Second Language Acquisition and the Use of Digital Technology in the Digital Era, Why and How

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Abstract
The evolution in the different areas of language and linguistics and the exigency of the advancement of the new teaching styles insists to generate teaching methods and strategies which can meet the need and requirement of the second language learners. There is no denying the fact that several approaches have already emerged in language teaching because of the increasing demand of English as a second language. We need to upgrade and incorporate the use of technology in the teaching methods which we use, to achieve a faster rate of learning by helping the learners in practical use of of the learned language. This paper focuses the use of digital technology for teaching and learning of second language. The paper also proposes some methods of advancement in the present available teaching methods and strategies of teaching and learning a second language.

Key words: second language, approaches, language teaching, instructions, communication

Introduction:
       According to Long, an interactive input is more important because conversation has significant role in providing a comprehensive input which is very important for the second language learners. Digital world provides the opportunity for the learners to help to remove the language distance. The social and cultural differences in language one and language two hinders the process of learning a second language. The influence of language one can be reduced by connecting the learner to the sociocultural environment of the second language learners. There is a powerful relationship between learning strategies and the communicative competence of the learners of a second language. If the previous methods of teaching second language are discussed then we can clearly make out the need of advancement in those approaches.

A short review of some prevalent methods of teaching English as a second language:

       The main goal of the GTM method is to enable the learner of a second language to read and comprehend well the literature which is written in another language. GTM method focuses on teaching grammar of the target language and vocabulary building is also an important aspect of this method. The learners try to illustrate the meaning of the text with their enhancing knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Students from

different educational, social, and cultural backgrounds use translation to learn, understand and be able to practice a foreign language. The translation is not just a method but a strategy that can be used in different teaching methods used for teaching various languages and for the smooth commencement of long-term programs. Translation helps in better understanding of new language by providing a clear idea of the used words, phrases, proverbs, expressions, etc. Duff in 1994 advocates the idea of using translation in language teaching by saying that translation helps to improve in search for more appropriate words to convey accurately the meaning of the original text, thus enhancing flexibility, accuracy, and clarity. (Laviosa, 2014, p.26)

Briefly reviewing the teaching methods of grammar in schools, one of them is the deductive method of teaching grammar, which describes and presents the rules of grammar explicitly, then the learners are provided with the examples through which the rules are applied whereas in the inductive method the instructor supplies the learners with examples and through these examples, the rules of the grammar are inferred. The problem with the deductive approach was that in schools while teaching grammar, teachers use the mother tongue of the learners and less emphasis was given to the target language learning skills such as listening and speaking, reading, and writing. Due to the increasing popularity and demand of the English language, second language learners aspire to be able to communicate. Simple adherence to the grammar of a language can not help the learners to use the language, on the other hand without knowing and learning the rules of Grammar, a learner will not be capable of developing a standard form of language. As Celca- Murcia(1991) warns that if the grammar is avoided to be taught in schools then it can "lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidginized form of a target language".

As Scott Thornbury states in his book 'How to Teach Grammar', that teaching grammar is not always the same practice but it may occur in varied ways in different situations. He further says that if the grammar is taught to learners without explicitly explaining the rules of grammar it can be done through(ALM). The implicit approach helps in naturally develop the grammar accomplishment but in the explicit method, the teacher tries to teach the rules of grammar to help the learners to organize linguistically accurate sentences. He further says that if the learners are taught to communicate through giving a practical task and during the task if a problem of grammatical concern arises and the teacher explains and solves the issue by clearly defining grammar rules then it is called covert grammar teaching.

Because the Grammar and Translation method focuses more on explicit teaching of the grammar, but it did not help much to those who wanted to master the communication skill. So there evolved a new approach which was called The Direct Approach of learning a language by totally avoiding the use of the native language of the learners. This method has been used by the teachers who believe that, for teaching a second language perfectly the meaning of the new vocabulary items must be linked to the target language directly. The use of students' native language must be strictly prohibited. Introduction of the new words and the conveyance of their meanings must be done through the use of, realia, pictures, and pantomime, etc. The teacher and the students use the target language a great deal by providing the syllabus of real-life situations. This means that the content which is to be taught, must be organized around the actual life situation so that students can associate themselves with it and to be encouraged to learn. A real-life situation like, booking a travel ticket or going for

the admission of a child, etc. In this method, grammar is taught inductively and more focus is put on vocabulary.

