it has become more of an acquisition of the *selective* skills of individual learners from the age-old *overall* skill-based drilling of language as such. Technically, in traditional methods, the follow-up and evaluation in traditional method of teaching which are assessments is seen as a separate activity while in



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the modern method, it is an activity integrated with teaching and learning, that occurs through observation.

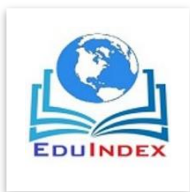
Ultimately, there is a need for understanding these ideas synchronically that will lead us to a broader perception that the questions we need to address in the modern context are: what the need of the hour is, and more importantly, the purpose for which that student is learning the language for. Technology and its advancements come to a major play at this point of approaching/understanding the teaching and learning a language.

Thus said, we arrive at Digital Humanities, one such quintessential area that promotes learning and teaching of humanities through technology. Digital Humanities that journeyed from the pioneering achievements of an English professor, Josephine Miles and a Jesuit scholar Roberto Busa, is grounded in approaching more conventional information and problems with rather fresh perspectives or means, thereby making the vast spheres of study easily accessible to the learners. This is what makes Digital Humanities a new and entertaining means of learning that suits the temperaments of the global contemporary. Digital Humanities as such is rooted in the technological advancements. In terms of *teaching* English language, such trends have moved it from English Language Teaching to Communicative Language Teaching.

As a means of assistance to learning language through listening and imitation of the speaker, tands for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a very important role presenting to the contemporary learners a myriad of online portals that help them equip themselves practically. In a broader sense, ICT is inclusive of telecommunication, broadcasting information through wired or wireless networks. Primarily, ICT helps in collecting, analyzing, interpreting and processing data. It is globally accessible, and covers a wide range of audience at a stipulated time and aids various aspects of education, irrespective of their age, needs, learning levels, capacities, etc.

The advancements of technology in the acquisition of language and analysis of literature include downloadable audio reader for variety of books from holy texts to different magazines, the screen readers that provide the apt pronunciation and the meaning of specific words which attempt to teach the learners independent of anyone's personal assistance. Providing education through ICT does not mean it would be humourless or hefty, it puts together the varied sources that enrich the learners' skills through diverse online and offline games/ interesting activities that enhances their skills in an innovative and insightful way.

In the digital era (21st century), education can be attained at fingertips through electronic gadgets and access to the internet. For instance, the educational website from different Universities across the world use online portals to edglobally. These classes are chosen by the learners on the basis of their personal interests. These courses are far more flexible than mainstream learning. These are time-efficient and accessible to the learners at anytime and anywhere. Online streaming uses different methods of teaching that intends to grab the attention of the learners who learn in the absence of a physical classroom and teacher-student setup. These can be in terms of pictorial/ audio-visual representations, deadline-specific assessment methods, all of which keep the virtual learner in track of the



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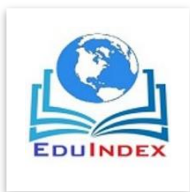
proceedings, participate actively beyond the multiple diversion scopes and internalize the concept in depth.

Audio-books, Video lectures, Podcasts, Module based E-courses, Google classroom, Powerpoint Presentations, Webinars, Blogs and Vlogs, Smart classrooms etc. are some tools that assist teaching. Tools like Webinar and Live Classrooms help the learner to interact and listen to diverse popular personalities even from their institutions. Learners are facilitated with opportunities to meet various resource persons, authors beyond geographical boundaries and have interactions to gain clarity on the subjects through the live chats facilitated by technological advancements. Apart from gaining ideas at fingertips from far-fetched sources, technological innovations like Google Classroom, Blogs and Vlogs provide for sharing perspectives, ideas, comments, reviews etc. Submitting the assignments through Google Classroom is in the vogue of many institutions as be of assistance or further inference to the co-learners apart from motivating inventive efforts in the study circle. Presently, Smart Classrooms, are popular assistance tools in most schools, making it more interesting and engaging by invoking the curiosity among young learners. The curiosity and critical aspects in terms of literature, for instance can be nurtured in all groups of learners by incorporation of film-based acquaintance to literature through smart classroom arrangement being made a part of the regular classrooms. Such teaching and sensitization to literature through an allied discipline imparts interest right from initial stages. It is by this we draw the major inference of the fact that the tools of ICT in the field of education are slowly *replacing* the mainstream rote-learning way of acquiring language and literature.

The Indian government has its hand in the ICT enabled learning through various online portals which significantly helps passionate and focussed students providing a range of accessible and efficient platforms beyond the shortcomings. Few such digital initiatives include SWAYAM, SWAYAMPRAKASH, INFLIBNET, NPTEL, GIAN, NDL, UAY, IMPRINT, Shodhganga, ePathsala, E- Shodhsindhu etc.

Every coin has its flip-side. Similarly, these technological platforms do have their own disadvantages. In most developing countries such as India, not all places have the accessibility to internet. In places with a rural majority, ICT enabled learning still lags due to lack of unperturbed access to internet connectivity therefore making it exclusive to the metropolitan and sub-urban areas. Additionally, virtual learning portals predominantly open up higher chances of distracting the learner through the irrelevant, non-academic contents that flash and pop now and then in the course of access. Another important drawback is that it isolates the learner from the external environment making them emotionally aloof. At once, the learner gets indulged in the closed environment, it would make them feel unappreciative of the physical world they live in. This, puts to test the philosophical and ethical grounds of such education approaches that almost materialize it rather than contributing to the overall enhancement of the ward rather by focusing on merely *selective* skill acquisition discouraging wholistic development as discussed earlier.

English language and its learning in the contemporary context cannot be confined to the structures it encompasses alone. Instead, it has to teach and learn the usage and its applicability in the context of the modern day-to-day reality. It is the modernity and everyday



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evolution phenomenon of the language and its applicability do we decipher the essentiality of technology as an aid. However, modernization and advancements do have their own shortcomings. Although modernity sufficiently aids the contemporary learning and teaching aspects, it doesn't account for the inclusive and more ethical grounds of the traditional methods. This doesn't mean that we need to trace back completely to tradition learning. Instead, it would be feasible and more appropriate if ICT is incorporated with the traditional approaches to language acquisition thereby humanize learning of language and literature thorough effective use of the digital forum. In this way, it becomes both inclusive and provides scope for improvement. Therefore, ICT aided learning is the best way to enrich learning and especially in the Indian social setup, interestingly take language to different groups of learners of the digital era.

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