Redefining Language Education: A Hybrid Approach of Social Media and Conventional Teaching

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the influence of social media in English language platforms has significantly transformed the teaching and learning process. It made the educational path more flexible, innovative, immersive, interactive and experiential. Social media offers numerous opportunities, as well as challenges, for both educators and learners. In order to create engaging, real-world language learning experiences, it has become essential to rely on social media as a part of a digitally enhanced language learning process. Traditional and digital methods of language learning have their unique way of enhancing learners' proficiency, co-existing both means of learning process can bring vast changes in the enhancement of language teaching and learning. The aim of this study is to rethink the way of language being taught inside the classroom based on the needs of the learners of this digital era. It highlights the benefits of blending digital and traditional methods in English language learning. It explores the ways in which social media can be integrated in language learning classrooms for an effective learning process. This paper tries to evaluate the necessity to depend on both traditional and digital methods of teaching and learning through quantitative analysis.

Keywords: Social Media, Traditional education, technology, pandemic, Gen-Z and Gen-Alpha

I. INTRODUCTION

English as a Lingua Franca, acts as a connecting bridge between different cultures, countries and people globally. As English is regarded as an universally spoken language across the world it becomes crucial for the non-native learners to get acquainted with the language. English is being taught as a Second Language (L2) due to its prevalence in numerous countries, including Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Especially in India, English is being taught as a part of their curriculum in schools, educational institutions, and Universities.

However, achieving proficiency in this language is quite challenging for the non-native speakers. While talking about the proficiency level of English language among non-native speakers Mohanraj in his research work AI, ChatGPT and ELT: A Maverick's view (2024) states, "Though English was taught over eight years before a learner joined the university, the proficiency acquired was said to be not adequate to cope with higher education."(4) In order to achieve proficiency in the English language, acquiring it naturally holds greater significance than merely learning it.

According to Stephen Krashen, language acquisition is an unconscious process, whereas language learning is a conscious one. Acquiring a language that is getting exposed to the language and using it in a real life scenario is more effective than learning a language through formal or traditional ways by learning its rules and grammatical structures. Krashen et al. (1982) while discussing second language learning states that "Learning is "knowing about" a language, known to most people as "grammar", or "rules". Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language, or explicit learning. "(10)

Due to the advancement of technology and social media, the methods of language teaching and learning have taken various forms. Social media plays a crucial role in language acquisition by providing exposure to native speakers across global boundaries. Many educational institutions utilize social media to offer real-life language experiences, showcasing how native speakers interact. This enables non-native speakers to understand how the English language is used in real life contexts. It fosters learners' engagement and makes learning accessible for learners.

The COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to a great switch in the learning environment, from offline to online mode. It became a necessity to rely on technology and social media to seek the attention of learners and to enhance their learning competency. Thereafter, the necessity has become one of the basic requirements in their day to day life. Gen-Z and Gen - Alpha learners,

being tech savvies, educators' dependence on social media and technology has become essential.

Brown (1994) stated that the inefficacy of the method does virtually nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the language.Using digital tools and social media in language classrooms caters the needs of current generation learners and makes learning, teaching language better and faster. It has its own drawbacks too. In recent times a commotion arose between the relative importance of traditional educational methods and digital oriented educational methods. Though each method of teaching has its own merits and demerits, completely relying on one method of teaching will not always provide productive results. This research aims to examine the effects of these divergent strategies and evaluate the possible advantages of using an integrated approach.

II. RESEARCH STATEMENT

The objective of this study is to explore the differing perspectives on the role of traditional and digital modes in language education, and to assess whether one or both are essential for effective teaching and learning.

Research Questions

- How does the shift from traditional to digital modes predominantly affect learners?
- How integrating both traditional and digital methods in English Language teaching helps in language enhancement among learners?

Hypothesis

The incorporation of digital teaching with traditional teaching and learning methods will help learners to acquire the language which will significantly enhance language learning. It will also significantly improve language learning, retention, and overall proficiency of the learners.

General Objectives

1) To examine the extent of the paradigm shift from traditional to digital modes of English language learning.

2) To analyze the effectiveness of incorporating digital tools and social media in the traditional classroom for the enhancement of English language learning.

3) To investigate the role of social media, digital tools, and traditional methods of teaching in promoting learners' engagement, interaction, and motivation in English language learning.

4) To explore the challenges and barriers encountered in implementing digital and traditional language learning approaches.

5) To assess the impact of social media and traditional means of language learning process on language proficiency levels and language skills development.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to examine the importance of unification of traditional and digital educational methods in language learning. It seeks to provide a thorough response to the question of why integrating social media, digital tools, and traditional means of education is crucial in educating learners in our contemporary, technologically advanced society.

