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Use of Digital Teaching-Learning Materials for Teaching English Language in India

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Abstract:

The word "Digital" has become an inseparable part of our life, at present. Almost all the spheres of life have got affected through the use of digital technology. The field of teaching and learning is also not remained untouched from its effect, specifically when we are facing the pandemic of COVID-19. Students and teachers cannot come together in a classroom; hence online teaching and learning has become a common practice, more or less in many educational institutes in present circumstances. Study materials are being provided to the students in digital forms. However digital technology is being used for teaching various subjects otherwise also, from the viewpoint of effective teaching. Teaching English as a second language in India is not an easy task due to various factors. Many researchers and educationists are focusing on the effective teaching of English Language. They are involved in finding out the sound ways of teaching English. Use of digital teaching-learning materials can also be a fruitful mode of teaching English language if done with a proper consideration of the state of affairs. The present paper deals with the notions that how digital teaching-learning materials can be used effectively in English language teaching. The paper contains an introduction, a brief review of previous studies, a comparison of teaching English through printed materials and digital materials, features that can be added to the digital materials to enhance the comprehension capability of students, advantages of their use in English language teaching, limitations of their use, challenges of using digital learning materials in a country like ours and a conclusion.

Keywords: digital, teaching-learning, materials, English, India

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1.Introduction: Teaching-learning materials (which include specifically the textbooks and other materials like handouts, workbooks, study guides, grammar books,maps,graphs , charts etc.) can be called as one of the major pillars of teaching-learning process specifically in case of language learning. Students go through the text of a particular language while learning a language and comprehend vocabulary and grammatical structure of the language and come to know that how anything can be expressed in written or orally after reading the text of a particular language, as English in present context. Humans are using printed learning materials since very ancient times for studying English language but now as the time has changed many new ideas are being adopted for the effective teaching of English language in the countries where it is taught as a second language, like of ours. Use of digital teaching-learning materials for teaching and learning English language is also one of these innovative ideas. Let us first of all understand that, what a digital teaching-learning material is? The term suggests that any material which can be accessed digitally i.e. with the use of devices like computers, mobiles, laptops or tablets etc., used for teaching and learning English language can come under this category like digital textbooks, digital workbooks, educational videos, e- quizzes etc.

2.Review of Previous Studies: Prior to proceed with the main body of the paper it is desirable to have a look on some previous studies related to the present title. A comparison of printed and digital textbooks was done by Jamie R. Engbrecht in 2018 which was concluded as "the digital and printed textbooks have their own advantages and disadvantages. Most have to do with the format medium, but some depend on the user's perspective or specific textbook features. Overall, research has shown that these differences do not have a significant impact on learning outcomes.(Woody et al., 2010). Students can learn on either type of textbooks. Yet, many still prefer print over electronic. Shin (2014) reported that over half of college students preferred print books. This was found to be true in most of the literature reviewed as well". (Engbrecht, 2018)A study was done by Viviana Gaballo which was concluded as "Combining the triangulation poles of pedagogy , methodology and technology is a good premise for effective digital teaching and learning." (Gaballo, 2019) . A book on digital language leaning was written with a purpose "to provide an overview of recent developments in the application of digital technology to language learning and teaching". (Carrier, Damerow, & Balley, 2017). Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) characterizes digital learning as "Digital learning technologies can enable students to grasp concepts more quickly and fully, to connect theory and practical more adeptly, and to engage in learning more readily, while also improving instructional techniques, leveraging instructor time, and facilitating the wide spread sharing of

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knowledge. Digital technology will enable this in new and better ways and create possibilities beyond the limits of our current imagination." (MIT, 2016)

3. Comparison of Printed and Digital Teaching-Learning Materials: Printed materials or traditional materials are in use since very ancient times while digital materials are the innovations of modern era. In this part of the research paper a comparison of both of these means of study is dealt with to understand the difference in the approaches to utilize them.

First of all, when we compare their formats, the printed materials are available in written format while digital materials are available in electronic form.

Secondly, printed materials contain written communication along with diagrams, figures,maps, charts, tables, pictures etc. in static form while all of these can be found in moving form or animated form in a digital learning material.

Thirdly, printed materials sometimes increase the burden of the students when they carry them in their bags on their shoulders, on the other hand digital materials can be accessed through computers or other devices available in their schools or colleges.

Fourthly, printed materials are easy in use as any student can easily read his or her printed textbooks or notes while use of digital materials needs some training to the students for their use hence small kids cannot use them on their own and sometimes technical issues also act as hindrances in their use.

Fifthly, paper is used in a large quantity for printed materials while digital materials are paperless means of study.

Sixthly, availability of printed materials is limited to some specific range and to access them is somewhat difficult while digital materials can be accessed from any corner of the world on the availability of network facilities.

