Introduction of Technology in Language Teaching/Learning

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1. Definition of Language laboratory

According to free online dictionary, Language Laboratory means, a room designed for learning foreign languages and equipped with tape recorders, video cassette recorders, or computers connected to monitoring devices enabling the instructor to listen and speak to the students individually or as a group. The **language laboratory** is an audio or audio-visual installation used as an aid in modern language teaching. They can be found, amongst other places, in schools, universities, and academies. Perhaps the first lab was at the University of Grenoble in 1908. In the 1950s up until the 1990s, they were tape-based systems using reel to reel or (latterly) cassette. Current installations are generally multimedia PCs. The original language labs are now very outdated. They allowed a teacher to listen to and manage student audio via a hard-wired analogue tape deck based systems with 'sound booths' in fixed locations.

2. Technology in Language teaching/learning

Emerging technologies make it practical to approach learning in ways that have been advocated by scientists, theorists, and educational psychologists for years. Advanced information technologies such as virtual reality, visualization, digital modeling, digitization, simulation, games, virtual worlds and intelligent one-on-one tutoring systems dramatically enhance teaching and learning of elusive concepts by translating abstractions into real-world contexts and providing customized instruction and individualized assessments. To realize the full potential of this technology and to ensure its pervasiveness in all institutions of learning and training, we must undertake a long-term, large-scale effort to research, develop, test and disseminate tools for building advanced learning systems.

3. Present scenario

Today all the major manufacturers say they have a 'digital' or a 'just software' solution. However in many cases they still rely on proprietary networks or expensive sound cards to successfully deliver their media. There are very few truly software only solutions that just rely on installing designated language lab software onto a network and then directing just the original network to manage the media between teacher and student, student and student or student back to teacher. In the past the quality of school or university networks may have meant that the speed that the media could be delivered on 'software only' labs would have meant a 'lag' in the audio feed. These days all professionally run networks are able to work with these 'software only' language lab solutions and deliver media synchronously. Software only systems can be easily installed onto an existing PC based network, making them both multi locational in their access and much more feature rich in how and what media they manage. The content that is now used in the new language labs is much richer and self authored or free: now not just audio, but video, flash based games, internet etc. and the speed and variety of the delivery of media from teacher to student, student to teacher, is much quicker and therefore much more engaging for both teacher and student. Further developments in language labs are now apparent as access moves from a fixed network and related Microsoft operating systems to online and browsers. Students can now access and work from these new 'cloud' labs from their own devices at anytime and anywhere. Students can interrogate and record audio and video files and be marked and assessed by their teachers remotely.

4. Methodology of Instruction

It is followed in the Communicative and integrated approach. It keeps the ability to use language to communicate as central goal, to make meaning-focused activity which simulates real life transactions; crucially activity is on the learner's part, with the teacher being more of a facilitator and guide. The type of Syllabus framed is Analytic. It equips the learner with language to use it in a variety of situations (real or simulated) covering the varied purposes for which they have to communicate in corporate world. The learner analyses these wholes and develops a sense of the patterns of usage. Thus they learn language naturally by being immersed in its communicative use. In these activities, learners move from controlled practice of a conditional form presented in an Audio or Video form or Reading text or the combination of both to the activity in which they have to produce in Spoken or Written mode. This Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model is followed in the lesson plans.

5. Functions of Teacher's Console:

5.1 Live Audio & Video broadcasting

- To broadcast live Audio and Video from news and educational channels of TV or from internet
- To broadcast the teacher's screen or a selected student's to other computers
- To broadcast Audio and Video from any analog source i.e. DVD, MP3 & CD etc

5.2 Monitoring the student's workstations

- To Monitor students' screens as a whole and also on individual basis from the teacher's workstation
- To take control or terminate applications on any student computer

5.3 Speech drill exercises

To practice voice based activities like speech drill exercises through model imitation, voice recording, voice graph and variable speed playback to neutralize accent & acquire fluency

5.3.1 Group Discussions

- To bring the students into random or standard groups to conduct group discussions and role plays from their workstations.
- Live recording of discussion content for each group so that the teacher can provide feedback on their performance

5.3.2 Content Authoring and conducting online examination

- To combine text, video, images and audio to design customized course materials.
- To create, edit and score exams, quizzes and tests using text, graphics, audio and video.

6. Advantages and Benefits of Language Lab

- Access to resources beyond the timetable encourages independent learning.
- By using text, audio and video can easily be integrated with actuality in everyday situations.
- Have the self evaluation: the students can do a periodical self evaluation to measure the progress as well as evaluate his/her language with that of the expert.
- It care takes the learners to become skilled at the language that they are learning.
- It is easy to guide the groups by monitoring each student independently without disturbing the others students.
- The automated learning environment removes one's fear and creates a happy learning situation. Learn the need: The lab fulfills the need of the learner that is learning the language skills in an effective way.
- The direct sound transmission gives step by step guidance from the teacher to the heads of the students with crystal clear clarity.
- The Lab increases the pace of comprehension as students coaching is purely based on the level of study.

- The lab provides to learn the foreign language practice in a focused setting that eliminates the feelings of self-consciousness.
- The Lab regulates the language through the different thoughts created in the mind of the students.
- The Lab software is more attention enthralling for the students, where they are engaged with individual systems.
- The students can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with the each other and the teacher, and store the results.

7. Conclusion

There is always scope for improvement and advancement in any field and for any subject. It has to be accomplished with commitment and enthusiasm. We are habituated to the traditional teaching methods. It is high time that our teaching methods have to undergo a change. Unless the new technology is adopted in English language teaching, we cannot impart language skills in our learners at the rate of growing competition. According to my view, these are a few of the whole lot of techniques those can be used to improve language skills through technology in the present generation. It can be implemented for a learner of any age at any stage. It will be more effective if technology is introduced from the elementary level. According to my view comprehensive language learning (language along with skills) is possible through both classroom and language lab teaching, as applied for science subjects.

References
1. Language lab From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
2. Roby, W.B. (2004). "Technology in the service of foreign language teaching: