ACADEMICIA
An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
(Double Blind Refereed & Peer Reviewed Journal)

DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2021.01229.5

TOWARDS CREATING A TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: SOME PEDAGOGIC CONSIDERATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at illustrating the significance of using technology in the language learning classroom. It basically and in general focuses on some of the current practices of Bangladeshi educational institutions in line with the global way-forward. Technology-enhanced language learning is a common phenomenon now-a-days all over the world. Technology aids in the process of language learning in the classroom. The paper focuses on the application of the technology in foreign language learning scenario. At the same time, it brigs into light the current scenario of technology uses in the language learning set-up of Bangladesh. It, at the same time, intends to disseminate the information on global and regional foreign language learning set-up.

KEYWORDS: *Technology, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Pedagogy, Learners, Foreign Language.*

INTRODUCTION

Preamble

The challenge Bangladesh faces is how to become a learning society and to ensure that its citizens are equipped with the knowledge, skills and qualifications on information and communication technology (ICT) they will need in the next century. ICT revolution imposes particular challenges on education systems in Bangladesh. These challenges reduce to three

broad areas. The first has to do with participation in the information society, the second considers how ICT impacts on access, cost effectiveness and quality of education, while the third is to do with the way that ICT changes the education process. However, ICT is contributing to ever-increasing inequalities in Bangladesh through the so-called "digital divide" that splits the Bangladesh between those who are "ICT-literate" and the majority who are not and most of the women have no access to a computer and the Internet. A series of factors, including literacy and education, language, time, cost, geographical location of facilities, social and cultural norms, and women's computer and information search and dissemination skills constrain women's access to information technology.

Importance of Technology in Contemporary World

The goals of using technology in the foreign language classroom are the same as in any foreign language classroom: to provide students with opportunities to engage the target language through reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. In fact, using technology, and computers in particular, can only help to give students opportunities to encounter the culture of the target language more authentically.

It the past, it was believed (during the audio-lingual days) that structured drills and repetition were all that were needed to make students more proficient in a language, and this is what "language labs" were mainly used for. Now, research in applied linguistics has shown that meaningful exposure to a language is the most important factor in language learning. The Internet, CD-Roms, recording software, and audio files all provides these opportunities for students to be exposed to the target language in a meaningful way.

The authentic language that students encounter when conducting web-quests or reading on-line versions of newspapers, magazines, and catalogs (store Web sites) is more engaging for students and also provides opportunities for cultural awareness and empathy.

Regardless of the type of technology that a teacher uses, it is important to keep in mind that the meaningful exposure to the target language is the most important factor. Many technology-based activities do not look like traditional classroom exercises, but this not a bad thing. When students are engaged in an activity that forces them to make meaning of the language that they encounter, they are gaining in proficiency.

Why Use Technology in the Language Classroom

There are many benefits to using technology in the language classroom:

- Multimodal practice with feedback
- Individualization in a large class
- Pair & small group work on projects
- Fun factor
- Variety in resources available & learning styles used
- Real-life skill-building in computer use

There are many different ways to integrate technology into your teaching and the students' learning. These are just a few of those:

- Collaborative projects
- Peer editing of compositions
- Email
- Reinforcement of classroom material
- Games and simulations
- Blogging and podcasts
- Web Quests
- Authentic language learning opportunities
- As a resource for multimedia (images, audio, video, etc.)
- As a resource for activity and lesson plans

Educational (ICT) Policy of Bangladesh

Bangladesh faces the challenge of becoming a learning society, and ensuring that its citizens are equipped with knowledge of ICT, skills and qualifications they will need in this century. Application of computers in industry, business, communication, and education and in every other sphere of life demands the extensive introduction of computer education from primary to post-graduate level, and career-oriented professional ICT training provided by NGOs like the Dhaka Ahsania Mission or a training centre like Bangladesh Computer Council. Formal education in computers was first started in 1984 with the foundation of Computer Science and Engineering Department in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. ICT education thereafter gradually extended to the bachelor's degree, higher secondary and secondary school levels. In Bangladesh, there are about 83,796 primary level institutions, 5,694 and 15,748 junior and secondary level institutions respectively, 2,339 higher secondary and degree colleges and more than 1,000 ICT training centers. This section describes the introduction and status of ICT education in primary and junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary, diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate levels, and career-oriented professional ICT training.