Seventhly, printed materials are less harmful from the viewpoint of physical health in comparison to digital materials, which can create health problems on their regular usage.

Eighthly, advanced features cannot be added to the printed materials so as to let any concept, understood in better ways, while in digital materials many useful features can be added to make the concepts clearer. Some of these features have been discussed in the next part of this paper.

Ninthly, use of the printed materials does not demand any kind of technology based infrastructure like availability of computers, laptops, tablets, mobiles etc. while for the use of digital materials there is an essential need of such infrastructure.

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Finally,the printed materials need time for their update, while it is quite easier to update digital textbooks very quickly.

4.Features that can be Added to the Digital Teaching-Learning Materials: Any kind of text whether printed or digital have some features like headings, subheadings, bold letters, underlined words, italicized words or sentences, quotations, bullets, diagrams, maps, tables etc. in order to capture the attention of its reader. One of the positive points of digital materials is that many useful features can be added to them which help in the enhancement of comprehension capacity of the students. In this part of the research paper some of these features have been discussed with special reference to the English language teaching.

(4.1) Use of animated text and figures: -The verb "animate" refers to give life to an unanimated object or in simple words to equip it with the property of motion. It is a common observation that when something moves in front of us it captures our attention more in comparison to a static object. Use of animated text and figures can be very helpful in effective teaching of various concepts of English grammar. As we can use some animated images as below to teach prepositions.

Around   Across   Into   Along

Next to
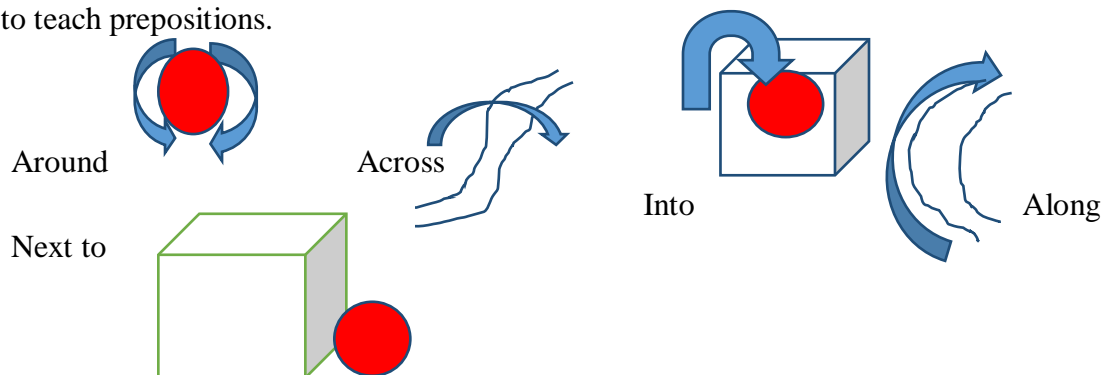
(4.2) Use of Audio Clips: Audio clips can be added to teach the correct pronunciation of the new words. It also improves their listening skills. Students can listen again and again the same audio clip and after repeated listening they can master their pronunciation skills. For example, if the students have to be made understood that how the pronunciation of a word gets changed on addition of letter "e" at the end ,it can be well explained through the use of an audio clip.

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Let's Listen:

Addition of "e"

Cap —cape	Pin-pine
Tap —tape	Fin-fine
Can-cane	Bit- bite
Hat-hate	Kit-kite
Mat-mate	Rid-ride
Mad-made	Cod-code
Fad-fade	Rod-rode
Met-mete	Not-note
Bed — bede	For-fore
Cub -cube	Or —ore
Cut -cute	
Tub -tube	

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

(4.3)Use of Video clips: Use of video clips can be helpful in development of speaking skills of the students as through videos , they can watch how the people are speaking and what type of gestures,postures, facial expressions, eye movements, pitch of voice etc., are being used by them , pauses taken by them and the stress given to the different syllables of the words can be noticed. Video clips can also be used for easier explanation of some story or other forms of literature.A conversation in English can be explained well through a video clip as below :

Let's talk:

