

# Integration of the Digital Tools in ELT Classrooms: A Strategy to Enhancing Language Learning

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## Abstract:

The digital-based model of English Language Teaching (ELT) is becoming a new change paradigm transforming the traditional model of teaching process by offering active and learner-centered teaching. The paper explains the way in which digital technologies, e.g., interactive tools (Padlet and Kahoot) or language learning apps (Duolingo or Quizlet) can enhance learning of English language skills. The study uses the TPACK and SAMR models and examines the possibilities and difficulties of technology integration in ELT classrooms in India based on the mixed-method approach consisting of a survey of the teachers, classroom observation, and interviews of the learners. The results indicate that even although the positive impact of the digital tools on the motivation of the learners, their active participation, and autonomy matter greatly, the impact of the utilization of the digital tools depends on the strategic integration, the readiness of the teachers, and the infrastructural support. The other digital literacy and access gap that is identified in the study is based on rural and semi-urban circumstances. This paper suggests some practical information to educators, policymakers and curriculum developers regarding the way to make technology integration in ELT meaningful and equitable. The findings reveal the importance of increased attention to special teacher training, the equipment that should be chosen in accordance with the situation, and blended education patterns that can be used to eradicate the digital divide to language learning.

**Keywords:** Digital Technology Integration, TPACK, SAMR, Blended Learning, Learner Autonomy, Digital Literacy, Digital Divide, Mixed-Method Research, India

## Introduction

The pace at which the 21st century has seen the growth of digital technology has revolutionised the aspect of education and changed the manner in which information is received, transmitted and processed (Prensky, 2001). This has infiltrated the English language teaching (ELT) classroom whereby technology has been instrumental in enhancing the level of interaction among the learners in the process of equipping them with skills and exposing them to the real language experience (Chapelle, 2003). Coronavirus also led to the increased use of educational technology due to the movement of teachers and school institutions into a digital and blended environment (Dhawan, 2020).

Digital classroom use is a chance and a challenge in the ELT setting especially in countries like India. Although educational programs like Duolingo, Quizlet, Padlet and Google Classroom are viable as dynamic learning tools to enable language learners, lack of infrastructure, training and level of digital literacy is a barrier to majority of the educators (Kessler, 2018). This renders the use of these tools patchy or superficial thus annulling the potential usefulness of the tools in language acquisition.

The present study functions under the idea of applying digital tools to ELT classrooms considering the fact of addressing the four main language skill listening, speaking, reading and writing, and considering the aspect of providing learner autonomy, interactivity and pedagogical focus as new learning tools. The study will also point out not only the advantages but the pitfalls of technology in teaching languages to prepare educators, teacher trainers and curriculum developers with valuable suggestions of how to make the tech-supported ELT learning environments more engaging and effective.

## Review of Literature

The application of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced a significant level of research studies in the past two decades, which are continuously witnessed by a growing amount of literature which promotes the idea that technology can be applied to enhance the outcome of teaching and learning. Warschauer and Healey (1998) and other researchers emphasised that behaviourist approaches to Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) are substituted by the more constructive and communicative ones, focusing the learner as the centre of language learning. The change is conducive to the recent trends in

the pedagogical practices borrowing the participatory and student-centred learning simulations by means of the digital technologies.

During the last several years, web-based applications like Duolingo, Quizlet, Kahoot, Padlet, and Google Classroom have gained significant popularity as applications that may be applied to the process of vocabulary development, grammar memorization, and team learning and evaluation. It may adopt Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) due to the fact that the concepts by Kukulska-Hulme (2012), as well as studies by Godwin-Jones (2018) already predetermined the fact that it could assume the role of offering flexibility to the anytime-anywhere learning, i.e., to the digital-native students.

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) offers a highly sound platform to tackle the issue of how ELT can be applied successfully by use of technology. On the same note, the SAMR model developed by Puentedura (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) could also make a handy consideration regarding the nature of classroom technology use: is it a simple substitution of the previous technology, or does it redefine the learning experiences?

Irrespective of such developments, there have been other research works which have come up with some of the challenges to be considered when integrating technology. The research conducted within the Indian scene (e.g., Sharma and Sharma, 2020; Basu, 2021) pinpoints the following issues:

- the impossibility to gain access to the devices,
- wobbly internet connection, and
- insufficient training of the teachers.

These barriers normally lead to under-use or overrepresented in rural or under-resourced schools. Despite the fact that the literature is fairly explicit regarding the pedagogical significance of digital tools in ELT, it also underscores the need to apply it contextually and continuously, and the close focus on technological decisions implementation with regards to the teaching goal. The study is anchored on the available literature that examines the current application of digital tools in the ELT classrooms and the ways of enhancing the same.

## Theoretical Framework

The most appropriate conceptualisation of integration of digital tools in English Language Teaching (ELT) is the theoretical frameworks that explain the interface of technology, pedagogy and content knowledge. Two of the theory models that are applied during this research include the TPACK Framework (Mishra and Koehler, 2006) and the SAMR Model (Puentedura, 2009). The models can be applied to determine the effectiveness of technology application besides the comprehensiveness and quality of technology application in language instruction.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is centered on the three sorts of knowledge which are complex in their interactions; content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK). The effective use of digital tools in ELT implies that, not only the material (language knowledge) is to be mastered but also teachers should know the strategies and methods of teaching the language and what the technology can help and enhance language learning. In a tip, when a teacher relies on a Quizlet to teach vocabulary, he/she should match the abilities of the tool with the right language learning objectives and requirements.