History: **From audio-lingual to multi-media**.

The language laboratory with which most Americans are familiar was a creation of the boom in education and technology after World War II. The audio-lingual method of the 50's and 60's demanded a great deal of repetition and creation of language within established patterns such as the person-number substitution drill .During the height of this method in the 60's and 70's, schools and universities often had several large rooms dedicated to carrels in which students would sit, either by themselves or in a class, and answer questions posed to them on audiotape, or repeat utterances for the purpose of checking their own pronunciations or grammar. From an instructional point of view, it was not unusual to devote a full day of class (one-fifth to one-fourth of the entire course) to taking the class as a whole to the lab. As audiotape technology became more inexpensive and widespread, students began to listen to their tapes at home. Language labs made available high-speed copiers so that students could make a personal copy of the lesson to listen to at home. Publishers were made aware of this trend, and began to bundle individual audiotapes with the textbooks. The ease of personal access to audiotape technology

had two immediate consequences. First, attendance at language labs began to drop as it became unnecessary for students to sit in carrels to do their homework. Second, anecdotal evidence began to mount that students were simply not getting the same benefit from listening to tapes at home. Professors complained that students were not listening to the tapes properly, if at all. They would rarely repeat a tape until they got the answers right, and they were not checking their answers properly. Students, who by the 80's were accustomed to being entertained at home via television, Nintendo, and personal computers, complained that the tapes were just too boring to be believed, and they were simply unwilling to spend the time repeating drills the way their parents had. The final nail in the coffin of the audio lab was the death of the audio-lingual method itself. New research noted that it was not necessary to bore students with repetitive drills in order for them to learn language, but it was important to engage the students in the language as often as possible.

As early as the 60's and 70's, foreign language methodologists began to experiment with computer-assisted language instruction. The early efforts, dependent entirely upon the access one had to the computer (usually a line-by-line terminal attached to a mainframe), were little more than electronic workbooks. The student would be asked a question, type in an answer, and be given immediate feedback whether the answer was wrong or right. Some programmers favored the game model, in which one played simple games like "Hangman" in the second language. Some students, those particularly interested in language or computers, were inspired to learn in this way, but for most, the experience turned out to be as unpleasant the audio lab: one had to go to a public place, sit in a carrel, and do repetitious work. Only this time the students had to contend with unfamiliar technology, user interfaces that varied greatly from machine to machine (especially in the approach to foreign characters), and, as with their experience listening to tapes at home, little to no supervision. At the same time that MTV was revolutionizing the visual vocabulary of a generation, computer screens full of text or excruciatingly amateurish graphics.

It wasn't until the 90's that the possibilities of computer-assisted language learning (CALL, for short) really opened up. One the hardware side, personal computers finally got fast and big enough to run sophisticated programs, and networking began to make technology available for collective endeavors such as education. With larger machines came multimedia capabilities: CD-Rom, Midi ports, and the like. On the software side, the success of the Windows operating system meant that PC users could finally learn the benefits of a standard user interface that Macintosh users had known for years: learn one interface, run any program using the same key-stroke commands. Of course, the software also kept up with the growing capabilities of the hardware, and it became extremely easy to run complicated software on CD or link to the Internet with a double click. The market soon discovered the interest in foreign language instruction, especially for business, and responded with several language "methods" for the most profitable language. (It should be noted that these CDs offer little more than conversational language methods. They can teach phrases and vocabulary and some grammar, but they are hardly the same as a full language course.) Even more important than the commercial offerings was the explosion in the World Wide Web across the world. In an hour in from of a computer, a student can now visit a variety of sites in the countries in which their target languages are spoken and see "authentic language," that is, language written by native speakers for native speakers. At the same time, they learn about the culture both directly and indirectly, through pictures, audio, videoclips, discussion groups, e-mail resources, and the like. Language teachers always knew

that to learn a language one had to "go there." Now, it appeared that "there" was able to come her. Since the web was available from both Macintosh and Windows platforms, even the perennial problem of hardware differences appears to have been overcome.

Programs that had hesitated to jump on the technology bandwagon when all it offered were simple programs (like the modern language program at Trinity) realized that the time had come to take advantage of the hardware and software at hand. Since the audio-lingual lab was essentially dead anyway, and since the entire campus, including the residence halls, was wired for the campus network during the summer of 1996, we could only improve current instruction by seeing what could be done to create what we optimistically called the "virtual language laboratory."

