

A Study on the Use of Technological Assistance in Learning Language Skills

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Abstract: *This article analyses the role of technology in education particularly in English language. From the target culture, students can view, listen, read and get timely materials through the purposeful use of technology. The application of modern technology shows a significant advance in contemporary English language teaching and learning. The study discusses the four basic skills in English language and how far technology enhances learning of the four skills in English language classrooms. The concept of using modern technology is not merely limited to the use of modern appliances and devices, but also to the introduction of innovative systems and methods of teaching which facilitates faster and more comprehensive learning progression.*

Keywords: Education Technology, Receptive Skills, Productive Skills, Digital Classroom

1. Introduction

English being the global lingua franca has become part and parcel of almost every existing field which ranges from business to entertainment. Being the most spoken language in the world, English holds a huge part in communication. English language began to form in the 5th Century AD and continues to develop until this day as the international language. A digital classroom can serve much in strengthening the three domains of learning namely the cognitive, affective and the psychomotor. The study gives a glimpse of the impact of technological assistance in enhancing the four language skills namely, Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing in English language classrooms.

Skills in English Language

Learning English involves both the Receptive Skills (Reading and Listening) and the Productive Skills (Speaking and Writing) which are fundamental to speak and understand a language. These four language skills are sometimes called Macro skills. Under individual level, these skills improve personality and increases sense of self-worth. Effective communication is acquired after learning these skills.

Listening is most widely used in people's daily life. Teaching the learners a lot of listening activities is a good way of improving their vocabulary. In learning a language, environment plays an important role. For a foreign language, we can meet it only in formal places and classes. Only through practice can the learners improve their listening comprehension. Speaking is often connected with listening. It allows us to communicate effectively. It gives the ability to convey information verbally and in the way that the listener can understand. Speaking a language helps to move your knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation from the back of your mind to the front. That is, from your slow memory to your quick memory.

Reading is an active process. It enables us to think with a broad mind. It is the act of processing text in order to derive meaning. Reading can help learners to explore topics that they love and stories that engage them. Finally, Writing provides variety in classroom procedures. It is the ability to

clearly communicate ideas through writing. Writing helps to recover memories, to stockpile ideas, to inform, to entertain, to explain as well as to persuade. It is a great mental exercise too.

Role of Technology in Enhancing Language Skills

Technology plays a vital role in enhancing the language learning process. Technology transforms students from passive recipients to active learners. It can help students with the technical tools to get the best samples of pronunciation of the language. Education technology has become the perfect complement in reaching fluency and proficiency. The use of multimedia projectors can support both teachers and students in learning language skills. Likewise the use of laptops can improve skills in writing and can also facilitate quicker learning. Similarly, the use of e-books provides a completely enriched learning experience and thereby improves their academic performance. E-book being available in digital form can help reduced transaction costs for the user.

Here is a study which shows the opinion of teachers and students of Higher Secondary School level in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram towards the extent of use of technology in enhancing the four language skills. Through the percentage analysis done, it shows how far technology could assist both teachers and students in acquiring the four language skills. The data for the study was collected from 100 Higher Secondary School students and 50 Higher Secondary School English teachers through questionnaires and used them for analysis. The study used Survey Method for collecting data.

Statistical Technique Adopted

To analyze the data collected through survey, the researcher has made use of the following statistical technique:

Percentage Analysis

The opinions of teachers and students on the role of technology in enhancing language skills was collected and analyzed, based on their responses under the alternatives-agree, disagree and undecided for the present study.

2. Analysis of Data Collected from Teachers

The details of the responses of Higher Secondary School teachers in English regarding the various aspects of technology applied in language classrooms are analyzed and interpreted through a table showing the number of responses and percentage of responses and its graphical representation.

The responses of teachers towards the extent of use of technology in enhancing the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing are given in the table below:

Table 1: Responses of Teachers Regarding the Extent of Use of Technology for Enhancing Language Skills

Item no.	Skills considered	Number of responses (Strength 50)			% of responses		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
1	Listening	42	8	0	84	16	0
2	Speaking	0	15	5	60	30	10
3	Reading	18	24	8	36	48	16
4	Writing	36	12	2	72	24	4

(A-Agree, D- Disagree, U-Undecided)

