ABSTRACT

The dynamic task of language teaching has adapted various teaching methods and techniques over the period of time. When the language professionals all over the world claim incorporating technology to be the best method, literature specialists assert the use of literature excerpts. This paper focuses on the methodology of language teaching, concentrating more on the skill of writing, through the combination of literature and Technology. This method is more demanding and fruitful for students. This paper discusses how the proposed method helps students to enrich their vocabulary to become prolific writers and how it facilitates a good grammatical knowledge among students in making their sentences accurate and well-structured. New technological tools continue to emerge and impact second language learning. The paper examines the widespread interest in these new technology-enhanced learning environments and looks at how they are being used to promote task-based learning. The paper concludes with the idea that language teaching should comprise of literature as well as technology to achieve a greater success.

Keywords: Technical Writing; ELT; Blended Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is really a dynamic task. A large number of English learners are not very familiar with the usage of Standard English language. Though new technological tools continue to emerge and impact foreign language learning, it is a challenge for the second language learners to attain the mastery over speaking or writing. Prachi Verma and Saumya Bhattacharya in their article on Economic Times “How English-speaking skills are keeping Indian engineers away from their dream jobs” discuss how Poor spoken English keeps large number of India's engineers from getting into best-paid jobs in the country. They also quote that about 67 per cent of engineers graduating from Indian colleges do not possess spoken English skills required for any job that they are qualified for (2015).
In order for the students to learn English, they need to be exposed to the English language as much as possible. The forthcoming paragraphs highlight the idea of clubbing literature and technology to achieve a greater success in language learning and teaching. This is done by incorporating learning of English Literature classics, while learning a language. This method is more demanding and fruitful for students. It helps them in enriching their vocabulary, attaining good grammatical knowledge, and enabling them to become prolific writers with accurate and well-structured sentences.

Using Technology to Advance Language Learning

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) refers to the persistent use of technology in the language classroom. Everyday new technological tools have been created and introduced into the market to guide the students in second language learning. These technologies include computers, the Internet, broadcasting, technologies like radio and television, and telephone. There is a widespread interest in these new technology-enhanced learning environments and they are being used to promote task-based learning. A decade ago, access to technology was very limited. Now for the young generation, technology, particularly the Internet, plays a huge role in their social and educational lives. In teaching second language learners, teaching technical writing using technology would not only enable better language learning but would prepare the students for today’s information world.

Being Surrounded By English: The absolute best way to learn English is to surround oneself with it; and technology makes it possible. Students need to be encouraged to observe how others use language; this can help with the better use of language. To begin with, students may listen to the native speakers, in the form of movies or documentaries, and try to imitate them. This would add a natural flow to their speech. English films, with English subtitles, would also help in strengthening their vocabulary. “The closer ESL students can get to this flow, the more comfortable they will become. This is a kind of subconscious learning that takes place naturally” (Jacobs). Watching News also would be very much beneficial. If an ESL student listens to the news he can also hear different accents.

Language Laboratories: Language laboratories have become a norm for the engineering colleges and universities. One major feature available in some language learning labs these days is the software that records when students speak through a recording device and shows a comparative report between the
native speaker’s and their pronunciation along with their stress and intonation. Through this method students can practice speaking a language with less fear and embarrassment. The huge and most commonly found problem among the second language learners is their own fear. The second is that these learners, especially students from vernacular medium have a lot of difficulty when faced with real life situation, though they fare well in the answer papers. The way out to these problems is the use of Language Laboratories. The difficulty and hesitation that the students experience while talking to people or answering a phone call in English will be brought under control when the students practice regularly using the language lab software. The more they practice, the easier and better it gets.

Internet: It is known that the Internet has made speedy access to up-to-date information on any subject possible. The same Internet plays a massive role in today’s English teaching and learning. It paves way for the students to continue with self-learning, even after the class hours, with or without the support of the teacher. Websites like webdisk.lclark.edu have made the language lab out-dated. These websites allow students to use the lab independently at their own time and pace.

The other major advantage of Internet is that, it allows students to have communication with people of native language, which turns out to be their target language. This also helps them in learning the nuance of the language along with their custom and culture. Blogs or Social Networks are the new tools that offer the possibility of learning English to students, while enjoying their favourite activity of being online. Blogs not only provides reading and writing practice, but allows the learners to share their personal thoughts and ideas with innumerable people. This activity of meeting and interacting with a lot of people around the world at the same time is impossible otherwise.

Using Literature to Progress in Language Learning

A large number of students, who study English as a foreign language, are not very familiar with the Standard English language. This can be solved with the help of English Literature classics. Literature can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement it cultivates in the reader. Many teachers have started considering the use of literature in language learning as an interesting method. The use of literature is a technique for teaching both basic language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking, and also the language areas like vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge. It is becoming very popular within the field of language learning and teaching.

Nuances of Language Through Literature: The present-day higher education system is expected to be tailored to the needs of the corporate. Along with the technical knowledge, today’s corporate world wants the engineers to be good at their writing also – which in the corporate world is called ‘technical writing’. Students must acquire a range of skills to express themselves not only through paper and pencil, but also a host of new environments like e-mail, Web sites, blogs etc. Knowledge of literary terms and the usage of it would enable the students to write attractive and appealing sentences. Famous literary works are available in the forms of movie and audio. Playing of such audios or videos of literary works may be used as listening comprehensions. These upper intermediate level tasks undoubtedly helps in developing listening as well as speaking skill. When students are made to read a literary work aloud, it helps in shaping their pronunciation also.

Extensive Reading: Reading is one of the best ways to experience and learn how a language is used. Extensive reading lends a major supports in successfully learning another language. Students should be motivated to read literary pieces on their own. Role plays based on famous dramas of English literature encourages them to read more. This language learning occurs mainly when the learners hear, see and understand the language as it is used. It is best to start with something that is in relatively plain language. In novel, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives. Through reading, students become familiar with many features of the written language, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills.
Focus On Words and Phrases: Vocabulary can be built through reading. Learning of words with its extensive and connotative meaning can expand vocabulary level of the learner. It is important for the learner to study the way words are used and how they come together as phrases. These words and phrases may be learnt through listening and reading. A dictionary should be kept handy to lookup words as needed.

CONCLUSION

English Language teaching to students of technical education is a task; teaching writing is harder. This new method is very interesting and comprehensive as it covers both the aspects of language learning - language is the practical aspect while literature is the theoretical aspect. This combination use of technology and literature together in the process of English language teaching would undoubtedly benefit the students and the teachers. This novel ‘literature clubbed with technology-enhanced learning’, if put to use in universities, would prove to be an ideal way of promoting learning in a great deal. This would achieve a greater success and prove to be a great methodology of teaching technical writing. This would fill in the existing gap between learners and their targeted second language learning.

REFERENCES