Basic Assumptions

If students won't come to the lab, then the lab can go to the students. The faculty at Trinity has by no means given up on the value of a language lab. Research has shown that language proficiency is a direct function of time spent dealing with the language. The "virtual language lab" was not meant to replace any of the tools of the past. Students would still be expected to use textbooks, audiotapes, and workbooks for drill and practice. The technology is intended to enhance the traditional classroom language acquisition experience. Because this is a kind of lab, it is expected that students will use it on their own time, that they will learn language because they are dealing with it, either by reading web pages in the target language, or by participating in student-oriented discussion groups or e-mail exchanges, or by listening to RealAudio or shortwave broadcasts, or by doing activities similar to those found in their workbooks, but adapted to take advantage of the multimedia technology.

This rationale has a number of assumptions behind it. First, on the side of language learning and instruction, it is assumed:

1. that students do not necessarily need only structured drills in order to learn, that language acquisition takes place any time the student is dealing with the target language (one might make the pedagogical leap and assume that the more students are engaged with a target literature or culture the more they will learn about those as well);
2. that information that students discover on their own has greater impact than information they are told or that they gain through memorization;
3. that "authentic language" is more engaging and useful (although occasionally problematic) than created pedagogical language, and that, as a result, students will be interested in accessing authentic language web pages in their target language, perhaps enough so to click on a few links of their own and go exploring, thus spending more time with the language and culture;
4. that websites and other software appropriate to a language lesson can occasionally be brought into class, thus giving the students a common "lab" experience;
5. that culture, which has been recognized as essential to full comprehension of another language, is easier to comprehend from real-life web pages than from the distilled cultural overviews usually written into textbooks;

6. that language, literature, and culture are intertwined so that one cannot really know one without knowing something of the others and that one always learns something about the others by studying one of them; and
7. that professors are willing to adapt their materials to include Internet materials and accommodate the unexpected, such as when a student brings a previously unknown site to the attention of the class;

Online Activities

The following is a list of the most popular kinds of activities multimedia technology offers to students:

- e-mail, discussion, chat, and lists
- web page creation
- games, including web hunts
- current events: news, sports, leisure activities
- information retrieval; research
- authentic language through personal web pages
- images and maps available to supplement readings
- analyze texts electronically
- online audio and video

Using technology for different areas of language study

While technology has had a major influence on the teaching and learning of languages, a lot of disagreement surrounds areas such as the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, language skills and testing.

Grammar

The increase in the number of interactive exercises on CD-ROM and the web has undoubtedly benefitted the analytical learner. Students can practise 24/7 and receive instant feedback. However, many teachers and material writers would argue that this kind of practice is based on an outdated, stimulus-response methodology. These grammar exercises 'skewer' the language, so on-line practice focuses on 'crisp' areas of language at the expense of 'fuzzy' areas. Here's a good example of this distinction:

Crisp: Is 'I went there': (a) Simple past? (b) Present perfect?

Fuzzy: What's the difference between (a) 'I did it' and (b) 'I've done it'?

Vocabulary

Arguments are currently raging about the use of electronic translators. These provide many benefits, allowing students to cross-check between bi-lingual dictionaries and mono-lingual dictionaries, and encouraging them to review language. Yet, when used for production, they seem to encourage the selection of the wrong word in English, and teachers can quite easily spot

an essay written with the help of one of these small machines. They also inhibit fluency if students take them out in discussion classes – which they frequently do.

Skills

In the area of the receptive skills, listening and reading, the effect of technology has been huge. The Internet has provided a vast range of material, offering many more opportunities for exposure to authentic materials, both audio and text. At the same time, much of this material is clearly unsuitable for language learners. The debate continues as to how useful YouTube is and to what extent is technology 'responsible' for the rise in plagiarism in EAP (English for academic purposes).

The influence of technology on the productive skills of speaking and writing is, arguably, less. If you wish to improve fluency, many students would argue that nothing is better than a face-to-face language lesson, a discussion class with the teacher. Can the same be said about taking a fluency class using Skype, a web-based program such as Illuminate or a class in the virtual world, Second Life? What value does 'Voice recognition' have? Wikis enable students to compose an essay together at a distance, making them a suitable medium for collaborative writing. However, not all learners wish to learn from each other, and prefer only the teacher to correct their work, rather than a peer.

