Materials Preparation for Web Teaching

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Abstract: *Computer plays an important role in our society. It is an electronic device, which makes human work an easy one. It can take any data as input, process them and give the required information as output. The major important features of computer are speed, storage, accuracy, automation and diligence. Offices, educational institutions, religious centers, etc. are very much aware of this electronic device, computer. Even in language teaching computers are widely used. Many courses which are taught in schools, colleges and universities are directly or indirectly related to computer. The packages such as Computer Aided Language Teaching and Learning (CALT & CALL) have a vital role in teaching/learning a language. After the introduction of multimedia, there was a tremendous change particularly in the field of education. The reason is, multimedia allows the learner to interact with the computer. Because of the interaction technology in multimedia, a number of CALT packages were developed. Apart from these learning packages, there is online language teaching also. There are even online courses. These courses are used to teach the basics of a language such as alphabets (scripts), vocabularies, commonly used phrases and sentences, and situational conversations (language at railway station, etc.). But these are not enough to master a language. Hence, there is a need of full-fledged online teaching in our society. When all the things in our society fall under the online technology, i.e. online booking, online shopping, online visa, etc., why not education?*

The main objective of this paper is to know the material Production of web teaching. Apart from this, the basic technologies that are involved in the material production of Web teaching are also discussed.

Key words: computer, language, multimedia, education, CALT packages

1. INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days computer has a great role in our society. This device can be considered the greatest of all inventions in technological aspect. It is the development of the latest technology. Though it has disadvantages like getting addict of playing games, etc. the advantages are enumerable. Due to the advancement of informational technology, the application of computer is widely used in the field of education.

Computer has nothing to do unless it is fed with instructions and commands. All these information are incorporated to the system using a limited set of vocabularies and syntax through programming languages. Even special symbols and numerals can be used in the programming languages. Ruby, Pearl, Visual Basic, etc. are some of the programming languages used for educational purpose. In teaching and learning processes, many soft wares were introduced and these were prepared with programming languages. The same technology is used for online teaching, language games, language puzzles, etc.

The main objective of this paper is to know the basic technologies of online language teaching. Apart from this, the important steps involved in the material production are also discussed.

2. LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TECHNOLOGY

Language teaching with technology is for teachers fascinated in incorporating technology into their classroom practice. There are different ways in which technology can be used with language teaching.

Flipped learning tool is one of the language teaching technologies used in classrooms. According to this tool, students are exposed to new material outside the class by lecture videos. With this gained knowledge, the learning process takes place by discussion, problem solving, debates, etc. in the classroom. It is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from group discussion to individual learning.

Mobile teaching is in the present teaching situation. It is defined as 'an integrated educational and ecosystem supported by compact, highly portable digital devices enable interactive teaching/learning within and beyond the physical instructional environment.' (Jorg, 2014). The benefits of mobile learning are:

➢ Magnifies the richness and equity of education
➢ Facilitates personalised learning
➢ Provides immediate feedback and assessment
➢ Builds new communities of learners

- Improves communication and administration power
- Learned anytime and anywhere

Even online teaching tools exist now a day. 'eduCanon' is one among them. It is an online teaching/learning tool that enables technologically challenged individual to build and share interactive video lessons. The teacher needs to upload every day.

With the advanced technology many teaching packages are able to develop.

3. CALT, A TEACHING TOOL

One of the major goals of computer technology in teaching and learning process is to have Computer Aided Language Teaching and Learning (CALT/CALL).

In 1970's computer assisted language packages were introduced. This didn't pay the attention of the learners and teachers during that period because of its price. It was expensive even to locate them using internet. Later from 1988 it started to root in the field of education and said good bye to black board.

The aim of natural language processing is to bring the technology closer to human side i.e. automatic. In order to make the computer automatic i.e. automatically analyze, understand and generate language texts, a set of linguistic and non-linguistic information should be incorporated in the form of rules. Keeping the basic features of computer such as speed, storage, accuracy, automation and diligence aside, colour, graphics, animation, sound, human voice, etc. are used for developing effective teaching materials.

'Language Teaching through computer, itself is an art and it needs to be handled more artistically by the material developers, language instructors as well as the language students' (Sam & Venkatesan, 2003; 241). The disadvantages of CALT are:

- Gets bore
- Doesn't install in all systems
- Doubts cannot be cleared when studied at homes
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4. LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language educators have used the concepts of basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing for a long period. These four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters namely:

- Mode of communication: oral or written and
- Direction of communication: receiving or generating the message.