The audio-lingual method does not focus on vocabulary building but it focuses more on the teaching of sentences that are based on the certain grammatical function of the language. This method is based on principles of structural linguistics and behavioral linguistics by believing that through the process of conditioning the grammatical patterns of the sentences could be taught to the students by assisting the learners in responding to the stimuli accurately. In this method, the planned grammatical structured patterns are produced before the students from easy to complex order. The students practice a lot of sentences but they are not supposed to know the grammar rule behind those sentences. The process of conditioning is done through imitation and repetition drills, such as repetition, backward build-up, chain, substitution, transformation, etc. It is believed that repeating the grammatical patterns and memorizing certain sentence patterns can avoid the habits of their native language and its grammatical arrangements of sentences. This results in the reduction of negative effects of the knowledge of the first language. This method views language as a distinctive complex system that comprises a different variety of elements and each element has its unique arrangement.

Nature of today's second language learner: A need to upgrade the prevalent teaching methods and use of digital technology.

The process of language learning has changed a lot because the dependency of students to some extent has been reducing due to the advent of digital technology. The students do not depend much on the teachers unlike before when students   depended entirely on their textbooks or teachers. They do not depend on teachers to practice the grammar anymore because they have ample practice sheets available online which they can practice anytime without any pressure and fear of being embarrassed even if they answered incorrectly. Today's generation is exposed to technology from their early childhood. They use cell phones, video games, computers, and many other digital tools. It is better to say that they are living in a digital age. The students of this age are "Digital natives", natives of the digital world who use the digital language of computers and the internet. The other form of them is called "digital immigrant", those who are not born into the digital world but have at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the technology are, and always will be compared to them, digital immigrants.)

In this present situation, a teacher plays a vital role in dealing with different nature of the learners because they both need different specific kind of teaching approaches to some extent, to get the equal desired results. Teachers should organize their lessons and the teaching methods by keeping in their mind the different kinds of learners because some of them may be skilled enough to use technology and can update their knowledge by independently using the technology. Those learners can easily clear their doubts and can have advanced knowledge about the concepts. Second kind of learners who had no access to the digital world and who did not make much use of the digital tools must be helped by the teachers carefully. So here it can be concluded that the old and traditional methods of teaching grammar and language

should be upgraded according to the need, interest, nature, and especially the digital environment of today's learners. Technology can not be avoided in teaching a language whereas it is also an undeniable fact that teaching methods that have been used to teach the language from the long past can not be completely avoided. All it is needed to be done that teachers should use traditional methods with the new style, strategies, and with a different attitude. The students from the rural areas and poor educational background, who even had their schooling in regional language and studied English only as a subject or as a second language which was taught few hours a week with the traditional methods. Those learners had no exposure to digital technology. Those learners must be focused more by exposing them to the digital environment. Due to their limited and poor knowledge of the language, they may lose interest and lack motivation in learning the second language and as a result, they may develop a negative attitude towards the language. A teacher can bring confidence in their students by creating their interest. The students will be interested when they find it possible to understand what has been taught to them according to their level of knowledge and understanding. Different learners have different purposes of learning English today so if their purpose is fulfilled successfully then they will take more interest.

The most important purpose of learning the English language today is to enable the learners to communicate. So the outcome of the entire process of teaching should be the communicative competence of the learners. Canale and Swain created a model of communicative competence in 1980, according to which communicative competence is not merely being capable to express someone's feelings but it includes several other constituents. Grammatical competence is one of them which means putting together different sounds into meaningful words and organize those words into grammatically correct patterns. Another component of communicative competence is a wise selection of words according to the different situations and environments. The speaker must have a clear idea of the social and cultural characteristics of the concerned language so that the speaker can wisely communicate his ideas without any confusion. The last one is strategic competence.

"Which refers to the verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome difficulties in communication breakdown to enhance the effectiveness of communication by paraphrasing, gestures and varying intonation, speed or rhythm". (canale and swain)

  To achieve the goal of communicative competence one must be skilled in all the constituents of communicative competence. The importance of grammar can not be neglected to achieve communicative competence but it can be said that language learning is to be able to communicate through putting together sensible words and other different elements of language in a systematic organized way and be able to produce comprehensible output. This can only be done if a person has good knowledge and understanding of grammar.

Teaching and learning of second language in the digital era: How to incorporate technology in the development of the process of learning a second language.

