Use of Multimedia Technology in Teaching and Learning communication skill": An Analysis.

Mr. Chirag Patel, Asst.Professor - SIT & Research Scholar.

Abstract. In Teaching and learning communication skills, we have a lot to choose from the world of technology: TV, CD Rom, Computers, C.A.L.L., the Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's. The last two decades have witnessed a revolution due to onset of technology, and has changed the dynamics of educational institutes, and has also influenced the educational system and the way people interact and work in the society. This rapid rising and development of information technology has offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. Using multimedia to create a context to teach communication skill has its unique advantages. As a result technology plays a very important role in teaching communication skill.

This paper tries to analyze the necessity of multimedia technology to communication skill teaching and also brings out the problems faced by using these technologies. It also aims to make English teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner.

Key Words: communication skill teaching, Multimedia Technology, Advantages, Disadvantages, Optimization, Strategies.

1. Introduction:

With the spread and development of English around the world, English is used as a second language in a country like India and for some people the 1st language. It enjoys a high prestige in the country. At present the role and status of English in India is higher than ever as evidenced by its position as a key subject of medium of instruction, curriculum. As the number of English learners is increasing different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. Use of authentic materials in the form of films, radio, TV has been there for a long time. It is true that these technologies have proved successful in replacing the traditional teaching. 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. At present the role and status of English is that it is the language of social context, political, socio cultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education. It is also a crucial determinant for university entrance and processing well paid jobs in the commercial sector. Since there are more and more English learners in India, different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. One method involves

multimedia in ELT 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 is utilized for the upliftment of modern styles; it 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.

2. Use of Technology in teaching communication skill:

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.

3. The Growth of ELT Through Technology:

English communication skill Teaching has been with us for many years and its significance continues to grow, fuel led,partially by the Internet. 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 communication 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 communication 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. 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. Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more colorful, stimulating lectures (new Horizons).

4. Analysis on Necessity of Application of Multimedia Technology in English communication Teaching:

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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 communication 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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 multimedia 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.

4.5. 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.

4.6. 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 communication skill 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 communication , as well as enhancing teachers'' interest in English communication teaching. As Zhang (2006:11.1)points out 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 communication skill.

4.7. 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 English communication 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.

5. Analysis on Problems Arising from Application for Multimedia Technology to English communication Teaching:

In spite of advantages of application of multimedia technology to English ccommunication teaching has to improve teaching effect and university students' overall capacities, there are many problems existing in practical teaching, such as:

5.1. Major Means Replaced by the Assisting One:

Application of multimedia technology is and assisting instrument to achieve the projected teaching effect While if totally dependent on, multimedia devices during teaching, the teachers may be turned into slaves to the multimedia and cannot play the leading role in teaching, It is observed in practice that a lot of teachers are active in multimedia technology application but

not proficient enough to handle it confidently. In class, they are standing by the computer and students are fixing their attention only on the screen, and therefore, there is no eye contact between teachers and students.. The trend of modern information and technology teaching appears to the extremity regardless of the essence of the traditional teaching. And hence, the notion of Creative Education is to be fully comprehended that modern educational techniques serves an assisting instrument rather than a target: and that should not dominate class. They are substitutes to effective teaching and learning.

5.2. Loss of Speaking Communication:

English communication analysis by the teachers are effective in conveying knowledge to the students from English pronunciation to comprehension, improving students' English thought patterns and oral expression, Whereas, the introduction of multimedia technology featuring audio, visual, textual effect fully meets audio and visual requirements of the students and enhance their interest, but it also results in lack of communication between teachers and students, replacement of teachers' voice by computer sound, and teachers' analysis by visual image and students have' few chances for speaking communication . With the favorable atmosphere by the mutual communication between teachers and students fading away, and sound and image of multimedia affecting students' initiative to think and speak, English class turns to course ware show and students are made viewers rather than the participants of class activities.

5.3. The restriction of Students'

Thinking Potential:

Teachers raise impromptu and real-time questions and guide the students to think, cultivate their capacity to discover and solve problems; however, due to over demonstration and pre-arranged order, the courseware lacks real-time effect and cannot give feedback. It ignores emphasis and importance in teaching; it also neglects instruction in students ' thinking , inspiring their paths of thinking, strengthening their capacity contemplating and solving problems. In this way, it should be noted that cultivation of students' thinking capacity should be the major objective in teaching and of using multimedia technology and it should not take up the students' time for thinking, analyzing and exploring questions.