Testing

There has been an explosion of on-line testing in the last few years. Such test materials use the same formats as multimedia materials: gap-fill, multiple choice etc. Is this a match made in heaven? Some would argue that on-line tests actually favour students who use computers, and ignore the assessment of 'affective factors' such as personality and learner type.

Theory vs Practice

This is a world which is driven by technology. The innovators innovate, and later, pedagogy plays catch-up, as teachers try things out. The world of theory (of evidence and research) is, arguably, lagging behind what is happening in the classrooms. In other words, if you wait for a case study to justify whether or not Twitter has value, you may be waiting a long time, and the technology will have moved on by the time the research has been done.

Technology readiness for the educational institutions of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a relatively long experience in the use of computers - the first "second generation" computer was installed in 1964 at Dhaka and very soon some of the large banks and industrial concerns started using computers, mainly for accounting and payroll applications. The utility companies (e.g. gas, electricity) also started using the bureau facilities of these installations for their customer billing. Unfortunately, the financial crisis that the country faced immediately after its independence in 1971 did not permit the sustenance of this early lead and lack of maintenance forced the closure of most of these installations.

Although the possibility of export of data entry services and software from Bangladesh has been discussed for over a decade, only a few companies were successful in getting some work from outside. In June 1997, the Government of Bangladesh appointed a Committee (with the author of this article as its Convenor) to look into the problems and prospects of export of software from Bangladesh. The Committee submitted its report in September, 1997. It contained 45

recommendations, both short term and medium term; some of these recommendations have already been implemented and the government has asked different concerned ministries to go ahead with implementing the other recommendations.

Although not properly exploited yet, Bangladesh does have quite a few inherent strengths which can be used as the launching pad for making this country a potential offshore source of Software and Data Processing Services. Some of these advantages are :

A substantial number of educated unemployed youth force, with ability to read and write English, exists in the country. They can be trained in the required skill (particularly in Data Processing Services) within a short time. Quite a few Bangladeshi skilled professionals have been working abroad. They can be encouraged to return to the country and/or collaborate with Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, provided proper environment is created. Universities in Bangladesh are turning out an increasing number of graduates in Computer related subjects every year, although the number is much less than the requirement. A large number of Bangladeshi students are studying overseas in Computer related subjects. A wide range of Hardware platforms, from Mainframe to

The government has taken a decision recently (June, 1998) to withdraw all import duties and VAT from all computer hardware and software. This has brought the prices of computers down to a level affordable by middle income households and sales of PCs have soared during the last few months. A 80-90% annual growth in the number of PCs sold is expected this year.

An Information Technology village is going to be set up very close to Dhaka. The government has already made 18 acres of land available for setting up this IT village. This would be similar to the Software Technology Parks in India. All the infrastructure, including high-speed telecommunication facilities (2 Mbps link) would be provided. These would enable the small companies to move into buildings with readily available facilities. Since this is going to take at least two years, a decision has been taken to initially set it up in an existing building in Dhaka.

In June, 1996 the government decided to allow private companies to act as Internet Services Providers (ISPs) using VSATs. At present, there are about 22,000 account holders with the ISPs (8 in Dhaka and 2 in Chittagong) and the total number of users would be around 100,000. The slow speed of access provided by VSATs (max. 128.8 kbps) is a major constraint. A number of Cybercafes providing e-mail and Internet browsing facilities have been opened in Dhaka city; these are quite popular among the young generation. Public kiosks with internet facilities are also being planned.

BTTB has already established a network for providing Internet connectivity and plans to start commercial service very soon. The proposed tariff rate should make Internet connection affordable to a larger cross-section of public. BTTB is also establishing a fibre optic backbone in the country. They also plan to offer ISDN service very soon using the facilities of the already installed digital exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong cities.

In order to enable the young entrepreneurs in the IT field, a special fund has been created by the government to provide working capital loan without any collaterals. A venture capital fund is also being set up. The banking procedures are also being amended and simplified to reflect the different nature of software transactions.

Experience of other countries shows that it is very difficult to achieve success in exporting software unless there is a big domestic market. The government ministries and departments are being asked to computerise their activities. A domestic price preference of 15% would be given to suppliers of locally developed software.