- Ramesh : Hi,Abhinav. You are looking worried.
- Abhinav : No, nothing is there , I'm Ok.
- Ramesh : If you have any problem , I'm there to help you, you can share your problem with me freely.
- Abhinav : Thank you for your concern. Actually, I have to complete my Project work of Mathematics and submit within three days.
- Ramesh : Don't worry , tell me about the project and we shall complete it very soon.
- Abhinav : You are such an angel. Thank you so much.
- Ramseh : You are welcome.
- (after two days on the completion of the project)
- Abhinav : Thank you Ramesh , I don't have words to appreciate your help.
- Ramesh : Don't mention it, Abhinav . You can call me anytime when you need help again.
- Abhinav : Thanks a lot, Ramesh .
- Ramesh : It was my pleasure.
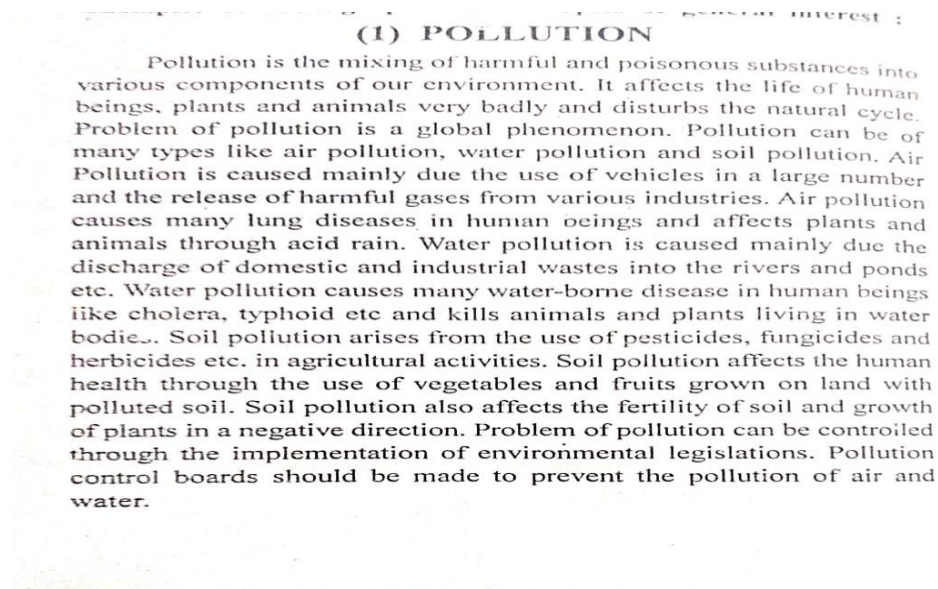
Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

(4.4) Use of interactive images like diagrams, maps, pictures: Use of interactive images increases the involvement of the students. By just a small click

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on these images they can learn more about a concept. Interactive images increase the interest of the students.

(4.5) Use of interactive text: Interactive texts can be used to solve the exercises based on grammar. Interactive questions and quizzes can be used in order to understand that how much students have understood from a particular text or material taught to them. Students can immediately come to know the result of their input and this helps in their learning in more profound ways.

(4.6) Use of hyperlinks: This features allows the students to have an additional information about something, which is given on a website or in a file. Like in the example below ahyperlink has been added to let the students know about environmental   legislations.

(1) POLLUTION

Pollution is the mixing of harmful and poisonous substances into various components of our environment. It affects the life of human beings, plants and animals very badly and disturbs the natural cycle. Problem of pollution is a global phenomenon. Pollution can be of many types like air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution. Air Pollution is caused mainly due the use of vehicles in a large number and the release of harmful gases from various industries. Air pollution causes many lung diseases in human beings and affects plants and animals through acid rain. Water pollution is caused mainly due the discharge of domestic and industrial wastes into the rivers and ponds etc. Water pollution causes many water-borne disease in human beings like cholera, typhoid etc and kills animals and plants living in water bodies. Soil pollution arises from the use of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides etc. in agricultural activities. Soil pollution affects the human health through the use of vegetables and fruits grown on land with polluted soil. Soil pollution also affects the fertility of soil and growth of plants in a negative direction. Problem of pollution can be controlled through the implementation of environmental legislations. Pollution control boards should be made to prevent the pollution of air and water.

What do you know about environmental legislations?
https://www.mondaq.com/india/waste-management/624836/environment-laws-in-india*(hyperlink)*

(4.7) Use of popups: Sometimes while reading a text in English students get stuck on some words which are new for them. This feature provides a solution to this problem. A popup is a window that can be added to help the students by defining some words which are thought new for them.

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(6) IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science and Technology has affected every aspect of our life whether it is personal, educational, professional or social. From opening our eyes in the morning to closing our eyes at the night we come across science and technology at almost every moment of our daily life. The food that we eat, the clothes that we wear, the house where we live,all are linked with science and technology in some respect. At our home we use many inventions of science like fans, coolers, air conditioners, sources of lights, computers, telephones, mobiles, television, sewing machine and many more, in short we can say that the list is endless. [...] ed the distances both the physical and personal [...] re and communicate with anybody within some m[...] f education, health, finance, art, business, agricult[...] use many inventions of science and technolog[...] many dangerous diseases can be prevented through the vaccination and other can be cured through the use of latest devices and effective medicines which is a result of of new researches in the field of science and technology. In the field of education too we use inventions of science like computers and other interactive devices. In business field now we use many kinds of machines which help in saving labour, time, money and give quality products in large numbers. For our entertainment also we use scientific inventions like televisions Thus we can say that everywhere and every time we use one or the other gift of the science and technology.

