

The Practice of Technology-Induced Pedagogy at the Tertiary Level ESL Classrooms in Sri Lanka

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Abstract- The Practice of Technology-Induced Pedagogy has gained a large research interest due to changes that occurred in traditional ESL classroom practices. This study aims at exploring the practice of technology-induced pedagogy in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms at the Tertiary-level in terms of types of technology platforms and tools and the current status of classroom management. Fifteen lecturers of English who serve at different Higher Educational Institutes were considered as the sample of this study. Data were gathered regarding their perspectives on the practice of technology-induced pedagogy through a self-reported questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. A Google form and Google voice typing were employed to collect data. Next, data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and content analysis. The results indicate that a wide array of new platforms and tools are employed in the teaching-learning and evaluation process related to all language skills. They include LMS, Moodle, MSTeams, LearnZoom, Googlemeet, Google Classroom, Pad let, Smart board, Podcasts, YouTube, Kahoot, Mentimeter, Canvas, Quizzlet, Google forms, audio and video clips, and Artificial Intelligence. Further, it has been revealed more advanced tools like Chatbots, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality will also become popular in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms in the future. The study further revealed the occurrence of major changes in classroom management aspects like lesson planning, physical setting, student engagement, disciplines of the students, time management, use of teaching aids, and strategies in ESL classrooms where technology-induced pedagogy is practiced. The study also highlights the need to investigate more on the safe use of AI tools and apps which ensure learner autonomy as well as creativity in other ESL/EFL contexts in the world and study their applicability to the Sri Lankan ESL context.

Index Terms- ESL classrooms, Classroom Management, Technology – Induced Pedagogy

I. INTRODUCTION

The influence of modern technology has touched almost all dimensions of education at different levels irrespective of the disciplines. This research explores the practice of technology-induced pedagogy at the tertiary level in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The integration of modern technology into the education of the Sri Lankan university system and Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) was drastically changed mainly during the Covid-19 pandemic period since there was an immediate concern to continue the education system through the distant mode.

Simultaneously, this modern technology was absorbed into the ESL teaching-learning process at the tertiary level of education. Also, the other available technological resources have been added to the ESL pedagogy creating a huge impact on the teaching-learning process as well as the classroom management. Currently, the ESL classes are conducted in three forms; online sessions, onsite sessions, and hybrid mode. However, a wide array of technological practices is utilized in all categories depending on the necessity. This research study focuses on how the practice of modern technology has affected the major aspects in the ESL teaching-learning process as follows.

1) Different technology tools and platforms utilized in ESL pedagogy. These tools are used in different ways depending on the target ESL component of each lesson since they require different levels of student engagement with the feedback. For instance, the Padlet is used as an effective technology tool to teach English Writing in Online lessons since it enables the teacher and learners to the class. It is an interactive tool that provides a platform for students to improve their English Writing skills. Similarly, when all students practice the particular grammatical aspect (Ex/ Prepositions / Conditionals.), the teacher can employ different types of drills by using modern technology tools.

2) Practice of technology to improve four English Language Skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) and Grammar and Vocabulary. The students need to have a wide platform to practice English language skills practically with effective exposure as well as feedback.

3) Practice of technology in assessment and evaluation. The assessment and evaluation process in ESL classrooms enables the learners to test their improvement after following a particular English course module for 10-15 weeks at an HEI. At this point, the assessment tools have to be carefully designed in a way not allowing students to misuse the technology. For instance, even though the students can have the support of Chat GPT or paraphrasing tools or software in the classrooms, their accurate English writing proficiency level cannot be tested if they utilize technology at the tests.

4) Changes occurred in aspects of Classroom management (teaching methodology, role of the teacher, lesson planning, setting, student engagement, disciplines of the students, time management, and use of teaching aids). Many of the classroom aspects have undergone drastic changes with the use of technology-induced ESL pedagogy. Certain aspects have been increased while some of them are minimized. For instance, the Methodology adapted by ESL teachers varies on the mode of teaching. It becomes Task- Based Language Teaching (TBLT) or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in more or less.

