INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY WITH FACE TO FACE MODE OF ESL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Technology plays an important role in Education. The national and state standards require teachers to integrate technology into their teaching. But in countries such as Sri Lanka the face to face ESL programs still lack the integration of technology .This study explores the benefits of integrating technology in face to face mode of English as a Second Language learning at the Sri Lankan context. The qualitative research was based on the interviews with the fifteen staff of the English Language Teaching Centre, University of Jaffna. The main findings indicate that participants could observe integration of technology with face to face mode and advantages in practicing each skill individually. The results of the study showed that qualitative methodology yielded evidence about the advantages in integrating technology with face to face mode of ESL learning. The study has an implication to design new ESL material incorporating technology.

Key Words: Technology, face to face mode, learning ESL

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INTRODUCTION

Technology plays an important role in Education. The national and state standards require teachers to integrate technology into their teaching. But in countries such as Sri Lanka the face to face ESL programs still lacks the integration of technology.

This study aims to investigate and discuss the effect of integrating technology based ESL learning in the traditional mode of teaching. English as a Second language (ESL) learning has been provided through face to face mode since the beginning of ESL learning. Even with the advent of the online education face to face mode of learning ESL is found from the primary to the secondary all over the world. This study focuses on the students of the Faculty of Arts University of Jaffna where ESL is learnt through face to face mode.

Objective

The aim of the study is to explore the result of integrating technology in face to face mode of ESL learning. Through the findings it is intended to see whether integrating technology in face to face mode could have implication for successful performance in ESL.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that integrating technology in face to face mode of ESL learning will pave the way for better performance in ESL learning.

Methodology

The sample consists of 98 1st year students from the Faculty of Arts University of Jaffna. All the participants were issued a feed back form on which

Dr. SHANMUGAYOGINI.RAVINDRAN

both the traditional and technology based teaching methods were included and the participants' preference of the method were gauged. They were grouped into two in a random basis in order to have controlled and experimental groups. The controlled group is named as a Group A and they were taught by using the usual teaching aid such as black board, handout and textbooks. Technological aid such as computer based teaching was done with the experimental group named as Group B. Both the groups were compared. The observations of the staff ELTC were gathered.

Literature Review

Language teaching methodologies of the past few decades indeed recognize and accommodate the critical component of learning that is affective, in lieu of traditional instructional practice that is strictly cognitive (Asher, 1977; Curran, 1972; Fanselow, 1987; Lozanov, 1979.Using computer-based technologies in ESL instruction makes sense practically, pedagogically, and to some extent, empirically. The prospect of providing language and literacy training for children learning ESL via computer is an intuitively appealing one. At the level of simple practicality, this is a potentially economical option in the minds of administrators who face the challenge of providing services to this population. The notion of efficiency that is intrinsically tied to anything "technological" is also part of this appeal. Tied to efficiency is the notion of economy. Per capita costs for ESL services are high. In most instances, there are so few ESL learners in a

building that grouping is not possible. Variation among students in terms of their level of linguistic and literacy development also work against grouping. Outside of large urban areas, then, the most common form of ESL service is one-on-one tutoring (Fleischman and Hopstock, 1993).Reticent students who are not prone to risk taking in the regular classroom may also benefit from multimedia language learning (Chun, 1994; Meskill & Swan, 1996). In situations where an ESL instructor works with groups of students who are at varying levels of English-language ability and/or from different grade levels, computers represent a means of involving learners in activity that is tailored to their individual language ability and grade level as well as their individual learning needs and preferences. An instructor can thus distribute her attention and direct her support to individual learners as they work on skills in environments appropriate to their individual needs. Exceptions include investigations of the discourse generated by language learners who are paired at the computer with a variety of software types (see, for example, Abraham & Liou, 1993; Meskill, 1993). Studies that move beyond single, software-specific features to account for the complex of contextual factors that constitute on-line language learning are sorely needed.

Findings of the Study

The findings from the feedback form issued to the students is presented in the following grid. The feedback form consisted of 15 questions which are based on the categories mentioned in the grid.

Feedback from the students

Serial	Teaching Aid	Very Interesting	Interesting	Boring	Very Boring
1	Hand out	20	44		11
2	Compact Disk	89	05	02	02
3	TV	67	20	09	09
4	Black board	05	14	61	18
5	Computer	91	07	-	-
6	Multi media projector	85	13	-	-
7	Text Book	20	54	12	11
8	Oral teaching	14	34	44	06

The analysis of the data collected from the feedback form revealed the fact that the majority of the participants showed more interest in the use of Compact Discs, TV, Multimedia projector and

Computer. They revealed the fact that the teaching aid such as using black board, issuing hand out, and teacher centered teaching (Oral teaching) were not interesting. The findings revealed the fact that the

Dr. SHANMUGAYOGINI.RAVINDRAN

students show more interest in learning ESL by integrating technology in the traditional mode of learning.

The findings from the controlled and experimental groups

The participants were divided into two groups. They were named as Group A and B. The A group students were taught in the traditional mode

and considered as control group. Technology based teaching aid were used for B group students.

Group A

The group A students were taught in the traditional way. They showed interest in learning in oral teaching and hand out. At the same time 22 students stated it's very interesting to learn with the help of the blackboard.