*introducing a **vaccine** into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.*

   (4.8) Feedback from the Readers: Students can leave their comments in the comment box after studying the material, that can be used later in the betterment of the presentation of the material.
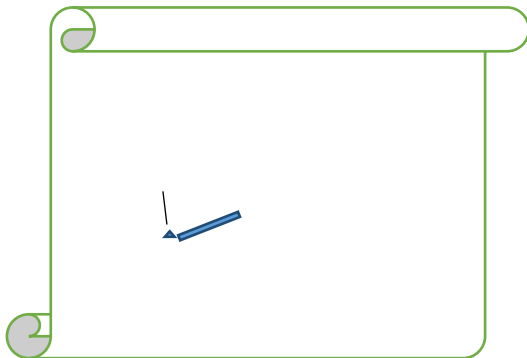
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5.Advantages:

1. Students with visual disability can use digital materials as their other classmates which are based on text-to-speech program. They can listen to the text and comprehend it.

2. Digital learning materials can be accessed from anywhere in the world very quickly.

3. Use of digital materials reduces the use of paper and this way it is helpful in saving trees.

4. Digital learning materials can be updated quickly with the latest information of any concept.

5. These materials are helpful in reduction of burden of the students.

6. Many advanced features can be used in these materials.

7.Many digital materials can be accessed through just one device.

8. Digital materials provide experience of reality.

9. These materials can be shared very easily.

10. Interactive elements can be used in these materials.

11.These materials are easily portable.

12. These are cost effective too.

6.Limitations:

1. Use of these materials can be done only through the technology based infrastructure.

2. Excessive use of these materials can create some health problems like eye strain or headache.

3. It is quite difficult to take notes from the screen.

4. Use of these materials require availability of power.

5.Book satisfaction cannot be achieved through these books.

6. These books cannot be used in case of unavailability of a device like mobile, computer, laptop, tablet etc.

7.E-materials are not forever as they are designed using bits and bytes that cannot be calibrated according to the communication tools of future.

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8. A new study tells us that students "Students learn better from books (printed) than screens (digital text books)"According to the researchers "Our work has revealed a significant discrepancy. Students said they preferred and performed better when reading on screens. But their actual performance tended to suffer."

7. Use of Digital Teaching- Learning Material in India: Efforts are being done by Ministry of human resources for the utilization of digital textbooks in India."The Ministry of Human Resource & Development (MHRD) and state governments are pushing QR (Quick Response) codes-based learning systems — to help school students and teachers learn and evaluate performance in real time. Over 500 million school textbooks now provide digital content by scanning QR codes. In fact, CBSE is now looking to digitize all the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books too — across first to tenth grade". (Sidhwani, 2020)Use of digital textbooks in India is limited to some certain sections of society, they are not in the access of all the students. Many students are not in the position to use these books due to the unavailability of devices through which these books can be accessed and also unavailability of internet specially, in rural areas.In one of the articles by AnandVardhan Tiwari it was stated that "Rural India especially has been affected by the sudden reliance on online learning. Official statistics state that there are more than 35 crore students in India. But there is no clarity about how many of these students have access to online learning. A large part of the Indian population has little or no access to the internet. This has been the biggest factor in hindering the proper penetration of digital education among the rural population. The lockdown imposed for many months also stopped children from gathering in one place with better internet connectivity. They were essentially cut off from education for months at a stretch." (Tiwari, 2021). A news article by Preeti Soni tells us about a study in which"a total of 1158 parents across private and government schools and 488 government school teachers across five states- Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh participated which was conducted between May to June 2020 and according to that study "8 in 10 parents in these five Indian states say there was no online education in government schools during the lockdown" and it also tells us that "In India, only 15% of rural households have access to digital technology." (Soni, 2020)

8. Conclusion:In the light of above mentioned facts and information it can be concluded that though the digital teaching- learning materials can be used as effective means of instruction but there are some infrastructural deficiencies in our country which create hindrances in their use. One other thing is that we should not be completely dependent on these materials as there are some adverse effect also related to their regular use but the importance of these materials cannot be questioned as only because of these materials only it became possible for the students

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to continue with the studies during the time of Pandemic-COVID 19, otherwise almost all the students would have to face a sudden and unwanted check on their studies. So, the study recommends that India should prepare itself in such a way that more and more students can be benefitted through digital teaching – learning materials specifically the learning of English Language. Learning of English language includes the development of four basic language skills namely listening, speaking , reading and writing and out of these four skills at least three i.e. listening , speaking and reading can be developed more through the digital devices in spite of printed material as students have to learn pronunciation of the words and other paralinguistic aspects which can be learnt better through the use of audio clips , videos , comparison of self-recordings with standard recordings. Students can also learn and retain grammatical parts for a longer time when they solve the exercises provided to them in an interactive mode where they can promptly check their responses and this immediate feedback make their learning an effective one.

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