5.4. Abstract Thinking Replaced by Imaginable Thinking:

The Process of cognition goes through perceptual stage and rational stage. It also applies to studying process. It is our hope that teaching makes students adopt the outlook cognition from perceptual recognition to rational apprehension, and greatly leap from perceptual thinking to rational thinking; therefore it is the major objective in teaching. To enhance the students' abstract thinking, the multimedia technology makes content easier, and with its unique advantages, it can clarify the emphasis in teaching. While if the image and imagination in students' mind were merely showed on the screen, their abstract thinking would be restricted and logical thinking would waste away, at present the decreased students' reading competence has become a major concern for reason that, textual words are replaced by sound and image, handwriting by keyboard input.

All in all, the multimedia as an assisting instrument, cannot replace the dominant role of teachers and it is part of a complete teaching process.

6. Suggestions and Strategies to the Existing Problems:

In Practical teaching. It is improper to duplicate the textual material simply to the screen so that the teacher's position is ignored In order to ensure the function of, multimedia in teaching. It should be noted that:

6.1. The Beauty of Courseware is not the Sole Pursuit:

It is proved through practice that adequate application of multimedia technology to teaching can make breakthroughs in class teaching. That is to say, during multimedia assisting teaching, teachers still play the leading role that their position could never be replaced by the computer. For instance, the introduction to each lesson and speaking communication are good way to improve students' listening and speaking which the computer cannot fulfill, Therefore, teachers' interpretation shall not be overlooked. Meanwhile, as a practical English communication should be used very often in class to cultivate the students' communicative competence, Multimedia, as an instrument for assisting teaching, serves the teachers despite its extraordinary effect, So teaching determines whether to adopt multimedia technology. Otherwise, the teachers were acting as the projectionist, clicking the screen.

6.2. The Computer Screen can't Substitute the Blackboard:

Some teachers take the computer screen as the blackboard, They have input exercises, questions, answers and teaching plans into the computer and display them piece by piece, without taking down anything on the blackboard or even the title of a lesson. It is known that teachers are supposed to simulate situations based on teaching and guide the students to communicate in English. Beside traditional writing on blackboard is concise and teachers can make adjustment and amendment to it if necessary. Furthermore, experienced teachers know well that a perfect courseware is an ideal project in mind, and that in practice, they need to enrich the content on the blackboard with emerging of new question raised by the students.

6.3. Power Point cannot Take the Place of Student's Thinking and Practices:

At present, most multimedia courseware mainly feature on image and animation of teaching materials in order to cause audio and visual effect, which lively displays the content of textual materials and helps the student deeply understand the texts. A problem remains that displaying of the content of texts in the PPT courseware cannot take the place of students' thinking or English communication in simulated circumstance, When working on and utilizing the courseware, we need to encourage the students to use their own mind and speak more, actively join in class practice,.

6.4. Multimedia Technology should not be Over used:

Some teachers may possess the improper concept that they would totally apply multimedia technology in their teaching. It is also believed that the more utilization of multimedia technology, the better class

atmosphere may grow, the more actively the students get involved in class participation, the more easily the material access to the students. Apparently, the students show some interest in leaning, but actually, they feel like looking on. In practice, the more unconscious attention the students pay. It is impossible to effectively train the students' language expression in class time. It is clear that in spite of advantages of application of multimedia technology, it assists in teaching.

7. Conclusion:

It is true that one of the ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the language learning, Context creation of ELT should be based on the openness and Accessibility of the teaching materials and information. Concerning the development of technology, we believe that in future, the use of multimedia English teaching will be further developed. The process of English communication learning will be m ore student-centered but less time-consuming. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students' applied English communication can be effectively cultivated, meaning that students' communicative competence will be further developed. In conclusion, we believe that this process can fully improve students' ideation and practical language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfill an effective result of teaching and learning. Barring a few problem areas multimedia technology can be used effectively in classrooms of ELT with proper computer knowledge on the

part of teachers, overcoming the finance problems in setting up the infrastructure and not allowing the teachers to become technophobes.

8. References:

[1] Language laboratories.(n.d). Retrieved December 02 2011, from aect The Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology Web site:
http ://www. aect. org/edtech/ed1/28/28-08.html

[2] Hiradhar,P.(2012). Effectiveness of technology-enabled language enhancement program to develop the written communication skills of ESL learners at tertiary level. . Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Sardar Patel University, India

[3] Zhanghongling (The development tendency of the modern foreign language teaching and the computer assisted instruction. Computer- Assisted Foreign Language Education 3.

[4] Brown, H.D. (2001). Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

[5] Madhvi(2009).Use of Language Lab in English Language learning/teaching. Retrieved from Articlesbase:Free Online Article Directory Website:
http://www.articlesbase.com/authors/madhavi/172504

[6] Manyard,J.(2007). How computer technology can promote learner autonomy? Retrieved from LASIG: Learner Autonomy Special Interest Group Website:
http://www.learnerautonomy.org/mynardh

andout.pdf.