

LANGUAGE TEACHERS AS CRUSADERS OF CHANGE!

DR. E. RAM BHASKAR RAJU, E. RACHANA

Abstract: Incomputeracy is a worse disadvantage than illiteracy in contemporary times. Educationists, researchers and administrators have acknowledged that the gambit of the new media of Information Technology into educational institutions calls for a change in learning and teaching patterns, particularly on the part of language teachers in specific those of English. A matter-of-fact approach of technology to teaching and learning tribulations has brought a great relief to pedagogy. Of late, Information Technology has turned out to be undividable from the frontiers of education across the world. With the advent of the modern technology, teaching and learning of English language processes are easier, effective, real, applicable to realistic situations, pertinent to life, retentive, and simplified, nevertheless cannot replace the role played by teachers. The rationale of this study is to scrutinize the inevitability of Information Technology and accentuate its significance as teaching and learning space in the present-day digitalized day-to-day teaching of English language in educational institutions. To this end, the enormous merits of utilizing technology media as a complement to teaching and learning need be pronounced. From this study, all and sundry would know the expediency of technologies as teaching and learning space and the motive why the integration of technology media potential into teaching and learning is inexorable. Through this research, English teaching fraternity would take cognizance of other effective and efficient means of teaching, to which new technologies belong besides the conventional method and they would know the upshots of incomputeracy in this highly competitive world of technology. This paper summons the results, discussions, and recommendations on the part of the new media-literate teachers accordingly for a brighter tomorrow.

Keywords: incomputeracy, teaching-learning process, information technology, media-literate teachers.

Introduction: *The measure of intelligence is the ability to change!*

Currently, there is much debate on how teachers are estimated to work for a knowledge society. We are living in a defining moment of educational record when the world in which teachers do their work is changing intensely, and the demographic work of art of teaching is turning over spectacularly. The hugethrong of teachers who entered the line of work in the expansionist times of the 1960s and 1970s are retiring. Teaching is becoming a young person's profession again. Whoever enters 'teaching' shape the profession and the fate of our children is put in their hands. In today's world, how dare a teacher teach something he/she has not herself come to understand what-is-what and practise? In the case of language education, how can teachers take part in electronically mediated discourses, if they are not acquainted with web expertise including hypertext, do not operate e-mails, chat, inhabit discussion lists, navigate multimedia, and go across the World Wide Web? As such, teachers are caught between demands that endorse standardization, worth, and curriculum goals on the one hand, and demands for creative, future-oriented and innovative consumption of information technologies on the other.

The accountability of realizing perspectives of teaching social, formational and future facets rest directly on the bearing of the new generation of teachers. This is an interesting and perhaps quite intimidating situation for potential educators. At the

same time, it means that there is an exclusive opportunity to make future-oriented, technology-integrated, dynamic and authentic practices as the strength of character of teacher education. To call a spade a spade, Informational Technology does not augment conventional practices, rather transforms them positively.

At this juncture, there are three key challenges for teachers. The first occupies a vision of learning as social, positioned, and tool-mediated; the second involves a view of informational technologies as transforming learning procedures and expanding prospects for learning; the third involves a shift from literacy to multiliteracies as an essential know-how.

Expertise is a shockingly blurred conception. It is a proven fact that given the right support (e.g. institutional organization, educational policies); such teacher's expertise can be developed. However, it entails a drastic shift away from the ceremonial view of teachers as simply providers of a pre-scheduled curriculum. Technologies persuade language production, one's use and understanding of language, and how one is socialized through taking part in communicative activities. In short, they transform essential aspects of our social lives. This is the genuine and justly challenging point of view for language teachers.

In a world alienated by conflicts of cultures and beliefs, the potential of the new media for cultivation of inter-cultural insight and swap is huge. In the

record of mankind, right of entry to information and knowledge has never been so clear-cut at a local, regional, national, or international level. Perceptive use of Information Technologies can promote and uphold cultural and linguistic multiplicity in individuals and in society in general. Facilitating admission to other cultures and languages is the main objective of the language-teaching profession, and using media resources effectively in their teaching represents one of the major challenges facing language teachers today in a cross-section scenario. For many developing countries, Information Technology is considered a decisive mechanism to enable the country to leapfrog ahead in technology-application, by bouncing some stages of development, and becoming an associate of the aftermath of the industrial civilization more quickly than would otherwise be likely.