Need for the study

Conventional teaching methods like chalk and talk remain effective for improving comprehension and language skills (LSRW) of the learners. Acknowledging learners' preferences and needs, particularly the learners of Generation Z and Alpha learners of the 21st century, it became necessary to rely on social media influenced digital based learning in order to provide an effective and immersive language learning. This study delves into the growing significance of social media in education, particularly in our technology-driven world. It seeks to explore the role of social media in digital education and tries to answer why adopting blended mode is essential. It also aims to provide insights into the importance of consolidating digital and traditional teaching methods in English language education. Additionally, it tries to

prove that incorporating digital and traditional methods into English language learning not only enhances accessibility and inclusivity by breaking down geographical and physical barriers but also enables adaptive learning and personalization. These advantages ensure that learners can access resources from diverse locations and receive customized instruction, ultimately optimizing their English language learning process.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative study is undertaken, to gain understanding of learners preference over traditional to digital teaching and learning methods, basic theoretical research has been conducted. This is followed by a brief explanation which encounters the preferences of learners for the innovative and interesting teaching and learning technique.

Historical Background

English holds the status of being one of the most extensively spoken languages globally as a lingua franca. Devrim and Bayyurt (2010) states that "It is an undeniable fact that English has become a global lingua franca. It is the most commonly spoken foreign language, language of media, language of social media, and language of science." After the British colonization, English became an essential tool for effective cross-cultural communication due to its widespread use in business, academics, travel, and the internet, thus knowing it well provides learners with the opportunity to improve their lives on a global scale. English language learning is the process by which non-native speakers acquire the language in a different learning environment through continuous learning process either consciously or unconsciously. There are many difficulties involved with teaching English as a second or foreign language.

Learners are not 'simply' learners anymore than teachers are 'simply' teachers; teaching contexts, too, differ from one another in a significant number of ways. In other words, language teaching is far more

complex than producing cars: we cannot therefore assume that the social media of language teaching will lead in a neat, deterministic manner to a predictable set of learning outcomes (Tudor 2003).

Overcoming language obstacles to managing learner motivation and cultural diversity is the vital role of every language educator. Understanding how language can be acquired is essential for effective English language teaching.

Education in general has substantially enhanced human lives as compared to earlier eras. It is the foundation for raising people's standard of living and enriching their mind, refines them and enlightens them. Before the English language emerged for academic purposes, Latin and Greek dominated the study of foreign languages during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries in the West. For their alleged capacity to improve intellectual capability, these languages were highly esteemed. The main goal of learning Latin and Greek was to cultivate academic and erudite qualities in their speakers rather than to achieve conversational communication.

During this time, the primary educational methods focused on the thorough study of grammatical principles, syntactic structures, and vocabulary memorization, frequently requiring the translation of literary writings. The emphasis was on correctly translating from the foreign language to the native language and comprehending the complex grammatical subtleties. This approach, which subsequently came to be known as the "Grammar Translation Method," focused more on text interpretation and translation than it did on teaching useful conversational skills.

There were few opportunities for learners to practice speaking or engage in oral communication under this popular Classical Method. The focus remained on developing a profound knowledge of the language's structure and literature. People attempted to demonstrate their ability to study and convey their knowledge, particularly in academic and intellectual circles, by becoming fluent in Latin and Greek.

However, as the 19th century rolled on, perspectives on language learning changed, and new instructional methodologies appeared. As a result, the emphasis was shifted from rote memorization and translation to more communicative strategies that promoted practical usage of the language. Modern, immersive language education methods finally gained ground as a result of the shifting educational environment.

Mehtabul Azam,et al.(2013) in their article"The Returns to English-Language Skills in India" states that, India is a linguistically varied nation with thousands of different languages, 122 of which, according to the 2001 census, have over 10,000 native speakers. On the list of Indian languages with the most speakers, English comes in at only number forty four. Native speakers, belying its significance in India ever since the British East India Company arrived there in the 1600s. The British officially dominated India from 1757 to 1947, the British East India Company was in charge of the Empire. 1857, then from 1858 until 1947, by the British Crown. English evolved to become the language of authority and prestige at this time. English was used for the higher levels. Consequently, the English language played a vital role in facilitating communication between Indian merchants and British settlers. It became essential for the local population in India to acquire proficiency in English in order to thrive in their own land. The substantial influence of English on Indians, combined with its global significance, English became an official language in India after Independence.

Teaching system in India has faced substantial changes over a period of time, Gurukula method of teaching is considered as the most common teaching method during ancient times and it was more common during the Vedic era.Throughout the monarchy, learners were taught using the Gurukula method. This educational system was residential and it was a practice of teaching learners various subjects and skills. While learners lived at the Gurukul until their education was complete, it was actually the house of the teacher or Acharya who trained learners.