All these skills and the two kinds of listening skills such as interactive and non-interactive skills can be developed through computer. After learning these language skills, it is important to know the usage of the language in a given social situation. It is quite difficult to bring a social situation inside a real classroom. But CALT will help you to overcome such problems.

At present, a number of multimedia language teaching packages are available in different languages including English. Language games, which can also develop the language skills, are also very popular.

5. MULTIMEDIA

Ganesan, M (1999; 02) has defined multimedia as 'It is a combination of texts, graphic art, animation, video elements, sound and human voice with interactive facilities'.

After the introduction of multimedia, there was a tremendous change in the computer application, particularly in the area of education, ie. teaching / learning.

Since it can interact like human being, many CALT packages are developed. But it is only a supplementary material and it can never replace a teacher in the current class room situation. With the multimedia the computer can take the responses from the learners, evaluate them and if it is wrong, it can pinpoint the mistake and able to explain, how the answer is wrong or in which way it is wrong etc.

Teaching with multimedia has many advantages like:

- Motivates the learners
- Encourages vigilant
- Demands active participation
- Allows the learners to work at their own time and place.
- Never gets tired and executes the same again and again.

Even disadvantages are also seen in teaching with multimedia.

- Gets bored
- Becomes easy for the second time user

6. WEB TEACHING

Web teaching can be called as online teaching or net teaching. All most, all the things in our society fall under the online technology, i.e. online booking, online shopping, online visa, online marriage bureau, online dating, etc., why not education?

Apart from the teaching learning packages discussed above, there is online language teaching also. Online teaching was introduced in the later part of 20th century. 'The teaching which takes place through internet is online teaching.' (Thambi Jose, 2008). David Crystal (2001; 216) says, 'Web is an eclectic medium'. By this, it is clear that the teaching method used in online teaching is eclectic. Since it is an easy way of teaching, many online courses are introduced in these days. Most of these courses are used to teach the basics of a language such as alphabets (scripts), vocabularies, commonly used phrases and sentences, and situational conversations (language at railway station, etc.). But these are not enough to master a

language. Hence, there is a need of full-fledged online teaching in our society. As today's learners become more receptive to online interactive learning, e-learning represents a paradigm shift in delivering and acquiring knowledge, the concept of online teaching is must.

Online teaching has various steps, like creating a website, material preparation, etc. David Crystal (2001; 244) says that**, 'It seems to be standard conversion** for books, dealing with digital technology to begin or end by warning their readers that contain is going to be soon **out of date'**.

There are many websites regarding online teaching. Some of them are payable and some are available at free of cost. But all these teaching are mainly related to basic courses such as script teaching, reading and writing the commonly used utterances, etc.

7. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

There is a tremendous development in the field on online teaching over the past few years. Even in our university (Sultan Idris Education University) we use online instructional teaching. All the instructions, announcements, attendance, etc. are given to the students through online. Even for staff, applications are provided through online. Since the need of online teaching has increased, the opportunity of learning about online teaching techniques is also becoming must. Currently some of the universities are offering course related to this.

- The basic requirements of online teaching are given below:
- Use technology with ease
- Create a few lesson plans that focus on online teaching
- Have a good technology
- Willingness to promote yourself

8. ONLINE TEACHING MATERIAL PREPARATION

In order to teach a language through online, preparation of appropriate materials are very important.

Three important steps are involved in material preparation for online language teaching.

1. Role of subject expert (linguist/language expert)
2. Programmer   and
3. Graphic Designer

First is the role of linguists or subjects expert who prepare materials, which are learner oriented. Second is a programmer, who programs the prepared materials with a set of rules and incorporate them to the system with a programming language. The third is the designer, who designs with the multimedia packages like Flash, 3D max, etc., so that it will be more effective.

8.1 Role of Subject Expert

In material preparation, there is no much difference between the multimedia teaching package and online teaching. More exercises, examples and explanations should be prepared for the online teaching, because it should be updated now and then to make the learners more interesting. The levels of material preparation are given here in brief. Material preparation can be divided into four different levels. They are:

1. Primary/Phonological level
2. Intermediate/Morphological level
3. High/Syntactical
4. Advanced/ Semantical level

8.1.1 Primary/Phonological Level

Since materials are prepared on phonetic and phonological notations, this level is termed as phonological level. In phonetic system, how sounds are produced should be prepared according to the IPA chart.
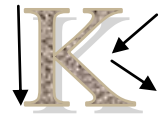
For example

The phoneme /k/ is described as voiceless velar stop. The explanation regarding voiceless, velar, stop etc. should also be prepared so that students will understand the difference between /k/ and other sounds.