5) Benefits and drawbacks of the integration of modern technology at Tertiary Level ESL classrooms. It has been reported that different plus and minus points exist related to the practice of technology-induced ESL classrooms which will be elaborated in this paper.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

With the emergence of modern technology, the field of ESL/EFL has experienced a wide array of changes in terms of pedagogy and classroom management. These aspects include teaching methodology, lesson planning, time management, use of teaching aids, teacher position, giving feedback, student engagement, and so on. These areas have been influenced at different levels according to teaching-learning contexts all over the world. However, this practice in the Sri Lankan ESL context has to be explored extensively since it is utilized on a large scale at present.

Learning styles such as auditory and kinesthetic styles of ESL learners influence the language proficiency level in different ways. The utilization of modern technology in today's ESL classroom is intertwined with learning styles since the learners follow different learning styles. Saricoban & Yuruk (2016) mention that learners follow a preferred learning modality: visual, aural, and kinesthetic while some learners are multimodal. This emphasis on multimodal learning is largely addressed in modern ESL classrooms which utilize the technology to enhance language skills of the ESL learners. Also, Gilakjani et.al (2011) highlights that other than the visual-cognitive activity involved, learning requires the interconnectedness of multiple sensory

modalities and representations. These theoretical backgrounds are well blended in technology-induced ESL classrooms since a wide array of platforms, software, and apps are utilized there.

According to Li et al. (2019) Technology-enhanced EFL classrooms in China negatively influence the communicative competency of the learners. Since it promotes the display questions which do not facilitate the learning process with correct feedback there is a possibility to provide spontaneous and authentic input for the learners. In this comparative study, they suggest that the EFL learners should be provided with an effective pedagogical awareness in utilizing the technology-induced language teaching. Li (2014) has explored Understanding language teachers' practice with educational technology in China with a sample of secondary school teachers. The data collection methods such as lesson recordings, and follow-up interviews show that the most frequently used technological tool is PowerPoint presentations since it enables the learners to enhance student engagement, and language acquisition, and create a facilitating classroom environment. The study highlights the necessity of exploring the pedagogical beliefs related to technology usage in EFL classrooms. Long (2022), mentions that multimode teaching is more productive since it enhances the students' engagement, interest, and ensures learner autonomy. Different applications of modern technology also have been explored in several researches which opens the path for further studies. Simultaneously, Fakhri (2022) claims that SMS can also be used effectively in ESL classrooms at the university level to acquire confusing vocabulary. This study further elaborates that the learners prefer to use this method since it ensures the learners autonomy to a greater extent.

There is some research conducted in the Sri Lankan ESL context regarding the use of different types of modern technology in learning. Keerthiwansa (2018) states that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms is a positive practice since it saves time and ensures learner autonomy even though it is far away from the traditional classroom. Further, this study reveals that AI tools make the learners more active in the classroom as it provides an effective feedback for learners. Wijewantha (2021) has conducted a study related to the use of multimodal texts to promote reading comprehension in the virtual language classroom with a sample of 50 freshmen in a government university in Sri Lanka. This experimental study reveals that the use of digital documentaries in the ESL classroom enriches the learners' comprehension and learner engagement more than in a conventional ESL classroom. Samarasinghe & Prasangani (2023) claim that AI tools can be effectively used in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms at the university level while fostering the creativity of them. This study explores that Chat GPT has gained a much popularity in learning English, especially in Writing, getting definitions, synonyms etc., checking grammar and pronunciation, and writing blogs etc. On the other hand, the qualitative content analysis of this study claims that there is a challenge of losing the creativity and the learning skills of the learners due to the excessive use of Chat GPT more frequently. However, there is a requirement to explore

more on the practice of technology-induced pedagogy from the perspectives of the learners as well as teachers. The present study explores the use of this concept at the tertiary-level ESL classrooms.