Serial	Teaching Aid	Very Interesting	Interesting	Boring	Very Boring
1	Hand out	18	23	08	--
2	Black board	22	20	06	03
3	Text Book	24	19	04	02
4	Oral teaching	19	25	03	02

Group B

Serial	Teaching Aid	Very Interesting	Interesting	Boring	Very Boring
1	Compact Disk	39	10	--------	--------
2	TV	40	09	--------	--------
3	Computer	45	04	-------	--------
4	Multimedia projector	38	11	---------	---------

The group B students were taught with the aid of technology. Majority of the participants showed much interest in learning ESL .They showed high interest in learning with the help of CD, TV, Computer, and Multimedia.

The performance of the B group and their responses to the feedback form reveals the fact that the ESL learners prefer the integration of technology in the face to face classes.

Teachers' Responses to Questionnaire Survey

The staffs were interviewed before the grouping of the participants. Fifteen staff were interviewed.

1. Majority of the staff disclosed the fact that they do not use technology
2. Most of the staff stated that they do not have access to technology.

The interview with the staff consisted of open ended questions about practices with computer technology. To begin with, the teachers were asked about grade levels, language backgrounds, and type of instructional support they provided to ESL learners. They were then asked what kind of computer programs they found to be the most useful ones with their students and why. This deliberately open-ended question was successful in leading teachers to explain beliefs about the uses of

computer technology in the classroom. An attempt was made to draw the teacher into providing a rationale for using computer technology and some specific examples of how a lesson might be constructed around the technology. Finally, questions were asked both about how the computer is integrated into the lesson and also about how the ESL lesson integrates across the curriculum.

While some sense of technologies use was gained from these interviews, the quality of response is unavoidably uneven. In others, there were those who had time to elaborate. Furthermore, some teachers were able to articulate their beliefs spontaneously in a way that others were not. There are those teachers who try to use computer programs in creative ways to stimulate student thinking. In addition to integration across the curriculum, they also see computer use as being a part of a larger whole of classroom activity. Typically, these teachers see the technology as a means of enabling the students to construct situations and obtain information which can be brought back to the whole class and which can serve as stimuli for rich language use activities.

Dr. SHANMUGAYOGINI.RAVINDRAN

Interview with Group B staff

From the teachers interviewed who fell into this group, the following kinds of computer use were identified:

Literacy through stories

Teachers use programs that allow students to choose environments and graphics to support the stories they write. There is preference for graphics to support the stories they write. Some use of book-length reading programs was also reported. Here, while reading the story, learners can access explanations and animations through hypertext links.

Literacy through personal journal writing

Word processing is used as the medium for interactive dialog journals. Entries are submitted to the teacher on diskette on which the teacher also saves her personal responses to students' writing.

Literacy through telecommunications

E-mail is used to connect students to other universities, to experts, and to share problem-solving hubs. There is also a growing use of the Internet for accessing information relevant to students' native language and culture, to the interests of individual students, and to support mainstream classroom work.

Autonomous usage with integration across the curriculum

Here computers are used as tools by students as they work on their own projects. When the system is networked, students are able to access their work in a variety of content areas from a number of locations in the school building.

Group A

These teachers regard computer based activity as separate from regular classroom activity. For them, the computer is utilized mainly to practice skills or as a reward for successful classroom work. These teachers are also less inclined to integrate across the curriculum or collaborate with colleagues (or are operating in situations less conducive to such practices).

3. There are strengths and weaknesses of both ESL and Native Speaker software products.

Despite these constraints, the following picture of the use of computer technology for ESL / bilingual students has emerged:

❖ . Access to computer technology is very uneven and, according to interviewees, depends on several factors:

❖ Overall, teachers like using computer programs because they are motivating, they give instant feedback, they allow users to progress at individual rates, and they often provide assessment components. Some teachers also like them because they provide a space for student-student interaction away from the teacher and aid. The teachers interviewed can, broadly speaking, be divided into two groups.

Teachers' Observation

Students' Response	Oral Teaching/traditional	Technology Based Class
Attendance	Dropped	Increased
Attention	Dropped	Increased
Ability	Dropped	Better
Performance	Remarkable to a certain extent	commendable
Attitudes towards learning	Positive to a certain extent	positive

Discrepancies in using technology

In the study, during the process of teaching in with the aid of technology, the teacher encountered numerous difficulties and challenges from students' presentation, and assignments. The findings of problems are (1) inefficient computer facilities, (2) administrators' ignorance, (3) teachers' belief and teaching styles, (4) teachers' computer competence, (5) teachers' work load, (6) Students' computer competence, and (7) the government's support. The challenges that teachers face and solutions to the problem are to (1) fulfill facilities, (2) build up innovative teaching ideas, (3) improve computer competence, (4) participate in conferences, seminars, and teaching practice, (5) reduce teachers' work load, (6) do self evaluation, (7) and ask the government for help. Finally students' self evaluation and teachers' rubric of Web

Dr. SHANMUGAYOGINI.RAVINDRAN

Quests are presented to teachers' improvements for the future.

Conclusion

The study reveals the fact that integrating technology with face to face ESL learning promotes ESL learning. The results of the study showed that integrating technology with face to face mode of ESL learning bring more success to the ESL learners. The study has an implication to design new ESL material incorporating technology.

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Dr. SHANMUGAYOGINI.RAVINDRAN