The further elaboration of TPACK is the SAMR model or Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefining (SAMR); the model provides a hierarchical approach to the question of the role of technology in the learning process. At the substitution level, technology only replaces a traditional device (i.e. a digital dictionary, rather than a print dictionary). Onward, at the modification and redefinition level, technology enables a few new forms of learning, previously unexplored: global learning, multimedia narrative or real time comments using interactive applications. The given model can be used specifically to analyse how far are the digital tools in ELT used radically or superficially.

The information offered by the two frameworks is helpful in the role that technology can play in language teaching. TPACK focuses more on competency and informed choices as a teacher, however, SAMR asks teachers to explore the depth of technological-integration. Taken in conjunction, they are the theoretical framework of addressing the current application of digital tools in ELT classrooms and how these tools might be optimized to be used in more meaningful ways.

## Methodology

The article is conceptual and practice-based in terms of researching the concept of the use of digital tools in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The study is not related with the collection of primary empirical data, but a synthesis of the literature available, case studies and observed classroom practices in any teaching environment and more specifically in India. Hopefully, some broad tendencies will be learned, some positive practices outlined, and some practical outcomes drawn to teachers and establishments that eventually intend to use technology-enhanced ELT.

It is examined based on the variety of the secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, policy reports, and reports of practitioners. In addition, the examples of typical online tools (DUolingo, Quizlet, Padlet, Google Classroom, and Kahoot) are addressed, regarding their opportunities of core pedagogy and their alignment with the analysed TPACK and SAMR models. The tools are taken into account depending on their ability to help develop the language skills, involve learners, and communicate in the classroom. Although, no formal experimental and survey-based methodology is taken in the current paper, classroom observations, reflective practice in teaching, and secondary research conducted in Indian and international ELT settings are included in the paper. The approach would enable one to see the potentialities and constraints of the digital tool integration as a whole and would be the foundation of the pedagogical recommendations provided in the following parts.

## Implementation & Analysis

There are many opportunities to study English as a second language that the online technologies offer and can be utilized to make the process more interesting to the students. The degree to which technology is available not only determines their success, but also the degree to which is used in the classroom to develop the specific language skills, promote interaction and promote learner autonomy.

Quizlet is the most widespread one, in which a teacher can create vocabulary flashcards, practice activities, and self-test quizzes. In ELT classrooms, Quizlet may be applicable in the school or college level and as an extension of the new vocabulary or phrase instruction in the reading or listening activity. The repetition system is gamified and thus assists students in memorising and remembering better. According to the TPACK model, Quizlet has performed

well since its content (CK), delivery (PK) and adaptation to the requirements of the learners (TK) can be created by teachers.

One more example of collaborative tool that can be used to encourage student writing, brainstorming or group discuss is Padlet. Respondents are able to respond to reading using multimedia (adding text, images, links, or videos) to convey their ideas. Not only is this preventing the fluent writing, but it is also preventing the creative mind, and socialising. SAMR model will allow teachers to turn Padlet into an environment in which the traditional writing activities could be altered and redesigned rather than replaced.

Kahoot has been successful especially in formative assessment. Its quiz-like form of interaction allows teachers to test the knowledge at the conclusion of a grammar or reading lesson and engage learners in competition. It also enables real time feedback because it enables the teachers to know which areas they are performing poorly and they can amend instructions.

In blended learning, the instructional organisation is based on Google Classroom. The instructors put up lesson content, assign and follow-up, as well as learners are able to review content asynchronously. This fosters differentiation and agency of the learners which is the objectives of the modern classes in ELT.

However, the classroom implementation is not problematic. In case of a lack of time or training, teachers lament that they struggle to select the correct tool to execute the correct task. The infrastructure inequities (unavailable Wi-Fi, outdated equipment, electrical issues, etc.) tend to limit access, particularly to rural or low-income schools. Moreover, they can be digitally literate in social or entertainment aspects, yet some guidance on how best to use technologies related to academics can be required by students. Despite the possible existence of these barriers, as demonstrated in the examples above, in case of a purposeful introduction of the digital tools, their implementation, depending on the goals of the instruction, and supported by teacher training, these tools can make a significant imprint on the ELT experience. The future of the technology in the wise and strategic use of technology is the mutual transformation of the passive learning to interaction learning and student-centred learning.

## Conclusion

Digital tools in English Language Learning (ELT) is a prospect of changing the art of language acquisition and giving the students a chance to interact and enhance the process of the acquisition of the basic language skills. Applications such as Quizlet, Padlet, Kahoot, and Google Classroom have the ability to change more traditional classrooms into newer and more interactive and learner-centered ones in the right hands. The rationale of balanced and strategic integration can also be supported by other models as TPACK and the SAMR in order that the technology can be an addition to and not a substitute of the pedagogical intent. Though digital technologies are flexible, autonomous, and provide real-time feedback, they can have the most significant effect where teachers possess the necessary technological, pedagogical, and content skills. In addition to this, the inadequate infrastructure, training and unequal distribution should also be considered to be specific to the non-homogeneous learning systems such as India.

To go on with it, the development of the teacher profession must be associated with particular training on the topic of technology integration. The institutions are stimulated to investing in infrastructural and experimental, and reflective practice culture. In schools, it is encouraged that teachers should begin with simple digital additions, and gradually evolve to more radical applications. Lastly, it can be mentioned that the online tools are also fruitful, and they serve a purpose in ELT. Effective facilitator of language learning in the 21st century Technology has the capacity to become a useful learning tool provided it is strategic in the pedagogical approach and sensitive to context.



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