The effort projected in the paper sets out to give a state-of-the-art needs and perspectives on the part of teachers of English in particular, as agents of change for the teaching and learning of English duly making use of the available information technology administering it in realistic conditions in the classroom for the benefit of today's progeny in educational institutions across the world. One imperative characteristic that has evolved in the study of the use of Information Technology in English language learning and teaching is that, as a subject area – it is both skill based and knowledge based. Progressively more, reference is made to the need for teachers and learners to acquire the “new literacies” caught up in the proper use of the new media available with the Information Technology today.

Information Technology can enlarge right of entry to language programmes and develop the quality of teaching and learning in a broad understanding. The internet serves the classroom context and provides access to current, brand new materials from the country or countries of the target language, English, of course, offering learners and teachers a surplus of materials in different approaches, bringing the foreign culture and language to life and making it more bonafide.

Studies have revealed that technology is most productively deployed in the language classroom, when:

- there is a valid reason for using it;
- different activities are to hand, if problems come up;
- guidance and support is given to learners;
- the use of technology is incorporated and continuing;
- the activities occupied in are motivating and useful to the learners;
- communication is taking place amid learners;

- learners are asked to use language in significant ways.

The reasons specified for this possibility are the learning hardship and learning potentials linked to the new media. Certain professionally matured language teaching luminaries in the field believe that the new media:

- call for and help more autonomy on the part of the learner, more self-directed efforts and the organization of learning procedures;
- persuade interactive work;
- make easy direct feedback;
- make room for a change in the role allotment of teacher/learner, where learners take on teaching purposes;
- enable contents to be recurrently restructured with least efforts;
- supply faster access to teaching materials;
- provide better opportunities for individual forms of learning;
- nevertheless insist on more social learning in group and team work.

The new media not only make easy a changed culture of learning in institutional contexts, they also stipulate such changes. They grant up-to-the-minute opportunities and challenges by:

- offering a wider choice of teaching contents (in particular teaching methods);
- enabling more self-governing learning, offering a variety of choices, individual learning corridors and freer forms of education;
- offering teachers and learners the option to plan and systematize courses together (authorizing learners to persuade the preference of teaching contents);
- freeing learning and teaching from the inadequacies and restraints of the traditional classroom by opening up and using spaces outside the school/teaching institution;
- helping contact between learners and between learners and the teacher by way of the Internet.

Experts underline that new teaching and learning media alone do not mechanically lead to a new *culture of learning* but simply offer the opportunity for change. Teachers' approaches to the new media and appropriate concepts for their use and for the orchestration of learning will decide whether the preferred outcomes can be achieved and whether a key shift in the culture of learning is possible.

Language teachers working in a media-rich atmosphere will, like their matching parts in other disciplines, need to:

- make out the individual learning problems of learners;
- build a careful and considered choice concerning the utilization of the media;

- ensure the truth of information content offered;
- widen efficient search techniques and be capable of conducting valuable research with the help of the computer;
- be able to use standard software with poise and proficiently;
- craft wise and vital choices of the information found.

These new competencies are often interrelated to what has become known as 'the new literacy'. In essence, serious linguists have been able to extract five categories of *new literacy* idiosyncrasies in compliance with the Information Technology that teachers need to understand and master alongside learners. The five categories of new literacies can be envisaged in precision as shown below.

- *Scientific literacy* speaks about to the capability to think systematically in a world, which is increasingly wrought by science and technology. This category of literacy necessitates an understanding of scientific concepts as well as an ability to apply a scientific viewpoint.
- *Digital literacy* recounts the ability to use technology mediasatisfactorily and relate them in a *principled* way to the subject matter at hand. In case of the language teacher, it refers in particular to the ever-new technology literacy, i.e. the ability to make use of the Internet for language research; to the use of linguistic appliances and set programmes for exercises for practice and testing tools.
- *Critical literacy* entails upon the ability to assess the reliability, utility, and dependability of any given sources of information. It also encompasses skills in sifting and identifying the relevant and central in the downpour of information which threatens to swallow up the unprepared.
- *Linguistic literacy* in this perception refers to the ability to distinguish different genres as they develop, to track developments in language use and practice and to adapt materials (bonafide or not) for teaching.
- *Cultural literacy* shares its lot to observing and documenting changes in the organization of the target language together with propositions for language teaching. Such transformations may be of a broad-spectrum nature leading to convergence between own, inhabitant culture and the target culture, or to positive transformations particular to the target culture.

