Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges

Sohaib Alam
Research Scholar
Department of English,
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh, U.P., India

Abstract

Drama in language learning and teaching gives us a lot of choices from the space of multimedia like Computers, CALL, Internet, T.V. Audiotapes, CD, Audio-Visual Aids, Radio, Power Point and so on. Utilizing Drama in teaching, particularly in teaching ESL provides a number of advantages. Drama can be coordinated into language classrooms viably to accomplish communicative purpose by incorporating the four basic language skills. Multimedia integration in the second language curriculum and its implementation in the classroom poses a number of challenges which refer the way multimedia tools and task affect language learning as well as learners' general cognitive, emotional, social and moral development. Using these multimedia tools to create a context for teaching English has many advantages. Drama is significant in enhancing learner's confidence, creativity, motivation in learning but integrating multimedia tools comprises numerous challenges for the teacher. The nature of classrooms and the role of the teacher has changed a lot as compared to the early 90s. The world of information technology has affected the classroom scenario too. As the switch between behaviorist to cognitivist so traditional to modern approach has changed the entire method and techniques of teaching learning scenario. This paper aims to explore how Drama can be used effectively and interactively to encourage learners to learn English as a second language with the integration of multimedia tools and what are the major issues and challenges in the real classroom situation that a teacher has to face. It also aims that how the English language can be taught with the help of multimedia tools in the classroom to develop learners' knowledge of the language.

Keywords- *Drama, Audio-visual aids, CALL, Multimedia Tools, Language Skills*

Introduction

In this global world the language teaching is ever changing. Nowadays the nature of language classroom is very different as compared to 90s. The focus has shifted from behaviorist to cognitivist, form to function, use to usage, accuracy to fluency and correctness to appropriateness. As Eaton says "There is no longer focus on grammar and memorization but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to communicate and connect to others around the globe" (5). Traditional techniques of pedagogy are offering approach to more up to date, more imaginative mindsets about how we learn, teach and acquire knowledge. Today's student and classroom are becoming more diverse and unique day by day. Learning a language is much more complex process than acquiring because the learners are not using target language on a regular basis and are also not able to practice in real life situation. Teaching any language as a second or foreign language includes major challenges for the teacher of that language especially when it comes to multimedia integration in ESL classrooms. Using drama in teaching, particularly in teaching English as a second language provides a number of advantages and use of multimedia tools gives it more authenticity. Drama can be incorporated into language classrooms effectively to accomplish communicative purpose by integrating the four language skills (LSRW). Drama in language learning has a clear pedagogical aim concentrating on the personal and social developments of the learners. It encourages learners to imagine, indulge, act and learn. Drama can assist, facilitate and foster language skills and their integrated linguistic competence by making a suitable meaningful context. Moreover, it is a powerful tool that indulges learners interactive throughout the whole class. It also enables learners to connect emotion and cognition as it enables them to make the connection between thought and action. Teaching English as a second language obviously needs a balance between receptive and productive skills; drama and theatre techniques in pedagogy efficiently fulfils this requirement as it focuses on both the skills. Multimedia tools are powerful in enhancing learner's confidence, creativity, motivation in learning. "The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language noted that technology has been used to both assist and enhance language learning. It is now rare to find a language class that does not use some form of technology" (ACTFL, 2013). "To enhance the learning of learners, drama with the use of multimedia tools uses CLT approach in English language classes. This approach requires interactive classroom activities and the integration of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking" (Sharif 64-70). However the difficulty is we don't have the arrangement to properly implement the CLT method in ESL classroom with regard to multimedia. Learning a language is a continuing process that doesn't finish at a particular level; rather, it continues throughout one's life. The technology provides learners with several options in learning the English language that can

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

434

be useful and suitable for the learning necessities of the learners. The computer is a modern apparatus in language education; it is a technological advancement that helps make learning procedure fun and may likewise make a positive learning condition. Also, it gives learners with new understandings and learning process to enable students to settle on various choices and to think critically. The World Wide Web increases learner's interest and also offers number of software and application that are design for the second language learner who want to learn English.