Furthermore, the graphic representation should be prepared and given. (i.e. how to write.)

For example

/k/ is written as

Exercises should also be prepared in this level.

8.1.2 Intermediate/Morphological Level

Words/vocabularies are being concentrated more in this level. The word or morphological level rules of affixation is also focused. Moreover, information and grammatical category about the word should be prepared. Since this level is related to morphology/word, it is termed as morphological level. All minute rules should be prepared in detail.

For example

In the word, boy the plural affix *'s'* can be added at the end of the word *boy > boys*.

But in the word man, **plural affix '***s***' cannot be added, instead the vowel '***a***' must be replaced with another vowel '***e***'. Hence,** *man + s* changes into '*men'*. Where, *boy* and *man* are nouns.

8.1.3 High/Syntactical Level

In this level, the formation of sentences should be prepared in detail. All the possible sentence structures in that particular language should be prepared. In English SVO, SV, VO, etc. sentence structures are possible in formal and informal speeches. All the possible sentence structures should be prepared in a particular language.

For example:

John ate an apple. (SVO)

Alpha finished. (SV)

The rules for the usage of prepositions/postpositions, articles, adjectives, adverbs and other grammatical categories in the formation of sentence should be prepared.

For example:

Trivandrum is a good city. (Mostly adjective is followed by noun)

Formation of phrases and clauses rules should also be prepared.

8.1.4 Advanced/Semantic Level

At this level meanings are focused both at word and sentence levels. Sometimes the sentence which has more on meaning will confuse the students. In such situations the possible meanings should be prepared. Consider the following sentence which has more than two meanings (ambiguity sentence):

The beautiful green house

Meaning 1. *The green color painted house is beautiful.*

Meaning 2. *The green house (name of the house) is beautiful.*

Meaning 3. *The house which is inside a garden is beautiful.*

Lessons related to society, culture, rituals, usage of proverbs, etc. should be prepared. Moreover at the end of each and every lesson, list of new vocabularies with meaning and usage should be prepared.

The materials prepared at all these levels should be stored in a systematic way so that the system can easily identify.

8.2 Programmer

A person who writes and develops various programs relating to the use of the computer can be called as computer programmer. This person has various duties relating to his general responsibility of designing computer programs. First, is to develop new computer programming rules. These may include anywhere from basic computer programming rules to more in-depth rules. Another duty which the computer programmer has is the development of programs himself. This is an extremely important concept associated with the role of a computer programmer as these are the people who construct the useful programs which are used by many.

Apart from these, the responsibility of a computer programmer is to consult with outside people in relation to the construction of computer programming methods and the programs themselves. Finally, computer programmers follow the progress of programs to ensure that they are operating correctly and fix any program errors that might occur along the way.

8.3 Graphic Designer

A graphic designer is responsible for creating design solutions that have a high visual impact. The role involves listening to clients and understanding their needs before making design decisions.

A graphic designer develops creative ideas and concepts, choosing the appropriate media and style to meet the client's objectives. The work demands creative flair, up-to-date knowledge of industry software and a professional approach to time, costs and deadlines. They undergo two stages namely designing and drafting. The first stage consists of designing the program and second stage consists of drafting the program before the final version is carried out.

9. BASIC TECHNOLOGIES

Online language teaching has four basic technologies.

9.1 Database: It is a collection of data and stored systematically in a particular place. It is recorded **and presented in learner's work.**

For example, if you want to teach about noun, give the definition and the example as mountain.

9.2 Digital Audio & Video: This technology involves vivifying examples of language use.

For example, the graphic of the mountain can be viewed as graphic with its correct possible pronunciation(s).

9.3 Hyper Text: Through this technology, there is a provision to provide varied access to exercises and explanatory material.

For example exercises, drills, etc. were given and the reasons for correct / wrong answers are also presented.

9.4 Network Communication: This is the important technology for online teaching. It brings the learners and teachers into easier contact.

10. CONCLUSION

No doubt, web teaching is going to bring a drastic change in human society. Furthermore, it will be the popular and most effective teaching aid within a few years. All the distance education text books will be computerized and taught through web. In Malaysia context, all PJJ classes can be conducted through web teaching. This change is near and not far. But it is sure that this web teaching can be handled by teachers and it can never replace a teacher because it is just a reference material and operated by teachers.

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