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Exploring the Effectiveness of Digital Tools in English Language Teaching and Learning at the Undergraduate Level in India

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Abstract: *Effective English Language Teaching and Learning (ELT) now heavily relies on digital resources, predominantly in today's technologically advanced classrooms. They are momentous because they improve accessibility, engagement and skill development in all language domains. The usage of digital technologies in English language instruction greatly improves its effectiveness, learner-centeredness, and interactivity. They prepare students for communication in the real world by bridging the gap between traditional teaching and contemporary learning requirements.*

The integration of digital tools in higher education has significantly transformed English language teaching and learning particularly for undergraduate and B. Tech students in India. This study examines the role of Digital Tools for English Language Teaching and Learning at the Undergraduate Level in India for improving student engagement and communicative competence. Drawing on existing literature and a case study conducted in an engineering college, the paper highlights the effectiveness of digital tools for English language teaching and learning. The findings suggest that strategic use of digital tools fosters active participation, collaborative learning, and improved language proficiency. The study concludes that technology, when aligned with pedagogy, plays a crucial role in preparing students for professional communication.

Keywords: *English language teaching, Digital learning, LMS, language labs, AI tools for language learning.*

1. Introduction

The integration of digital technologies into higher education has significantly transformed English language teaching and learning in India, particularly at the undergraduate and B. Tech levels. With increasing emphasis on employability and communication skills, digital tools provide innovative ways to enhance learners' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW). These tools support interactive, student-centered pedagogy and enable flexible learning environments that extend beyond traditional classrooms.

1.2. Review of Literature

The role of technology in language learning has been widely studied. Warschauer and Healey (1998) emphasized that computer-assisted language learning (CALL) enhances learner autonomy and interaction. Similarly, Hrastinski (2008) highlighted the importance of synchronous and asynchronous tools in promoting engagement in online learning environments.

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Recent studies have focused on digital platforms and mobile learning. Godwin-Jones (2018) observed that mobile applications facilitate vocabulary acquisition and self-paced learning. Singh and Thurman (2019) analysed online learning models and concluded that blended approaches are more effective than purely traditional methods.

Gamification has also been identified as a powerful engagement strategy. Deterding et al. (2011) argued that game-based elements increase motivation and participation. Tools such as Kahoot! and Quizizz exemplify this approach.

In the Indian context, government initiatives like SWAYAM and NPTEL have expanded access to quality educational resources (MHRD, 2020). Furthermore, AI-based tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT provide personalized feedback, enhancing writing and communication skills (Ranalli, 2018).

Despite these advancements, several studies note that the effectiveness of digital tools depends on pedagogical integration rather than mere availability.

2. Categories of Digital Tools in English Language Teaching

2.1 Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Learning Management Systems such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Virtual platform (Microsoft Teams and Zoom) Quiz tools (Kahoot, Quizizz), AI tools (Grammarly), Language lab software, and AI tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, Grok etc., are widely used in Indian higher education institutions. These platforms facilitate the organization and delivery of course content, assignment submission, assessment, and feedback.

LMS platforms enable blended and flipped learning models, allowing instructors to share instructional materials before class and utilize classroom time for interactive activities (Singh & Thurman, 2019).

2.2 Virtual Communication Tools

Synchronous teaching tools such as Zoom and Google Meet play a crucial role in enabling real-time interaction. These tools support ‘Online lectures, Group discussions, Oral presentations, and Viva voce examinations.

They are particularly effective in developing speaking and listening skills through live engagement (Hrastinski, 2008).

2.3 Language Learning Applications

Applications such as Duolingo, Hello English, and BBC Learning English provide structured language practice through gamified and interactive modules.

These tools enhance vocabulary acquisition, grammar understanding, and listening skills, especially for learners from non-English backgrounds (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

2.4 Digital Language Laboratories

Digital language labs are widely implemented in engineering colleges to improve communicative competence. These labs provide:

- Pronunciation training using audio-visual aids
- Listening comprehension exercises
- Role-play and simulation activities
- Interview and group discussion practice

Such labs focus on skill-based learning and are particularly aligned with placement requirements (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

2.5 Interactive and Collaborative Tools

Tools like Kahoot! Quizizz, Padlet, and Canva promote active learning and engagement.

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They support Gamified quizzes, Collaborative writing tasks, Visual content creation, Peer interaction. These tools increase student motivation and participation in language learning (Deterding et al., 2011).

2.6 MOOCs and Government Platforms

Indian government initiatives such as SWAYAM and NPTEL provide access to high-quality English communication and soft skills courses.

These platforms promote self-paced learning and democratize access to educational resources across diverse socio-economic backgrounds (MHRD, 2020).

2.7 AI-Based Writing and Language Tools

Artificial intelligence tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT assist learners in improving writing accuracy, coherence, and language fluency.

These tools offer real-time feedback, enabling learners to identify and correct errors independently, thereby fostering autonomous learning (Ranalli, 2018).

3. Implementation of Technology-Enhanced Classroom

3.1 Teaching Model

A blended learning approach was adopted:

3.2 Pre-Class Activities (Flipped Learning):

Instructors can use LMS platforms to upload instructional videos, reading materials, and vocabulary lists prior to class. This approach ensures that classroom time is utilized for higher-order learning activities such as discussion and analysis (Bishop & Verleger, 2013).

Students accessed video lectures and reading materials via LMS.

3.3 In-Class Activities: Concept explanation using multimedia presentations, Live quizzes using Kahoot, Group discussions via breakout rooms, Multimedia presentations via Canva, Real-time polling and feedback, discussions based on YouTube videos are some of the examples where we can effectively use digital tools for ELT.

Such strategies enhance learner engagement and retention.

3.3.1 Speaking and Communication Practice

Virtual tools with breakout room features facilitate 'Group discussions, Debates, Role-play activities.'

These activities improve fluency, confidence, and interpersonal communication skills, which are essential for professional contexts.

3.4 Collaborative Writing and Peer Learning

Platforms like Google Docs and Padlet allow students to collaboratively write and edit texts. Peer feedback mechanisms encourage critical thinking and improve writing quality.

3.5 Language Lab Integration

Dedicated language lab sessions provide structured training in pronunciation, listening comprehension, and interview skills. These sessions bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

3.6 Post-Class Assessment and Feedback

Writing assignments submitted online, Feedback provided using Grammarly and instructor comments Assignments submitted through LMS platforms can be evaluated using AI tools like Grammarly. Continuous feedback helps students refine their language skills over time.

4. Implications for B. Tech and Undergraduate Students

The use of digital tools in English language teaching has several advantages:

- Enhances employability and professional communication skills
- Supports personalized and self-paced learning

- Bridges linguistic gaps among diverse learners
- Encourages active participation and collaboration

However, effective implementation requires pedagogical alignment and teacher training. Merely adopting technology without interactive usage limits its potential.

5. Conclusion

Digital tools have become integral to English language teaching in Indian higher education. When used strategically, they transform classrooms into interactive learning environments that foster communication competence and career readiness. For B. Tech students, in particular, the integration of digital tools plays a critical role in preparing them for global professional contexts.

Technology-enhanced classroom interaction has the potential to redefine English language teaching in higher education. For B. Tech students, digital tools not only improve language proficiency but also prepare them for professional communication.

Effective integration of digital tools requires a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy. Future research may explore large-scale implementation across diverse educational settings.

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