Exploring Web 2.0: Tools for English Language Teaching

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Abstract: - **The world has moved to the concept of virtual world very rapidly during the pandemic. Where the classrooms teaching has shifted to online learning these days, effective digital tools have become an integral part of teaching learning process. Web 2.0 which is also known as Participative and Social Web refers to websites that emphasize user-generated content that are easy to use and compatible with other systems and devices for end users. These tools provide a chance to create learner-cantered environment that maximizes use of the target language while catering to interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication. As a result, the learners can practice the language more while interpreting content. Also, the learners can demonstrate and document their language understanding through the help of the tools mentioned in the paper. The present paper provides archetypes of activities that can be incorporated in Web 2.0 which can be used in the language classroom to create appealing learning environment.**

Index Terms— Language learning, Learner centred approach, Social Web, Web 2.0

1. INTRODUCTION

It is said that the world is a global village and with the expansion of technology the people are virtually close to each other. This concept is very well in appropriate in the current scenario. When the world is struggling to come out of the pandemic, online teacher learning is very well in run-through. Of course, web 2.0 tools have been used by the many educators across the world since its inception to make teaching learning effective, the present case of virtual teaching forces the educators to be acquainted with several websites and technological supports that enable them to create, collaborate, edit and share user friendly content. The present paper discusses a few such web tools that can be used widely to make teaching-learning of the language more stimulating.

II. Web 2.0: background and meaning

Ours is a brand-new world of allatonceness. "Time" has ceased, "space" has vanished. We now live in a global village…a simultaneous happening…we can no longer build serially, block-by-block, step-by-step, because instant communication ensures that all factors of the environment and of experience co-exist in a state of active play. (McLuhan & Fiore 1967: 63)

Distance education taught in traditional classroom via distance delivery method as well as online environment has been popular since it gives feasibility and flexibility to the students and the instructors. In the technological era, the students are better updated about the curriculum using sources available online. Hence, it becomes a challenge for the educator to present something new to the classroom every now and then, to keep the students interested in the subject and keep them engaged in the curriculum learning. Web 2.0 comes to the rescue of the instructor in such a situation. They are an amazing asset for any classroom. Hence, one can say that the important role of technology is "the same as the teacher's, that is, to facilitate online learning" (Huang 2002: 31)

When Web 1.0 was prevalent in the years between 1994 and 2004, Web 2.0 appeared as a "next generation web". Web 1.0 functioned more as information provider. However, with the growth of technology, rather than simply going through the information on the internet, the users wanted to do the trading on the internet, publish their views on their website and collaborate with their friends and distant family. These requirements gave rise to community and social websites. These sites evolved with Web 2.0 tools.

The term Web 2.0 was first noticed on the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. In his speech at the conference Tim O'Reilly mentioned Web 2.0 as a new version of world wide web and not its upgradation (O'Reilly). Where internet has transformed the way we look at world wide web today, Web 2.0 applications have facilitated education sector immensely world wide.

Web 2.0 tools can very broadly be defined as end-user applications that require dynamic interaction, social

networking, or user interfacing between people and information. They almost always have accompanying websites and associated apps for smart devices. In a Web 2.0 environment users decide how they want to use, interact with, and create information. Users can add images, videos, or links to other media content. Students have unlimited opportunities to individualize the content they embed in their products, and the ease of use of these tools encourages student creativity. Unlike traditional pen and paper type responses, students are not limited by their own artistic abilities, page-length, or word count limits. Students will often go beyond the basic expectations of an assignment because these tools facilitate students' creative processes. When Web 2.0 has many advantages for instructors and students, it is not the magical solution for all the challenges faced in education sector. The instructors have to vigilant enough to select the best tool for their target audience and the time given for specific unit in the curriculum. Even at the students' end not everyone is tech-savvy for using the selected tool. Hence, they should be judiciously used as over use of it may become obsolete.