Some of the local firms have already succeeded in exporting software, although the total amount is not very large. One firm has been producing CDs with searchable database for US and Latin American clients. CAD conversion work and web-page design work are also being undertaken. Taking advantage of the considerable number of COBOL programmers who were trained in the sixties and seventies, a number of firms are doing work related to the Y2K problem. ERP software is being developed by a local firm in partnership with Microsoft.

The government has placed top most priority to human resource development in the IT field. At present, the annual output of graduates in the IT field would be around 500. The target is to produce 10,000 programmers annually by the year 2001. There are about 24 Universities offering undergraduate degree programmes in IT-related fields. All the four BITs (at Rajshahi, Chittagong, Khulna and Gazipur) are also planning to offer undergraduate degree programmes in computer science and engineering from next year. The 20 Polytechnics are also introducing 3-year diploma programmes in Computer Technology. In addition, a large number of educational and training institutes, many of them with linkage with foreign institutions, are also offering training courses. One of the major problems faced by these institutions is the shortage of trainers. Recognizing this problem, the GOB Committee (referred to earlier) recommended that BCC should take up a crash programme to train at least 1000 high-level trainers by the end of 1999. Moreover, the absence of adequate physical resources (e.g. computer hardware and software) and weakness in course contents in the training institutions will adversely affect the quality of output from these institutions. An accreditation system is planned to be introduced by the government soon.

BUET was the first institution to offer post-graduate degrees (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) in Computer Science and Engineering. Some other institutions have also initiated research programmes in IT related fields. These include Machine Learning, Pattern Recognition, Speech Recognition, Automatic Translation, Computational Algorithm, VLSI and 3-D Vision. Considerable research work has been done in the use of Bangla in computers. Unfortunately like R&D in other fields of science and technology, there is very little interaction between academia and industry.

Efforts were initiated about 13 years back to introduce computers in schools and colleges. ‘Computer Studies’ has been introduced as an optional subject both in SSC and HSC examinations. The lack of adequate physical facilities, computers and qualified teachers has resulted in very few students opting for these courses. Experience of other countries shows that teaching of computer programming by incompetent teachers may do more harm than good. Therefore, teacher training is one of the priority actions to be taken.

In order to co-ordinate the computerisation activities of government and semi-government agencies a National Computer Committee was set up in 1983. This was transformed into the National Computer Board in 1988 and the Bangladesh Computer Council was set up in 1989 by an Act of Parliament. It had some initial problems and faced a lot of criticism from the IT community when it became more of a regulatory body, rather than a promotional body as originally envisaged. It is planned to strengthen BCC by inducting more IT professionals, so that

it can play a bigger role in IT development in the public sector, particularly in human resource development.

A large number of Bangladeshis are now working in the IT field in different companies in USA and are gradually moving up the organizational hierarchy. The government is trying to get the assistance of these non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) in IT development, particularly by giving them incentives to set up software companies in Bangladesh.

Although the banking sector had been among the pioneers in computerization in Bangladesh, the present level of computer usage in banks is very low. The foreign banks operating in Bangladesh have taken a lead in computerizing their front office operations. It is only during the last 4/5 years that some of the Bangladeshi banks have started gradually computerising their front office activities and very soon a network of automatic teller machines (ATMs) using VSATs would be set up by the private banks throughout the major towns.

At present, Internet access is available only in a few Universities. The University Grants Commission is setting up BERNET (Bangladesh Educational and Research Network) establishing linkage among the Universities and providing access to the Internet.

The present government has recognized IT as one of the priority sectors and is providing all support to the private sector to enable them to enter the export market for software and data processing services. Recognizing the bright future of IT, a large number of students, young professionals and businessmen are taking keen interest in acquiring knowledge about computers and its applications. This is reflected in the tremendous enthusiasm generated in the on-going International Computer Show organized by Bangladesh Computer Samity. It is expected that within the next 3 to 4 years, IT applications in Bangladesh would not only spread to various private and public sector offices and industrial units, but Bangladesh would emerge as a regional hub for software development.