Additionally, so as to function effectively in the world of the new media, teachers require acquiring and mastering a complete assortment of new skills ranging from the technological to the organizational and the conceptual. They need to become utterly computer-literate in a practical sense, and have the confidence

to employ the accessible technology effectively. They should be able to withstand the most common problems arising from the use of computers very much in the way that typical car drivers can cope with usually occurring problems with their motor cars, i.e. no expert knowledge of the apparatus, but knowing what to do when routine breakdowns arise. This mission will undoubtedly grow to be easier for the teachers of tomorrow, who are the beginners of today.

Language is a shared activity which requires true associates for communication. Teachers vehemently need to recruit new associates with whom their learners may practise the target language. It becomes clear that certain new intangible skills are required of teachers when one considers the substantial leap required in moving from well-tested handy media like the textbook with its well-organized, complementary materials, to the more open, inquisitive approach when exploiting the new media to the fullest extent for positive transformational benefits. Teachers must go forward to a responsibility in which they are improvising learning experiences and planning encounters for/with their learners with the target language setting in mind, or rather, at hand.

All the same, language teachers are now required to take on new roles and come to the classroom situation with appropriate attitudes and approaches. As in circumstances of self-directed learning, the media-literate teacher has an untold responsibility to function as launch pad and pathfinder to the learners. Other new and important teacher roles proudly include those of moderator, investigator, and designer of complex learning scenarios, associate, and assessor.

As such, this way, the new approach for teaching English in this digital age would go hand in hand with the integration of the media into their teaching, where increased use of Information Technology will be seen as an integral part of the syllabus and teaching stuff (not just as side-line resources). There is a fear of jeopardy that the present enthrallment with technology will become paler giving way to a well-versed and upright approach to the employment of Information Technology, if today's teachers do not allow themselves to work upto the high water mark of satisfaction as agents of change aspired for duly imbibing the ever dynamic technology duly improvising it to their needs and deeds in their classroom in matters of teaching a language like English.

The conclusion is that *teachers will need to become agents of change in the wake of information technology with its creative and dynamic media* since they alone are exclusively closest to the practical manifestations of the perspective under consideration

debated here. It is their situated expertise that may prove to be the most important factor in rising the didactics of the digital and networked knowledge community. When teachers concede the transformational potential found in technologies, they can really integrate the creative and critical media contributions in their practices, i.e. to say that they can *appropriate* them so that such technologies become animpeccably interwoven constituent in their specializedgamut for the advantage of the academic world to propel it to newer frontiers in the field.

Hence, the emerging new media-literate teacher as an agent of change aspired for will have to master a

wide range of skills and competencies. Above all, such teachers will need to focus on the design of situations, sequences, and activities advantageous to learning languages by encouraging learners to participate in shared efforts. The organization of learning state of affairs where learners and teachers complement one another's skills, expertise and knowledge in collaborative efforts must, we believe, form the foundation of the education of the language teachers of tomorrow. Happy changing the scenario of teaching English to be amply smart...! Choose to be huge!

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.

References:

1. Becker, H.J. (1994). How Exemplary Computer-Using Teachers Differ From Other Teachers: Implications for Realizing the Potential of Computers in Schools. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 26(3), 291–321. Print.
2. Becker, H.J. (1994). How Exemplary Computer-Using Teachers Differ From Other Teachers: Implications for Realizing the Potential of Computers in Schools. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 26(3), 291–321. Print.
3. Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Daniels, H. Print.
4. FitzpatrickAnthony. Information and Communication Technology in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning – An Overview, Germany. UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, Moscow, 2004. Print.
5. Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the Knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*. Maidenhead, UK & Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press. Print.
6. Salmon, G. "Future Learning Encounters" in <http://www.atimod.com/presentations/download/Eurocall.htm>
7. Soetaert, R. & Bonamie, B. (1999). Reconstructing the Teaching of Language: A View Informed by the Problems of Traditional Literacy in a Digital Age. *Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education*, 8(2), 123–149. Print.

Dr. E. Ram Bhaskar Raju/Assistant Professor of English /
Government Degree and P.G. College/ Peddapalli/
Satavahana University Karimnagar/ Telangana/ India – 505 172/
rambhaskarraju@gmail.com/98491 69320
E. Rachana/B.Tech. (ECE) III Year/Kakatiya Institute of Technology and Science/
Warangal/Telangana/India/rachanaerra@gmail.com/90005 85690