III. Review of related literature

(Orehovacki, Bubas, Kovacic) classifies Web 2.0 applications and presents a 3D taxonomy of various tools that have educational potential. Their objective is to create a taxonomy of Web 2.0 to overcome challenge faced by the students and teachers in order to select appropriate and useful Web 2.0 tool. The first dimension of their taxonomy refers to the types of Web 2.0 applications, the second dimension is related to their function, and the third dimension represents cognitive process i.e. remembering, analyzing, understanding, applying, creating and evaluating through these applications. They go at length to describe all such applications presented as a part of their 3D taxonomy.

(Peller, Jane, Beebe and Aldrighetti) experimented that using a single technology in the classroom is a powerful tool for learning, but using a combination of various technologies to reinforce each other helped to strengthen the learning process. They carried out a research on social work students of Northeastern Illinois University with the help of their instructor to experiment using forms of instructional technologies to achieve course outcome. They used chat room by Meebo as well as word processing program simultaneously in the classroom. After setting up technology-assisted collaboration and supervision, the researchers could very well explain the interview skills to their students. Even the students accepted the change in instruction positively. Ultimately, technology-assisted teaching-learning found a permanent place in their curriculum.

(Cook) in her article tries to explore the effects of sign,

symbols and podcasts affect e-learning. Through the case study the researcher tries to explore how podcast facilitate deeper learning. The case study was conducted on 20 adult learners enrolled in an online Technology, Training and Human Performance course at Midwestern University. The researcher had established online learning community, where for eleven weeks' course, the instructor posted responses and conversation with the learners in online community. Podcasts with course aid were also posted on university patented iPod site. The findings suggested that the learners who were feeling isolated and disconnected from their peers initially due to online classes were now feeling connected to each other and could get better visuals and understanding of the course content through podcasts.

(Tutty and Martin) designs Web 2.0 Instructional Design Model as a guide for the users to enhance their learning and performance. Web 2.0 ID model is designed in such a way that it can be utilized in a face-to-face, blended or an online classroom. The instructors here functions as a facilitator who guide the learners to the Web 2.0 tools to achieve learning objectives. The model has three phases of analysis, collaboration and personalization as well as evaluation that contributes to the learner centric design across disciplines. The users can analyze the tools, identify strength and weakness of each tools and can also identify potential outcome of all the tools presented. Collaboration and personalization keeps the learners engaged in learning process and they can improvise the learning continuously. Evaluation caters to the feedback system to identify attainment of learning outcomes.

(Vaughan and Garrison) describes the integration of Web 2.0 tools to design collaborative communities of inquiry. The researchers present eight categories of Web 2.0 tools with their software application and associative collaborative learning. They also discuss at length, instructional strategies for using these tools in the blended learning environment. In short, the researchers have attempted to describe the potential use of Web 2.0 tools in collaborative communities of inquiry.

(Yun-Jo, Aworuwa and Ballard) explores best teaching practices with the help of Web 2.0 technologies as well as the pros and cons associated with the use of Web 2.0. 14 university instructors who had an extensive experience in teaching with Web 2.0 technologies participated in a web-based survey. The outcome specifies the major benefits of using Web 2.0 technologies in teaching which are interaction, communication and collaboration, knowledge creation, ease of use and flexibility, and writing and technology skills. The major obstacles university instructors encounter in teaching with Web 2.0 technologies include technical problems, and time management. The survey results also provided insightful guidelines and tips for teaching with Web 2.0 technologies.

IV. Exploring web 2.0: tools for English language teaching

In today's digital era, from tiny tots to the college goer, the generation has grown up using the technology in the best possible way. They are well versed with the technology and every information is available on their finger-tip. In this case, it is vital that the technological tools used in the classroom to teach English language needs to be unique and engaging. Today, a wide range of educational apps are available over internet. But it is important to remember not to use them more if it does not enhance learning. The goal is not to keeps the students engaged for the sake of doing something (Lux, Banger & Whittier 2011: 416).