"Drama activities can help students to learn language well. It offers great opportunities for students to communicate with others even when they have limited vocabulary. They can use their body languages and gestures to express their purposes. Multimedia tools and materials gives this technique strength of variations" (Bas 2008 Web). "About the function of using Drama for at-risk students, he claims that some at-risk students are low level learners" (Schiller 9). So the challenge is how to motivate them to be engaged in learning? Drama games or activities encourage them to communicate with others and express themselves bravely. Though audiotapes and computers are useful tools to help learners learn some routine expressions and common words, learners need to experience a real language atmosphere. ICT gives a kind of motivation in the learners from the world of multimedia like Computers, CALL, Internet, Radio, Audio tapes, TV, Audio-Visual Aids, CD, PowerPoint and so on. "It was observed by that the style of language teaching has changed over the years. Warschauer noted that virtually every type of language teaching has had its own supporting technologies. For instance, teachers who followed the grammar translation method (i.e., where the teacher explained the grammatical rules and the students performed the translations) used the technology of the blackboard. This was merely a one-way transmission of information. Later the blackboard was replaced with the overhead projector, which allowed for a teacher dominated learning approach" (Warschauer 303-318). Now we have language lab classes comprised of audio-visual classes. "In these labs students would enter at a designated time and perform repetition drills on computers" (Warschauer, 303-318). The principle motivation behind the language lab is to study listening and speaking skill as speaking and listening are two major skills which were neglected still in India and around globe. The audio lab proved to be quite innovative since it provides learners with exposure suprasegmental feature of native speaker. At that time, learners had no opportunities to travel in English speaking countries. "Whether in the lab or in the classroom, repetitive drills that emphasized technology only and ignored communication achieved poor results. Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, the field saw a shift towards CLT to emphasize student engagement in authentic and meaningful interactions" (Warschauer, 303-318).

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

435

By actively involving him in his own learning process, drama allows each student to absorb the language in his own way. Similarly, learners whose language skills are still very limited are given the opportunity to communicate using nonverbal cues such as body movements and facial expression as objectives of the study. Drama provides an excellent platform for exploring theoretical and practical aspects of the English language. (Sahni, 2.3)

Susan Holden "adds some definitions as to what Drama is and how it provides opportunities for a person to express themselves" (1-9). Alan Maley and Alan Duff are "classic sources for the benefits of using Drama techniques; how it helps to learn new vocabulary, builds confidence, motivates the students and helps shift the focus from the teacher to the students" (229-231).

Objective of the Study

This inculcation of Drama and drama through ICT in ESL classroom proposes to attain the real life situation in English classrooms which is the primary focus of Communicative Language teaching. It promotes the communication capacity of the learners. It also improves the teaching effect as well as interaction of teacher and students. As Zhanghongling states:

> Through multimedia and network technology we can offer students not only rich sources of authentic 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 English.(11.1)

Improvising Drama and drama in ESL classroom doesn't mean to encourage parrot like repetition in its exercises. But rather on using the text as a stimulus to generate fresh thought. Moreover, the prime focus of the study is to enable learners to produce natural language in different mode or settings through different ingredients of drama and techniques of Drama. The study focuses to analyze the ways in order to encourage the learners to learn English language through drama with the help of multimedia tools as well as to improvise the incorporation of drama by developing activities for the effective use of drama in Language teaching. Finally it foregrounds how techniques of drama and theatre are used in language teaching through ICT.

Issues in Integrating Multimedia tools

Second language classroom has number of issues in integrating multimedia tools. One of the problem that prevails is students are not motivated to involve, indulge actively in the communicative task that teacher ask to perform. The most significant factor is simply the learning effort of the learner, regarding time, intensity, productivity, appropriateness and

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

436

suitability of that effort. All other components in the system are evaluated by their effect upon these learning parameters. A system which makes it possible for the learner to work longer, more intensively, more efficiently and appropriately will be more highly valued than one which does not. Teachers are not trained enough to handle the multimedia tools and do not have knowledge of using technology assisted language learning. Itis the teacher, i.e. an initiator who sorts out, organizes and displays the material to be learned, keeps an eye on progress, gives feedback on performance and discovers methods for overcoming learning difficulties and troubles, of building and looking after inspiration, cultivating and controlling group works. Though, syllabus and curriculum are not multimedia friendly i.e. it does not have particular section that hold special attention for the teacher and the learner. However, it is clear that so far as is possible, courses should be planned on a multi-media basis, to exploit the specific advantages of each medium, whilst not being unduly constrained by its limitations. It should be remembered, however, that a multi-media course isn't just difficult to design and regulate, yet in addition makes rather more requests upon the learner, who must organize himself to pursue the different activities laid down in the programme in the order and at the times specified. In country like India which is emerging as a super power in terms of economy and strength still in our colleges and universities language labs are not available and if fortunately labs are there lab experts and technicians are not available to take care of the lab sessions and classes. Another problem which is major one, lack of infrastructure, we still use the chalk and blackboard, smart classes are not available in our classrooms. So somewhere we are lacking in infrastructure also. Moreover after this all hassles and difficulties the last nail of the coffin is problems of electricity. We don't have adequate electricity to use all the resources we have. There is problem of funds to establish or to make availability of multimedia materials. Size of classroom is a big problem for the teacher in a country like India to involve all the students for the particular task. Nature of classroom is heterogeneous not homogeneous, there are students from different region speaking different languages so the teacher have to make balance between the average and intelligent students through different techniques like pair work, group work and think pair share and so on. Finally, the root cause of motivation level of the student is examinations are not conducted with the help of multimedia i.e. evaluation system must integrate multimedia resources in order to motivate and make learners more serious.