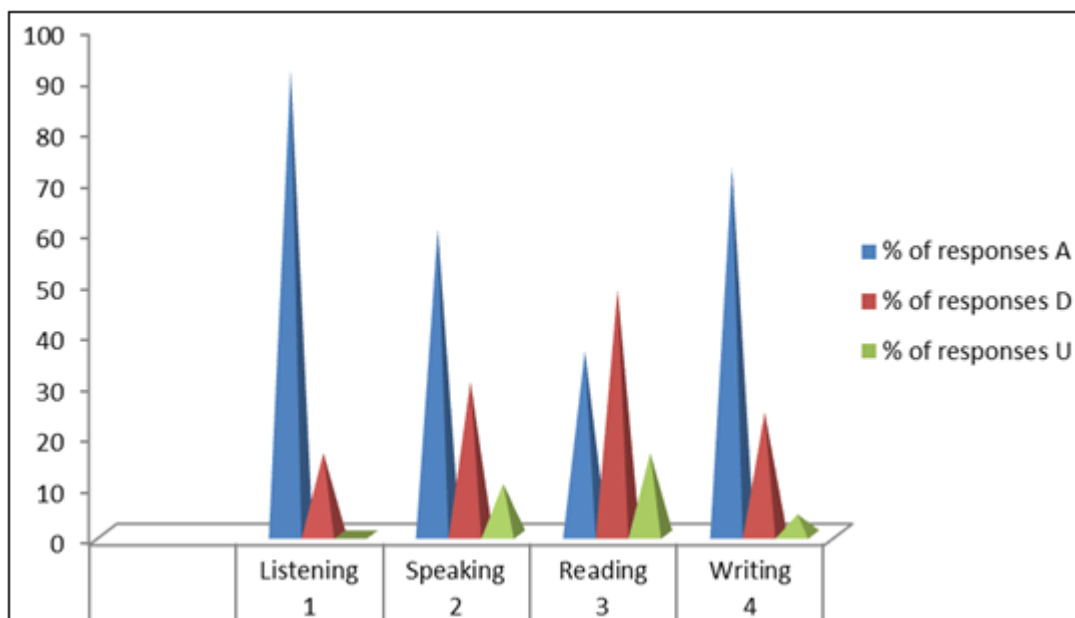


Figure 1: Graphical Representation of the Responses of Teachers Regarding the Extent of Use of Technology for Enhancing Language Skills

3. Analysis of Data Collected from Students

The details of the responses of Higher Secondary School students regarding the various aspects of technology applied in language classrooms are analyzed and interpreted through a table showing the number of responses and percentage of responses and its graphical representation.

The responses of students towards the extent of use of technology in enhancing the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing are given in the table below:

Table 2: Responses of Students Regarding the Extent of Use of Technology for Enhancing Language Skills

Item no.	Skills considered	Number of responses (Strength 50)			% of responses		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
1	Listening	60	36	4	60	36	4
2	Speaking	52	42	6	52	42	6
3	Reading	40	58	2	40	58	2
4	Writing	63	28	9	63	28	9

(A-Agree, D- Disagree, U-Undecided)

As per the table shown, majority of the students (60%) agree that they get opportunity to listen to different narrations or speeches through technological devices in classrooms. In improving speaking skills, majority of the students (52%) agree that their pronunciations are examined by the teacher through an electronic device and suitable corrections are

given. But the enhancement of reading skill is low in classrooms compared to the other skills as a good number of students (58%) disagree that their teacher helps in using instructional software like electronic books in classrooms.

Majority of the students (63%) agree that their teachers provide comprehension questions through an electronic device to improve their writing skill.

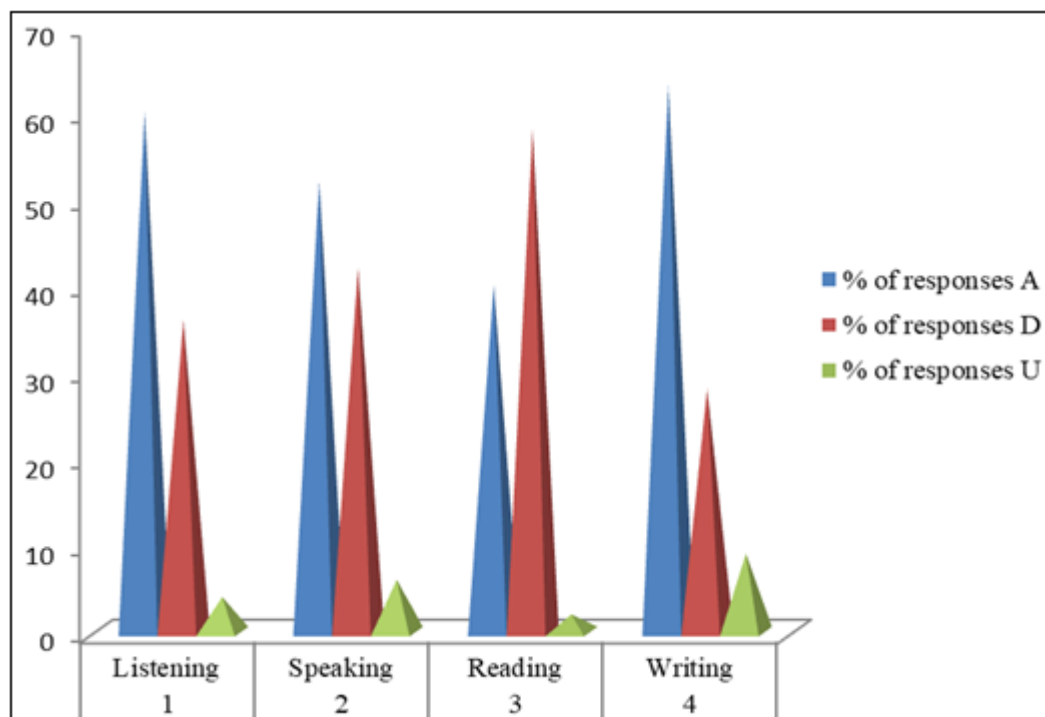


Figure 2: Graphical Representation of the Responses of Students Regarding the Extent of Use of Technology for Enhancing Language Skills

4. Conclusion

To teach the target language, the teacher needs to create an atmosphere that is vibrant, active and interesting. The linking of technology in education creates a remarkably rich medium for learning. From the study it is evident that multimedia technologies allows unlimited opportunities in English classrooms and this helps in providing a wide range of audience and purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening and researching. Hence, technology assisted classrooms promises the teaching quality and the improvement of skills in learning English language. The study shows that a small percentage of students disagree that they don't get the assistance of teachers to use e-books, which has to be considered, as e-books can offer flexibility in English classrooms. Technological assistance in English language classrooms can provide students with a completely enriched learning experience which in turn improve their academic performance.

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