Digital era can be defined as an age where the computer is widely used to access the information stored in digital form. Teaching and learning activities do not remain enclosed in classrooms only but it is possible to learn anywhere and anytime. It is the

perfect time for the language teachers to renovate their entire teaching process by including computers as much as possible for them. Teachers can make their lesson plans based on the activities which require interaction between teacher and students. Different topics can be prepared and projected according to the intellectual level of the students. Nowadays, there are many authoring software available, for using those soft wares, one does not need to be an expert. Even a non-expert teacher in technology can use them easily with a little guidance. Teachers can easily prepare lessons, activities, and exercises for the learners and can leave them for learners to practice anytime either from home or from study centers. Not only these authoring soft wares can be used by teachers but learners can also use them for creating activities and they can also use web-based media like blogs to present their work and also enhance their knowledge by observing the work posted by others. Presentation, slide shows, animations, and videos can be published online to create, exhibit and improve the knowledge.

Digital technology supports the fact that learning can be made more effective if the learners learn together by sharing their knowledge whereas in the traditional learning process learners have no opportunities to connect with others. Digital technology has created a different learning environment where learners can learn through shared knowledge and information which helps in solving problems, mapping knowledge, and identify the knowledge gap. It is said that learning is possible when a person gets engaged and exposed to a variety of different ideas and different levels of knowledge. The connection of a learner with several learners and experts is made possible by digital technology which helps a learner in various ways.

Role of technology in teaching grammar: Usually, grammar is taught in three different stages. The first phase includes the presentation of rules by using an inductive or deductive approach. Many educationists believe that exposure of the students to a meaningful and understandable input is very important no matter which approach has been used to teach, but for the proper organization of linguistics, elements so that the purpose of communicative competence can be achieved without any hindrance due to the lack of proper knowledge of grammar. Green and Hecht (1992) insist that formal grammar teaching " satisfies a human drive to impose order on the apparent chaos of natural learning." It is not always required to teach a long list of grammar constructions and rules of grammar but grammar teaching must be planned and done through using communicative and meaning-based approaches. Long (1991) "a systematic non-interfering focus of form produces a faster rate of learning and a higher level of ultimate second language attainment than instructions with no focus on form." In this case, it can be said this is an extra choice for a teacher to choose any of these approaches. In the inductive approach, the students infer the rules and generalize them by developing an understanding of the grammar and the deductive approach helps the students to have a linguistics insight of the target language and in both cases, the learners get the benefit of both the approaches because the grammar is taught to the students so that they can accurately perform the task of communication but to not to only providing the knowledge. During the second phase students practice grammar constructions and in the third phase students are provided with the opportunities for the accurate use of the grammar, taught and made practiced during the first two phases.

In the digital era, the digital text is used on a wide scale by the teachers which include images words, and sounds in a very innovative way that supports the visual culture and helps in conveying the knowledge in the most meaningful manner. Several free sources are easily available. Those resources which can be used through technology include image banks. Slide show creators, photo editing, animation creators, and video sharing sites. These resources can be used by both teachers and students to create and share their knowledge for the promotion of learning.

Teaching of second language through context: Helps to apply sociocultural approach.

For the learners to be able to explore and use the grammatical structures in the appropriate context is still challenging in the traditional classrooms because there is no direct relationship between explicit knowledge of grammar and the practical implication of those learned rules in the real world situation. Grammar exercises which the learners practice in the classrooms help only in the formal knowledge of grammar and demonstrative capability of the learners. Learners should be provided with the opportunities to know and understand that how should these forms be used in different contexts for the different communicative purposes? "context gives a more precise understanding of how to use grammar, and provide accuracy in the studied language". (Wajnryb 1990,p6).

"In a genuine communication beyond the classroom, grammar and context are often so closely related that appropriate grammatical choices can be made regarding the context and purpose of the communication". (Nunan. 1998,p.102).

According to Thornbury. Language is not possible without context, to understand a single uttered word or a phrase, the presence of context is central. Through the use of technology the subject material can be produced in the form of a movie, video, or feature film. These forms of media can perfectly reflect the context of a conversation and it also thrives the intellectual insight of a learner through the depiction of cultural background, body gestures, and facial expressions. Technology made it possible for the learners to choose the appropriate grammatical structures according to the context and also provides them an opportunity to have access to the cultural framework of the target language. One of the important elements of communication is emotion unfortunately which is sometimes ignored in traditional classes. The emotions showed in a communicative event help the learners to understand the context, to interpret, and also to how to deliver a dialogue in an emotional environment such as a joke or a lecture.

Conclusion:
Second language learning is highly influenced by the use of digital technology. Learners are helped on various platforms. This develops their learning capacity, their cognitive differences can be removed to by the use of several new methods and strategies. By witnessing the real life situation learners get aware of the social and cultural context of the target language which helps them to have a clear understanding of the second language.

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