Using Video in the F/SL Classroom

What are the practical implications of using video in the classroom? At the most basic level of instruction, video is a form of communication and it can be achieved without the help of language, since we often interact by gesture, eye contact and facial expression to convey a message. Video provides visual stimuli such as the environment and this can lead to and generate prediction, speculation and a chance to activate background schemata when viewing a visual scene reenacted. It can be argued that language found in videos could help nonnative speakers understand stress patterns. Videos allow the learner to see body rhythm and speech rhythm in second language discourse through the use of authentic language and speed of speech in various situations. Videos allow contextual clues to be offered. In addition, video can stimulate and motivate student interest. The use of visuals overall can help learners to predict information, infer ideas and analyze the world that is brought into the classroom via the use of video instruction. In a teaching or testing situation video can help enhance clarity and give meaning to an auditory text; it can create a solid link between the materials being learned and the practical application of it in a testing situation; the video can act as a stimulus or catalyst to help integrate materials or aspects of the language; videos can help manipulate language and at the same time be open to a variety of interpretations.

Arthur (1999) claims that:

"Video can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play; can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability; can strengthen audio/visual linguistic perceptions simultaneously; can widen the classroom repertoire and range of activities; can help utilize the latest technology to facilitate language learning; can teach direct observation of the paralinguistic features found in association with the target language; can be used to help when training students in ESP related scenarios and language; can offer a visual reinforcement of the target language and can lower anxiety when practicing the skill of listening."

Video used in a classroom should be interpretive and to the point. The visual should show reasonable judgment and enhance comprehension, heighten sensory acuteness, and illustrate the target language being used. Practitioners should avoid the use of distracters, over-crowded or violent stimuli. Visuals are ineffective in the learning process when the visual is too small; when the visual or video uses stereotypes; when the visual or video is a poor reproduction; when the picture is to far away from the text illustration; when the video has irrelevant captioning; when the video or visual offers to much information related or unrelated to the picture; when the video or visual is poorly scaled; and when the picture is not esthetically meaningful. A visual cue may be accompanied by a written cue to focus on a lexical item being furnished. Videos can make the task, situation or language more authentic. More importantly, video can be used to help distinguish items on a listening comprehension test, aid in the role of recall, help to sequence events, as well as be adapted, edited or changed in order to meet the needs of the language learner (Canning, 1998).

Key Consideration for Using Video in the Classroom with Nonnative Speakers

Although video may be a popular tool to use with students, as F/SL educators we must not loose sight of the educational purpose it has in the language classroom. It is suggested that language teachers should ask themselves the following questions before implementing a video lesson with F/SL learners:

- How will the language learner benefit from the use of video in the classroom?
- How will the visual component enhance the auditory component?
- Who will select the video? Is it the class, the teacher or the curriculum developers?
- Who decides which language should be exploited from the video? Is it the class, teacher or curriculum developers?
- How do you plan to exploit the 1-10 minute segment of the video? What are the alternative methods of exploiting the clip for further reinforcement in the classroom?
- Whose responsibility is it to select key vocabulary and structures from the video?
- Who decides how many times the video is played?
- How can students and teachers develop academic listening and conversational listening activities based on the video?
- How is the video used in a classroom context?
- How does video support the curriculum?

- Can the comprehension of the video be measured without visual support?
- Can the comprehension of the video be measured without auditory support?
- How will you assess the comprehension of the video by the language learners?
- How practical is the video to improve a learner¼s academic listening and/or conversational listening skills?
- What is the educational purpose for showing the video? How will you later assess its effectiveness with the learners ability to comprehend information?

Using Computer in language classroom

For some tasks, computers can provide distinct advantages over more traditional approaches. The use of a computer for listening exercises often provides not only sound, but also visual input providing students with more contextual clues. Students interacting with a computer are also using motor skills as well, which can have a strong reinforcing effect on the learning process by connecting physical actions (clicking, typing) with desired results. Students are also allowed more control over their own learning process as they make the decisions when to repeat questions, exercises and sequences based on their own progress.

Probably the strongest argument for the use of the computer in the classroom environment is that of student self-pacing. Especially in the field of pronunciation, students can employ a computer to record themselves to compare their pronunciation to a target pronunciation. This can be repeated endlessly until a student is satisfied with his/her result. These pronunciation exercises are often combined with visual aids (such as intonation graphs) to help the student recognise how his/her pronunciation compares to the target pronunciation. Common tools such as spell checking can also provide the student with valuable self-analysis instruction.