Suggestions

Successful ICT integration in the ESL curriculum and its practical implementation are not easy task. There are number of ways through which we can reduce, minimize the gap between using ICT in the classroom. First and foremost, they require a clear pedagogical framework. For that there are number of things has to done i.e. teacher training courses

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

437

should be introduced with the nuance keeping in mind that even with the minimum utilization of multimedia tools we reach at maximum achievement. The question is how? Even a common and general medium like mobile phones can help teacher to use as a means of multimedia. The use of mobile phones to provide feedback to the student is excellent. Students can also be encouraged to hold controlled telephonic conversations with each other. Co-operation between ELT practitioners and developing materials should allow genuine native programme material, suitably selected and edited, to be integrated into courses at all levels. It is quite possible to programme a multi-media course in such a way that it can be followed fully by students working as individuals. Group work is, of course, advantageous. Short term courses for enhancement of ICT resources should be made compulsory for the teachers. Providing training in how specific multimedia tools and tasks actually affect learners cognition and language acquisition at different stages of ESL proficiency developments. We should very consciously design the syllabi and curriculum to make it multimedia friendly. Apart from this, deciding a set of clear pedagogical guidelines for ICT integration in lessons and activities is very much needed. Separate classes should be allotted for the lab exercises. Skill development of the teachers has to be done by the experts for time to time for upgradation and improvement. Platforms like Edmodo should be used by teacher to access, check and guide learners. It is a good resource that can be used to give instructions and have a look on the learner's improvement in a particular task. The most fascinating thing about Edmodo is you can log in through your account and add the students and their parents too so that they can also have a look on their wards work. Last but not the least government should take initiative for the technical developments of the colleges and universities i.e. easy access of grants for smart classrooms, labs, multimedia tools and materials and so forth. Digital India should be introduced in education also and we as teachers, practitioners have to develop as much as multimedia exercises, materials, activities and so forth. The effectiveness of the integration will be a function of the extent to which a teacher knows how, why and when digital tools enhance learning and affect learner's cognition and learner's acquisition.

Conclusion

The findings and recommendations of this paper are not just helpful for English instructors educating in the schools, yet in addition to the speakers with related field, particularly the individuals who are showing student educators, educators instructing in schools, colleges and other instructive organizations. The suggestions and recommendations might be filled in as guidelines for instructors and trainers while incorporating multimedia devices in education, as they need their learners to completely focus on the lesson, by monitoring the desires and needs in language teaching. At the point when teachers know how to grasp learners' attention, teachers can give a friendly and fascinating environment to the

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

438

learners to learn and ICT is the best choice to get consideration. The multimedia will not only help learners to become more active but also they take their own initiative towards the learning. Furthermore, the implementation of multimedia tools in teaching language with the help of Drama and drama is less time consuming as compare to manual one. Subsequently, the instructors will have adequate time to make friendly classroom exercises and lead an effective teaching and learning process. Finally, multimedia tools must assist not drive the teaching and learning process.

References

1. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2013) Role of technology in language learning. Retrieved on 22 November 2014 from http://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/role-technology-language learning.

2. Bas, G. Integrating multiple intelligences in ESL/EFL classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal,* *5.* Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/BasIntegratingMultipleIntelligences.html (2008, May).

3. Eaton, S. E. "Global trends in language learning in the twenty-first century." Calgary, Canada: Onate Press, 2010. Print.

4. Holden, Susan. *Drama in Language Teaching*. Essex: Longman, 1981. Print

5. Maley, Alan, and Alan Duff. *Drama Techniques in Language Learning: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers (2nd Edition).* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Print

6. Maley, Alan& Alan Duff. *Drama Techniques in Language Learning: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers.* (3rd Edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print

7. Maley, Alan, and Alan Duff. *Words!* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1982. Print.

8. Sahni, Geeta. *CTET Language I, English and its Pedagogy.* India: Pearson Education India, 2016. Print.

9. Schiller, J. "*Drama for at-risk students: a strategy for improving academic and social skills among public middle students*."Dominican University of California, Unpublished Master's Thesis.2008. Print.

10. Sharif, M. Y. "Communicative approach: An innovative tactic in English language teaching."*Journal of Education and Practice*. 3(4) (2012): 64-70.Web 15 November 2016.

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

439

11. Warschauer, M. & Meskill, C. Ed(s) *Technology and Second Language Learning. In J.Rosenthal (Ed.), Handbook of Undergraduate Second Language Education.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. (2000).p.303-318. Print.

12. Zhanghongling. "The development tendency of the modern foreign language teaching and the computer assisted instruction. Computer- Assisted Foreign Language Education" 3 (2000). Web. 02 January 2018.

Using Drama for Teaching Language in ESL Classrooms Integrating Multimedia Tools: Issues and Challenges
By
Sohaib Alam

440