

USING ANIMATION VIDEOS ON PROMOTING ENGLISH LEARNING AMONG ENGINEERING COLLEGE STUDENTS IN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Teachers are always looking for new and better ways to educate the young learners. At present, they teach the students by introducing text books along with verbal instructions which is the traditional method of teaching. As technology is developing rapidly, it is time to teach students with interactive learning system, so that they can improve their learning, memorizing capabilities and enhance knowledge. Animation is a brilliant and innovative way to encourage learners especially learners of English to communicate stories, ideas, concepts and to learn grammar, in a creative way. It is observed that animation learning to improve English offers exciting possibilities for meeting the needs of 21st century learners. In the current era, the student can communicate with community, work together with peers and validate their learning through technology. This paper explains that animation learning approach in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu can promote the level of proficiency in English.

Keywords: Teaching, Language, Animation, Learning motivation

Key words: *animation, teaching method, communication, engineering students*

Introduction

It is obviously true that English is a World Wide Language. In India, engineering students are forced to a condition that their communication skills in English should match with the expectations of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) companies. It is quite interesting to note that India, a multilingual

nation, is the third largest English-speaking country after the US and UK. In 1834, Lord Macaulay recommended studying English is better than Arabic and Sanskrit which is beneficial to Indians who pursue higher studies. At that juncture, to gain roots in the educational system, English gradually spread wider in India. Starting from kindergarten until higher secondary level, all students in India have to learn English as one of their subjects. Therefore, it has become a compulsory subject in Indian educational system. Moreover, it is taught as a common subject and not as a language. In spite of learning English language for the past 12 years in schools, the students who opted for engineering course still find it difficult to communicate effectively for job or other purposes. The paper depicts that animation-based learning environment is very effective to transfer knowledge and motivation to speak effective English.

Literature Review

Teaching is a gratifying profession and considered to be one of the difficult processes in the current scenario, because the students browse the course in online. Classrooms across India are having increasing numbers of students whose primary home languages are not English. At present, the students are technologically brilliant as they use the latest gadgets, hence teaching and learning should both be carried out in technologically enabled environment. Hoeffler, & Leutner (2007) says that, A meta-analytic findings show that dynamic animations have significant advantages in promoting of learning success. Animation is a dynamic representation that can be used to make change and complex processes explicit to the learner, Schnotz, & Lowe (2003). As the use of technology becomes an integrated part of a college education, animation has a high potential to enhance students' understanding and learning motivation. Multimedia education offers an alternative to traditional education that can enhance the current methods and provide an alternative. Shis, C. Papa, M. Chang, and T. Hsin (2012) depict that Language learning classrooms can be vibrant, with the help of innovative methods like materials with animation videos. Therefore, it also gives more supportive for students in the language learning process in engineering colleges.

Sun and Dong (2004) portraits that Animation is considered as one small part of the computer revolution which is a very important part of high technology. Moreover, David and Dan (2002) state that this issue points to the fact that a successful and contemporary animation curriculum should not only be interdisciplinary, but also should encourage students to develop effective skills and activities. Language teaching/learning is one of the areas that have been feeling the impact of the changes afforded by technology. As Chapelle (2007) points it out, not only are these changes going to lessen, but also technology will continue to influence every aspect of the lives of language learners, including their formal as well as informal language learning experiences. One of the aspects of the new technologies that have become prevalent in language learning contexts is the use of audiovisual materials. McNulty & Lazarevic (2012) describe the ubiquity of audiovisual materials has never been more obvious than it is nowadays for the new generation of language learners.

Teaching Language in Engineering Colleges

The standard of English among today's engineering graduates is unfortunately disappointing. A fresh or an experienced teacher may observe that the students keep silent all the time during the teaching and learning process. The main reason for this situation is the fact that the students do not want to speak in English and a few may be from vernacular medium schools. In most of the English classroom teaching, the teacher tries to explain and make the student's to speak but the teacher is unsuccessful in making the students to speak in English. Even when the students know the answer to a simple question, they still hesitate to open their mouths because of unfamiliar in English language. Having confidence to speak the language is considered necessary in the present scenario. Animation video learning teaches language learners to observe how to listen, speak and continuously watch the video till they understand the stories, concepts and ideas. The study projects animation teaching will enable students to use English for their daily life, knowledge acquisition and to prepare them for future jobs.

English language learning is not mere quest for information, it is skill acquisition. However, it is not enough that learners are made to listen to the lecture; they need to be engaged in the session to learn a language and not a subject. Engineering admissions in Tamil Nadu has a picture of diversity in enrollment. Although the state is more highly urbanized than most other states in India according to Government of India statistics, majority of the students seems to come from rural parts of Tamil Nadu. First generation learners represent a significant portion of students enrolled in engineering colleges. Even though the college entrants may have opted English as the medium of instruction in their high school and higher secondary classes, their competence in English even for purposes of classroom instruction and learning is not impressive.

The English teachers working in engineering colleges seem to focus more on the transmission of content than on the skills in English. Students coming from remote areas are not trained to write a few sentences correctly. While English is present as part of the curriculum, language learning does not take place in classrooms. English is a compulsory subject of study in engineering course where a student learns two theories and a laboratory course. All the English courses are taught as a subject and not as a language. After learning English with certain language tools and qualifying the English exam, still it is a big question on acquisition of language skills among engineering colleges. According to a survey by Hindustan Times, 97% engineering graduates cannot speak English fluently.

The teachers teach Communicative English in the First semester, Technical English in the second semester followed by Language lab activities of three/two credit course respectively. The following illustrates some details of English language patterns in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu.

Theory Classes

- ✓ Students mostly attended theory classes but are not interested because they think that they can pass the course.
- ✓ Those who want to score grades preferred to attend theory classes and study voluntarily.