3.0 Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study adapted the mixed method in research since it explores both qualitative as well as quantitative data related to the practice of the technology-induced pedagogy from the perspective of lecturers of English Language Teaching (ELT).

3.2. Objectives

3.2.1. To investigate different types of technology tools and platforms employed in Sri Lanka ESL classrooms at the tertiary-level in terms of teaching-learning and assessment and evaluation.

3.2.2. To explore the status of classroom management in technology-induced ESL classrooms.

3.3. Population and Sample

The target population of the study was ELT lecturers who serve at tertiary-level institutes in Sri Lanka since they utilize modern technology in ESL classrooms in different aspects. The sample included 15 ELT lecturers who teach at different HEIs irrespective of the academic majors of their students. The academic disciplines that they engage in include Engineering, Technology, and TESL,

3.4. Instruments

A questionnaire was administered virtually among the participants as the major data collection instrument. It included questions related to technology tools and platforms used in ESL classrooms, teaching methodology, aspects of classroom management, evaluation process, and language components facilitated through modern technology. Also, a semi-structured interview was conducted to gather data related to the perspectives of ELT lecturers regarding the changes that have occurred in the ELT pedagogy, and data were recorded through Google voice typing. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and content analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 Technology Tools and Platforms used at the Tertiary-level ESL classrooms

The sample of the study included 15 ESL teachers at HEIs who have a minimum of one year of teaching experience. About 90% of the sample has teaching experience of more than three years in ESL classrooms at tertiary-level. It has been reported a variety of technology tools and platforms are used in ESL classrooms to enhance the English language skills of the learners. They include Zoom, LMS, Moodle, Google Classroom, Learn Zoom, Google Meet, and MS Teams have been reported as the most frequently used in ESL classrooms at HEIs. Subsequently, it has been reported that many technology tools / apps such as Pad let, Smartboard, Podcasts, YouTube, Kahoot, and Mentimeter are being used in ESL classrooms in teaching-learning process.

Similarly, several technology tools and platforms are reported to be used in the English language assessment and evaluation process. They comprise LMS, Canvas, Padlet, Quizlet, Google Forms, Google Classroom, and audio and video clips.

4.2. English Language Skills enhanced through modern technology.

According to the results of this study, it was reported that modern technology tools and platforms are frequently incooperated to improve all four language skills as well grammar and vocabulary. Listening and Writing skills report the language skills which are mainly supported the technology while Grammar marks the least constituent. These new technological practices are used to improve the English language proficiency of the learners in all aspects.

4.3. Role of the teacher in technology-induced ESL classrooms

The results indicate that the teacher's role in ESL classroom has shifted from the traditional way to more a supportive role with the use of new technology. Teacher's role in the ESL classrooms as the facilitator has been reported with the highest percentage. Next, the teacher's role as an instructor and a participant in classroom activities are reported with lower percentages respectively.

4.4. Classroom Management in a technology-induced ESL classroom.

It was explored that there is a considerable change in certain specific aspects of classroom management in ESL classrooms where new technology is practiced. The participants have revealed their perspectives regarding a range of aspects: lesson planning, physical setting, student engagement, disciplines of the students, time management, use of teaching aids, and use of different teaching strategies as follows.