Moreover this educational system was not equally available for all people in India. Learners belong to the high class people, where they are given all privileges rather than the low class people due to the class and caste discrimination in India. After the British invasion in India this system of education was shattered. Societal advancements is also one of the causes for the shift of Gurukul Method to a traditional teaching approach. This teaching technique includes Vedic education and one-room schools. The major objective of this teaching method includes chalk and talk, and teacher-centered classrooms. It places greater focus on memorizing, exams, and grades than on the learners' ability to access the content being delivered. It helps learners' to learn new values and skills, as contrasted to practical knowledge.

Traditional teaching methods from earlier times were seen as an excellent assistance in advancing knowledge but it has significant shortcomings. A few of them are lack of focus, it is a direct method of teaching, it is memory-based rather than practical-based, they lack critical thinking, etc.

Constructivist theory suggests that knowledge is not acquired through transmission but is developed through involvement in collaboratively developing artifacts to address the issues raised by driving questions. Developing artifacts involves learners in a series of activities including planning, searching for information, analyzing the information, and making products while sharing ideas with others (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palincsar, 1991).

Modern educational approaches are implemented in the education system to overcome these shortcomings . The main focus of modern educational methods is on learners of the twenty-first century, who are gifted with creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. These learners are capable of coming up with creative solutions to any challenging problems. It is necessary for teachers to rely on social media in order to educate this type of learners. It helps them to promote the skill of creative learners and helps them

to discover new things through their creative way of learning.

Computers started to evolve in educational circles around the 1980's. The evolution of computer based learning can be categorized into seven phases: Early adoption stage, Personal computers and educational software, Internet and Multimedia Integration, Digital Learning and Online Education, Mobile Devices and Personalized Learning, Remote Learning and Technological Integration, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and Personalized Education. In the early adaptation stage computers are used in universities and Research institutions due to its cost effectiveness. In the second phase there was an emergence of subject software where subjects like maths, science and languages were taught and schools started to adopt basic word softwares.

During the third phase computers played a vital role in educational classrooms and in the fourth phase educators started to use authentic materials like videos, pictures etc as educational materials. And the text educational materials are slowly being replaced by online materials. In the Remote Learning and Technological Integrated phase, the expansion of mobile social media leads to mobile education which promotes anywhere, anytime education, in which learners can access their educational materials from any part of the world. Through ICT, the learning space is no longer limited to a traditional classroom, shifting educational delivery to the palms of every individual(The Earth Institute, Columbia University and Ericsson, 2016).

The growth of educational apps promote self learning for the learners. Computers and the internet provide students with access to a vast amount of information and educational resources from around the world. Online libraries, databases, and educational websites enable research and self-directed learning. Interactive and multimedia content in computer-based education can engage students more effectively than traditional methods. Gamification elements, quizzes, and simulations make learning more enjoyable and

motivating. Through CALL learners develop valuable social media skills that are essential for success in the modern world, including digital literacy and proficiency in using various software tools. Digital textbooks and online resources can be more cost-effective than traditional printed materials.

AudioVisual aids are used as innovative materials for creative learning. The learners' curiosity will be aroused and they will feel more like explorers as a result of hands-on activities. Constructive interaction among the learners and group activities foster a sense of learning spirit. The use of social media, audio and video teaching tools, educational games, virtual tours, talking dictionaries, and other materials in modern teaching methods has a significant positive impact on learners and also it provides global access for the learners. This form of instruction gave learners a clear understanding of what they were learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has set the door for rapid advancement in technology, digital tools and social media in many disciplines, including education. It accelerated the shift towards conventional to technology based learning. With widespread lockdowns and school closures, educators and learners had to adapt quickly to remote learning environments. Online platforms, video conferencing tools, social media, educational apps, and digital resources became crucial for maintaining continuity in education.This change emphasized the digital gap as well as disparities in access to social media, technology, and excellent education. Educators had to change their teaching approaches, making use of online platforms and new technologies. Learners faced difficulties with engagement, social connection, and mental health. The pandemic highlighted the significance of education institutions' flexibility, and creativity. The worldwide education and universities have been forced to fully convert to online teaching within the spreading of Covid-19 pandemic. The conversion in teaching from mostly traditional teaching to full online teaching has an unexpected situation of challenges (McKibbin and Fernando 2020).

The pandemic has made it possible for Generation Z and Alpha learners, those who were born in the digital era, to employ social media and technology even more in their academic pursuits. Incorporating social media as well as technology into education has become an appropriate alternative for these learners in the current scenario. Since they were raised in a digital world they are technically sound by nature and these learners are commonly referred as tech savvy. They have grown up with smartphones, tablets, and computers being a part of their everyday lives. So, using social media and technology in the classroom is a way to keep them engaged and excited about learning. It's like giving them tools they already know how to use to help them learn even more effectively. As these generations step into a rapidly evolving digital world, adopting digital-based learning is a strategic move to equip them with the skills and competencies necessary to thrive in the modern era.