- ✓ Teachers preferred the lecture method in theory classes as it is difficult to conduct learner-centered activities.

Lab Classes

- ✓ Maximum students get a first time opportunity to attend language labs. They feel excited to do activities in pairs and groups but gradually the interest is declined, however the students score good marks.
- ✓ Teachers try to design and conduct lab activities but due to lack of appropriate resources they find it difficult.
- ✓ Teachers feel the challenges in conducting lab classes because the software is not updated or they use the basic software for language teaching.

Purpose of the study

The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- ✓ Effectiveness of using animated videos in English language in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Familiarizing English language teachers with the basic principles of designing, selecting and using animated videos in teaching English language as a multi-disciplinary activity.

Students' Academic needs

According to Anna University Curriculum, the students are taught Listening, speaking reading and writing with the traditional method preferably with a workbook. To meet the present generation expectations in teaching, technology related teaching activities along with personality development sessions is much necessary. Pransky (2001) accepts that the use of technology in students' lives has increased so much that the students of the contemporary era should aptly be called digital-natives or the net-generation. By teaching the curriculum in the traditional method in engineering colleges, students can pass the course, but the outcome of the course may not be attained as per the curricula & syllabi.

Outcomes: At the end of the course, learners will be able to:

- Read articles of a general kind in magazines and newspapers.
- Participate effectively in informal conversations; introduce themselves and their friends and express opinions in English.
- Comprehend conversations and short talks delivered in English
- Write short essays of a general kind and personal letters and emails in English

In order to attain the outcomes of the course, the students should be taught with various animated video clips, comprising dialogues and songs, grammar exercise, and ask to identify the use of tense, prepositions, adjectives and other grammar related exercise. The students will learn very responsive during the whole lesson. More importantly, authentic videos help students learn the language features in their real context. They can even do the same exercise in their leisure time and enhance their language skills.

Language Learning Animation resource

Animation websites to learn English as a second language

- Littlefox, Fluentu, Udemy, British Council, *multimedia-english.com*, *youtube.com*, *dailymotion.com*, *educatorstechnology.com*.

Animation in Learning Language

Rapid display of images to create an illusion of movement is called animation. Animation has the power to gain the attention and generate interest in a learner. To illustrate clear content and challenging grammar topics, the talk and chalk method usually lacks effective approaches. Animation teaches the same thing through the use of new software and hardware techniques. Animated stories, video and lectures bear many prospects for an effective and meaningful language instruction. It can also help to contextualize the new language providing audio-visual input along with the story narration.

Traditional method of teaching English using text books and blackboards do not really convey the complete gist of a lecture. Often students are disturbed and diverted in listening to lectures due to various physical and mental distractions. However, a learner can easily remember a scene in some

animated videos which he watched long time ago. Researchers have proven language learning using animation has more retention of information because it is transferred using both visual and verbal communication. Birbaumer & Schmidt (2006) points that Teachers and students can benefit from incorporating fun and animation videos into the classroom and to all types of students. By adopting animation students learn through what they prefer to see in a classroom environment.

The process of teaching and learning gets a new experience when animations are used during the process. Humans have a very good pictographic memory; the more it is used the better the information is stored. Adopting to animated video both the teacher and the student find it more comfortable to explain or understand a topic; and believe that no class will be boring. This process not only makes the characters in the novel and drama, grammar clear but also helps the students memorize them for a longer time.

Why Animated Video

Present day students have grown up with gadgets and live in a world where digital technology is part of the texture of their daily existence. They never saw the world without technology. Technology is their native language and they expect to use technology in education. The animation boom extends, not surprisingly that benefits the students. As Nicola Davies asserts, "If you want people to emotionally connect with your content, animated video is an investment worth making." Animated movies provide significant content from which students can learn different aspects of grammar, thus facilitating learners through interesting content while at the same time encouraging them to acquire English language.

In the present era, students have access to laptops and computers, they are utilizing them to chatting with friends and to surfing the Web. Hence, video learning is now the preferred medium of communication for students all over the world. The YouTube Generation relates better to video than to text or spoken presentation, and studies suggest that many of them retain information better when presented as video. This requires the students to

examine a scene in depth, understand staging, and create an interpretation of the work. It gets the students engaged, and requires them to stop thinking about drama, novel or poetry in written form and think about it as performance. The students examine the grammar in depth and better understand by taking it beyond the written word. Adding multimedia content enables the student to approach the subject in a richer way than just using written text and still images. The student has a chance to visualize the character.

Benefits of Animation as an Affective Learning Tool

- The abstract ideas and complicated grammar can be visually capture using animated video.
- 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in the brain than text. – **Source by Amanda Sibley**
- 40% of people will respond better to visual information than plain text. **(Source: Zabisco)**
- Animated videos are psychologically appealing.
- Animation is inspired and interactive way for flexible education and training, learners will be more motivated to learn more and more.

Conclusion

The study concluded that animated movies are a very effective mode of teaching English in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu since they provide entertainment and add pleasure to the learning process. Students learn on

both conscious and unconscious levels while enjoying the movie clips. The process also helps them recall the learned concepts more efficiently due to the link between the learned concepts and the animated images in the movie. Offering engineering students the opportunity to develop adequate and comprehensive English language skills is increasingly becoming a necessity and it can be concluded that this method will improve the language skills. The animation method can help the students to enhance the LSRW in engineering colleges which at present is in the lower level in language proficiency. It is observed that animation can reduce learners' time and make more practical and task-oriented. The language learners who have learnt English language in schools through chalk and chalk will feel happy of seeing animation videos as a way of learning English grammar. Indeed, students will remember much more when learning through animated videos than learning from a workbook.

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