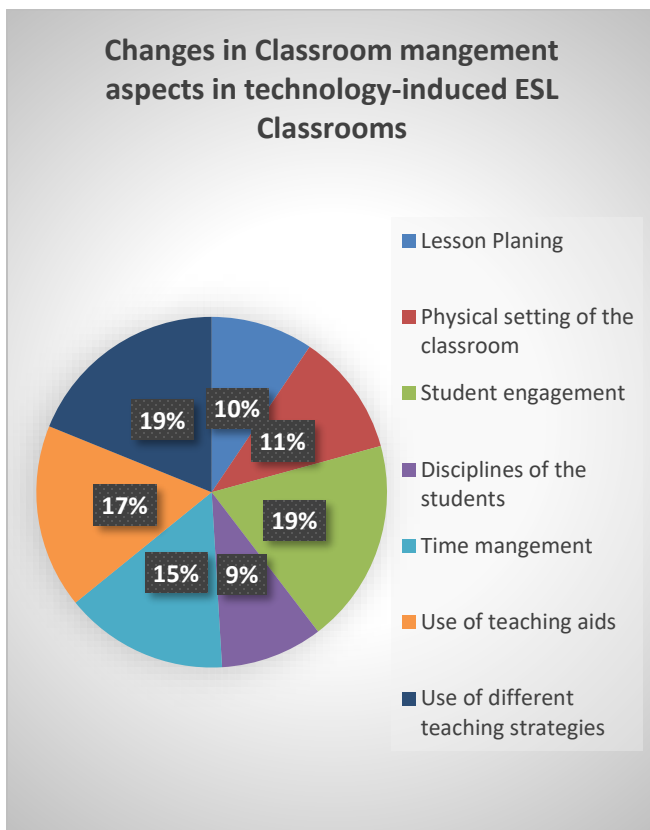


Figure 1: Changes in Classroom Management in Technology-Induced ESL Classrooms

According to the pie chart, ESL teachers at HEIs experience some changes in classroom management at different percentages. Both student engagement and use of different teaching techniques are reported to be the highest technology influenced classroom aspects. As the pie chart depicts technology creates the lowest impact on the disciplines of the students. The use of different teaching aids in ELT has also been affected in modern ESL classrooms by a considerable percentage. Further, the sample of the present study has identified that this practice has created a positive impact in ESL classrooms in terms of teaching, learning, and assessment.

4.5. Benefits of using technology in ESL classrooms

The study has revealed that ESL teachers have identified a wide range of benefits of using technology in classrooms as follows.

1. Easy to access and implement the lesson
2. Saving time of the teachers as well as learners
3. More student engagement
4. Enhancing learner –centered teaching
5. Keeping the learners and teachers updated with the modern trends in the field of ELT

According to the perspectives of the participants, they prefer to employ new technologies in ESL classrooms to achieve a wide array of benefits that enhance English language proficiency of the learners.

4.6. Drawbacks of using technology in ESL classrooms

The study revealed some negative aspects related to the practice of technology-induced pedagogy in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms. It has been reported that there is an issue in giving take-home assignments for the learners since there is a possibility of misusing new technology which hinders their actual learning. If they directly use AI and other apps to write things for them, the learners will not acquire basic English knowledge. Also, there is a conflict between the cultural practices related to teaching such as respecting the teachers and the practice of new technology in ESL classrooms.

4.7. New technologies to be used in ESL classrooms in the future
According to the perspective of the ESL teachers who participated in this research, there will be more modern technologies that will play a significant role in future. They include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chatbots, Virtual reality (VR), Augmented reality (AR), mobile learning apps, summarizing and paraphrasing tools, Smartboard, ChatGPT, and Bard. Due to the availability and promptness of the technology resources the learners display a huge interest in using them in language-related tasks.

6. Discussion

According to the findings of the study, it is evident that the ESL learners at HEIs in Sri Lanka follow different channels of learning such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic to enhance the English language proficiency of the learners. Due to the availability of a wide range of technology tools as well as the necessity of dealing with learners with different learning styles, ESL teachers practice technology-induced pedagogy in the classrooms. The present study revealed that ESL teachers use a wide range of tools like recordings, PowerPoint presentations, and YouTube to enhance student engagement in the classroom which has also been pointed out by Li (2014). Also, there can be seen the utilization of more technology tools in the ESL teaching / learning and evaluation process today. Similarly, Li et al. (2019) mention that ESL teachers should be made aware of the use of technology effectively to ensure the communicative competency of the learners.