Traditional Method of Teaching in Language Classroom

The traditional method of teaching, often referred to as teacher-centred or lecturer-centred instruction. It is characterised by the teacher serving as the primary source of knowledge while learners take on the role of passive listeners. This approach has a rich history of effectively conveying fundamental information and essential concepts. Its primary purpose often lies in imparting cultural knowledge to learners, with teachers acting as content deliverers and learners as recipients of this knowledge.

A typical classroom instructional model is used in the traditional lecture-based teaching style. This method involves the instructor giving verbal lectures while using technologies like projectors and visual or writing surfaces like chalkboards or whiteboards. This approach is often characterized as teacher-centered and content-focused. To put it in a different context, traditional lecture-based instruction is primarily focused on boosting learning through practice questions and exercises. They are particularly excellent at fostering communication skills, critical

thinking, and a greater comprehension of challenging ideas. Although the teacher plays a key role, it is frequently the intention to promote engagement among learners, stimulate active participation, and establish a collaborative learning atmosphere.

Advantages of Using Traditional Method of Teaching in Language Classroom

- Traditional learning tools like textbooks, chalkboards, and physical manipulatives offer a tangible, tactile learning experience
- It reduces screen time
- It provides universal access through libraries
- It minimizes distractions caused by social media,
- It promotes a collaborative language learning environment.
- They encourage hands-on learning, enhance memory retention, and are cost-effective
- It enhances peer teaching and promotes active language learning
- It focuses on reducing the environmental impact of education, thereby promoting sustainability for both students and educators
- The traditional teaching method is effective in preventing physical harm to learners due to the use of social media

V. DIGITAL METHOD OF TEACHING IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

A formalized teaching with the help of digital tools, technology, social media or net resources is called E-learning or digital learning. E- learning is also referred to as a process of getting education anywhere, anytime through . Virtual learning platform can also be defined as a customized learning space wherein syllabus and materials are designed based on the needs of the learners virtually. The use of social media and different pedagogical techniques has advanced modern teaching techniques.

In this technically advancing era, integration of social media and multimedia in education made the teaching and learning process easy and more interactive than the traditional method of teaching. It is a learner centered teaching approach wherein learners become responsible for their learning and they can access any materials to improve their learning from wherever they are and accessing globalized material even more possible from their home, which is impossible in traditional way of teaching. It became the learners choice of learning. There won't be any restriction that learners can use the learning period in a free and tension less way. However, it is essential to strike a balance between traditional and modern teaching techniques to ensure effective learning outcomes

The main purpose of integrating many digital technologies into the learning environment is increasing the quality and success of education. Looking through the related literature indicates that there are a number of studies that support using digital technologies in classrooms increases students' academic success (Chen et al., 2013)

Advantages of Using Digital tools in Language Classroom

- Digital tools in the classroom enhance engagement
- It provide personalized instruction, offer vast resources
- It helps learners acquire essential digital literacy and social media skills
- They provide instant feedback for the learner, which helps the educators to do instant evaluation on learners' understanding of the presented content
- It facilitates collaborative learning
- It promote global accesses to educational materials or resources
- It supports multimedia content, streamline administrative tasks
- It offers accessibility features for students with disabilities
- It contributes to a more sustainable classroom environment by reducing the need for paper and physical resources

Findings of the study

- Blending both digital and traditional means of education especially in English language teaching will enhance learners' communication and comprehension skills.
- It widens the scope of global opportunities for the learners.
- It will provide heightened engagement, enthusiasm and improved performance among the learners.
- It will enhance learners' interaction and reduce distraction especially among Gen z and Alpha learners in the current era.
- It gives learners greater independence, pushes teachers to update themselves in this technically sound world.
- It will promote flexibility, creativity, and a dedication to the inclusion and equity values among learners.
- Exposure to native English language speakers aids in unconsciously acquiring knowledge.
- This process of learning promotes a learner-centred approach, allowing learners to access knowledge globally and engage in free-fledged learning.

VI. CONCLUSION

Incorporating digital tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, and educational apps, and social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook,etc.,into conventional teaching methods enhances opportunities for teachers to select appropriate tools tailored to the needs of today's learners. This integration facilitates language acquisition by addressing potential language barriers and allows learners to engage with environments that align with their interests. According to the research, incorporating technology into conventional classrooms improves learner engagement and helps them by closing the gap between theoretical and real-world language usage. It also promotes adaptability, affordability, and flexibility, ensuring that learning materials are accessible and suitable for diverse learning contexts.

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