Finally, with the aid of the Internet and CD-Rom based materials, teachers can quickly access documents addressing individual student needs. This is especially effective when teaching English for Specific Purposes such as Business English. An example would be white papers put up on a company web-site discussing certain technologies in English that students are currently employing. Another example is glossaries provided for specific business sectors (port, banking, insurance, etc.). Using these materials, the teacher can often provide content addressing specific student needs, thereby improving motivation and effectiveness.

Making the student comfortable with the technology

Admittedly, the computer can be an overwhelming and imposing instrument to students and teachers. The complexity of the computer - not to mention the overwhelming choice of possibilities - can put students and teachers off as they lose time grappling with how to use the computer. There are a few basic principles that should be followed in order to help the student (and teacher) feel more at home using the computer.

- The computer should always be turned on, booted, and the program loaded (preferably the exercise chosen) before the class begins. In this manner, students focus on doing the task at hand rather than getting to the point where they can do the task.

- Students who are not comfortable using computers should be placed with students who are. These students should not be forced to use the mouse or type at the keyboard. As they become more familiar with the technology, they will often begin to play a more active role - even if they don't, the ability to use the computer is not the issue.
- Students more comfortable with the computer should be strongly discouraged from using other resources available in the program itself, or in other programs. These students should be encouraged to explore these resources on their own by taking advantage of self-access programs.
- Use of the computer should be phased in; instead of introducing a complex series of exercises to be done for a lesson, teachers should begin by doing a limited amount of work with the computer (i.e. one listening exercise followed by an interactive quiz).

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is a form of computer-based learning which carries two important features: individualized learning and bidirectional learning. It is not a method. CALL materials are materials for learning. The focus of CALL is learning, and not teaching. CALL materials are used in teaching to facilitate the language learning process. It is a a form of student-centered learning materials, which promote self-paced accelerated learning. CALL is not a software application, but rather courseware that is designed specifically for language learning for a specific group of learners.

CALL originates from CAI and was invented in 1960s. Computer-Assisted Instruction was first viewed as an aid for teachers. The philosophy of CALL puts a strong emphasis on student-centered lessons that allow the learners to learn on their own using structured and/or unstructured interactive lessons. These lessons carry 2 important features: bidirectional (interactive) learning and individualized learning. It is a tool that helps teachers to facilitate language learning process. CALL can be used to reinforce what has been learned in the classrooms. It can also be used as remedial to help learners with limited language proficiency.

The design of CALL lessons generally takes into consideration principles of language pedagogy, which may be derived from learning theories (behaviorist, cognitive, and constructivist) and second language learning such as Krashen's Monitor Theory.

Others may see CALL as an approach to teaching and learning foreign languages whereby the computer and computer-based resources such as the Internet are used to present, reinforce and assess material to be learned. CALL can be made independent of the Internet. It can stand alone for example in a CDROM format. Depending on its design and objectives, it may include a substantial interactive element especially when CALL is integrated in web-based format.It is in the area of industrialization of teaching that is reigning now. The traditional face-to-face teaching which is based on interpersonal communication between the teacher and student is gone. However, the industrialized teaching is able to offer teachers with the opportunity of sourcing from the computer internet rather than being faced with the problem of materials. It may include the search for and the investigation of applications in language teaching and learning. Except for self-study software, CALL is meant to supplement face-to-face language instruction, not replace it.

Computers have been used for language teaching ever since the 1960s. This 40-year period can be divided into three main stages: behaviorist CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL. Each stage corresponds to a certain level of technology and certain pedagogical theories. The reasons for using Computer-assisted Language Learning include: (a) experiential learning, (b) motivation, (c) enhance student achievement, (d) authentic materials for study, (e) greater interaction, (f) individualization, (g) independence from a single source of information, and (h) global understanding. The barriers inhibiting the practice of Computer-assisted Language Learning can be classified in the following common categories: (a) financial barriers, (b) availability of computer hardware and software, (c) technical and theoretical knowledge, and (d) acceptance of the technology.

In multimedia programs, listening is combined with seeing, just like in the real world. Students also control the pace and the path of the interaction. Interaction is in the foreground but many CALL programs also provide links to explanations simultaneously. An example of this is Dustin's simulation of a foreign student's arrival in the USA. Programs like this led also to what is called explorative CALL.