Further, the present study explored the practice of Multimode teaching in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms since there is a utilization of a wide range of technology tools that deals with the human senses. The present study revealed that ESL teachers employ these techniques in all language aspects in terms of teaching, learning, and evaluation. Many of them deal with both visual and auditory senses together such as electronic media, Zoom, Google Classroom, MS Teams, Smartboard and Smart phones. These resources enhance the interaction among other participants while ensuring the authentic usage of language. Since the learners need to communicate with others in English new technological platforms provide learners with the opportunities to interact with others. Moreover, the technology-induced pedagogy ensures the learner autonomy among the adult learners at HEIs who prefer to utilize them even after the classroom hours. These points have also been supported by Fakhri (2022) and Long (2022) in their studies. It is evident that today ESL teachers employ many of the updated technology tools and platforms which were not available about 4-5 years ago such as Padlet, Googlemeet, Moodle, Bard, Canvas, Quizlet AI-powered tools like Chat GPT.

These practices are not included in previous studies since they emerged recently and were incorporated to language teaching recently. Moreover, the present study revealed that ESL teachers anticipate that more technology-induced practices such as AI tools, Virtual Reality, and Augmented Reality will be incorporated at a high percentage in language teaching and learning in the future.

Next, it is necessary to discuss the findings of this study in relation to previous studies conducted in the Sri Lankan ESL context before providing recommendations for future studies. The current study has explored that the practice of modern technology in ESL classrooms has created a wide range of benefits including high student engagement, time management, efficient lesson planning and implementation, and sense of being updated. When there is more learner engagement, the whole teaching-learning process ensures the language improvement of the learners. Since the learners are exposed to English in more authentic ways via these technology tools there can be seen an improvement of English usage among the ESL learners at HEIs. Confirming these findings Keerthiwansa (2018) has stated that the practice of AI tools in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms is a positive one since it enhances the student engagement and time management while ensuring the learners autonomy. Similarly, in the present study also, the majority of the participants claimed that the practice of technology-induced pedagogy in ESL classrooms is a positive change while the minority has identified it as a neutral tendency. Furthermore, Wijewantha (2021) also indicates that student engagement and comprehension levels can be enriched through the use of modern technology tools in ESL classrooms.

Moreover, the present study has investigated that AI tools including Chat GPT have become more popular in ESL classrooms as they provide the learners with quick solutions for the language-related tasks within the classrooms as well as outside the classroom. Moreover, it has been anticipated by the participants of the study that AI tools, Virtual reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), and more advanced mobile learning apps will gain much popularity in English language learning. Confirming these findings Samarasinghe & Prasangani (2023) also claims that the ESL learners at the university level tend to use Chat GPT for a wide array of purposes such as checking grammar, meaning, writing blogs, and so on. However, the present study has revealed that there are some negative impacts of the excessive use of AI tools, especially Chat GPT. For instance, the participants have reported that ESL learners use AI tools in most of the English writing tasks without attempting to make a draft. This tendency hinders the learning process and creativity if they use these technology tools without a sufficient amount of language acquisition. There is a risk of losing creativity and inability to face real-time assessment and evaluation tasks during university life as well as in the International English Language Tests. This point has also been confirmed by Samarasinghe & Prasangani (2023) in their research study. They have stated that the excessive use of Chat GPT and AI tools will reduce the English learning skills and

student engagement during class hours. Further, the present study has revealed that giving take-home assignments for ESL learners has become a challenging task due to this practice.

Finally, it has been revealed that aspects of classroom management such as lesson planning, teaching methodology, disciplines of the students, and physical setting of the classroom have also deviated from the traditional roles within the technology-induced ESL classrooms.

7. CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, it is evident that the practice of technology-induced pedagogy creates some positive and negative impacts on the teaching-learning process. It is necessary to explore more on how to optimize new technology tools in ESL classrooms to ensure the improvement of the English language skills of the learners. It is recommended to investigate more on the safe use of AI tools in future classrooms in other ESL/EFL contexts and apply them effectively to enhance English language learning while ensuring learner autonomy and creativity within the Sri Lankan ESL learners at the tertiary-level.

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