More recent research in CALL has favored a learner-centered explorative approach, where students are encouraged to try different possible solutions to a problem, for example the use of concordance programs. This approach is also described as data-driven learning (DDL), a term coined by Tim Johns.

Theoretical basis for CALL instruction design

Computers have become so widespread in schools and homes and their uses have expanded so dramatically that the majority of language teachers now think about the implications. Technology can bring about changes in the teaching methodologies of foreign language beyond simply automating fill-in-the-gap exercises. The use of the computer in and of itself does not constitute a teaching method, but rather the computer forces pedagogy to develop in new ways that exploit the computer's benefits and that work around its limitations. To exploit the computers' potential, we need language teaching specialists who can promote a complementary relationship between computer technology and appropriate pedagogic programs.

A number of pedagogical approaches have developed in the computer age, including the communicative and integrative/experimentative approaches outlined above in the History of CALL. Others include constructivism, whole language theory and sociocultural theory although they are not exclusively theories of language learning. With constructivism, students are active participants in a task in which they "construct" new knowledge based on experience in order to incorporate new ideas into their already-established schema of knowledge. Whole language theory postulates that language learning (either native or second language) moves from the whole to the part; rather than building sub-skills like grammar to lead toward higher abilities like reading comprehension, whole language insists the opposite is the way we really learn to use language. Students learn grammar and other sub-skills by making intelligent guesses bases on the input they have experienced. It also promotes that the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are interrelated.Sociocultural theory states that learning is a process of becoming part of a desired community and learning that community's rules of behavior.

What most of these approaches have in common is taking the central focus away from the teacher as a conveyor of knowledge to giving students learning experiences that are as realistic as possible, and where they play a central role. Also, these approaches tend to emphasize fluency over accuracy to allow students to take risks in using more student-centered activities, and to cooperate, rather than compete. The computer provides opportunity for students to be less dependent on a teacher and have more freedom to experiment on their own with natural language in natural or semi-natural settings.

Use of CALL for the four skills

A number of studies have been done concerning how the use of CALL affects the development of language learners' four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Most report significant gains in reading and listening and most CALL programs are geared toward these receptive skills because of the current state of computer technology. However, most reading and listening software is based on drills. Gains in writing skills have not been as impressive as computers cannot assess this well.

However, using current CALL technology, even with its current limitations, for the development of speaking abilities has gained much attention. There has been some success in using CALL, in particular computer-mediated communication, to help speaking skills closely linked to "communicative competence" (ability to engage in meaningful conversation in the target language) and provide controlled interactive speaking practice outside the classroom. Using chat has been shown to help students routinize certain often-used expressions to promote the development of automatic structure that help develop speaking skills. This is true even if the chat is purely textual. The use of videoconferencing give not only immediacy when communicating with a real person but also visual cues, such as facial expressions, making such communication more authentic.

However, when it comes to using the computer not as a medium of communication (with other people) but as something to interact with verbally in a direct manner, the current computer technology's limitations are at their clearest. Right now, there are two fairly successful applications of automatic speech recognition (ASR) (or speech processing technology) where the computer "understands" the spoken words of the learner. The first is pronunciation training. Learners read sentences on the screen and the computer gives feedback as to the accuracy of the utterance, usually in the form of visual sound waves. The second is software where the learner speaks commands for the computer to do. However, speakers in these programs are limited to predetermined texts so that the computer will "understand" them.

Self access language learning centers or independent learning centres have emerged partially independently, and partially in response to these issues. In self-access learning, the focus is on developing learner autonomy through varying degrees of self-directed learning, as opposed to (or as a complement to) classroom learning. In most centres, learners access materials and manage their learning independently, but have access to staff for help. Many self-access centres are heavy users of technology and an increasing number of them are now offering online self-access learning opportunities. Some centres have developed novel ways of supporting language learning outside the context of the language classroom (also called 'language support') by developing software to monitor students' self-directed learning and by offering online support from teachers.

Center managers and support staff need to have new roles defined for them to support students' efforts at self-directed learning. In fact, a new job description has emerged recently, that of a "language advisor".

CONCLUSION:

Foreign language learning especially English language is a dominant aspect for the present world. The tradition of technology based language learning is growing and spreading around the globe with the global changing scenario. Bangladesh is also trying to cope up with global prospective. If, some improvements, on certain aspect can be made the country would be able to flourish the shifting trend in a more better and comprehensive manner.

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