When ample of web tools are available to collaborative learning, it is important to choose the one that helps to reinforce the skills or concepts taught. Below are some Web 2.0 tools and their applications which can be used in the language classroom.

Nearpod: It helps to make the lesson interactive. The educator is able to prepare presentation in terms of quiz, polls, videos, collaborate boards, etc. It also gives access to some thousands of pre-built lessons for classes K-12. The teacher can also upload their existing lesson. Since we talk more about student centric teaching, this tool give access to the students to flow at their pace for the particular chapter. It has features like simple presentation, personalized provision, distributing resource, live formative assessment, ongoing assessment, self-assessment, open-ended tasks, homework setting and using pre-made resources. Nearpod can be used as a substitute for Powerpoint presentations or Google Slides. There is a drag and drop feature where the teacher can import PDFs and PPTs to crate Nearpod presentation.

Below is the image that shows how collaborate boards can be created in the language classroom. When students arrive at a Collaborate Board during a lesson, they will be able to post text and/or images in response to your prompt. They'll see other student responses, and be able to "Like" responses that resonate with them by clicking the heart in the bottom corner of each post.

Fig. 1 Nearpod Collaborate Board

If collaborate board is used in student-paced lessons, the teacher can simply enter the topic and a description. These are the prompts that the students will see. The reference images can also be added and the students will try to understand the concept through the concept. This collaborative board can be used for live participation mode as well. It enables the students to give comments in real-time.

Wordwall: It allows teachers to create interactive and printable activities. Interactives can be played on any internet-enabled device. These activities can be individually by students, or in the teacher-led classroom with students taking turns at the front of the class. These activities can be printed out directly or downloaded as a PDF file. They can be used as a companion to the interactive or as stand-alone activities. The best feature of Wordwall is that the teacher can use one out of various templates available. These templates are in form of quiz and crossword. The other forms of games include Maze Chase and Airplane where the teachers can present the lesson in the form of games. In total, there are 34 interactives and 21 printable readily available with Wordwall.
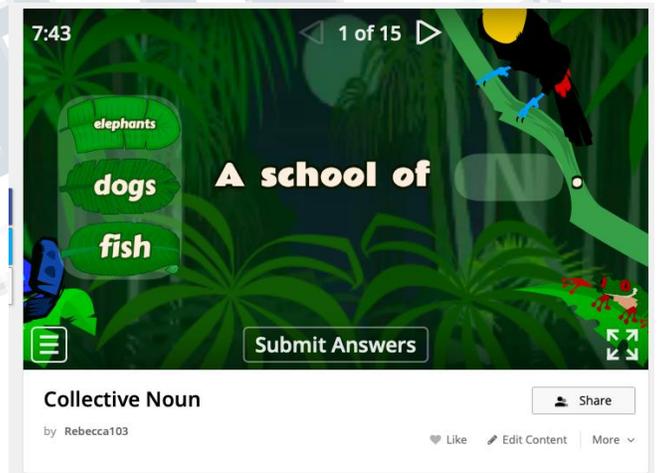

Fig. 2 Wordwall English Quiz

These quizzes also allow the teachers to set the timer and shuffle the question order. Add sound option makes the quiz lively. At the end of the quiz the leader board shows the statistics of the quiz. The benefit of creating activities on Wordwall is that the teachers can customize them to suit the class level and teaching style.

Storyboardthat: It is a digital story telling tool that reinforce powerful visual communication among the students. It is loaded with more than 2000 lesson plans and activities for Elementary to High School teachers to select from. Storyboardthat has an active educational blog where the educators share additional activity ideas and resources for worksheet creating, app smashing, and accessibility. The best feature of this tool is Picture Encyclopaedia. It covers a wide

range of topics for students like mythological figures, famous people, genres of literature, innovations, etc. They can serve as a starting point for a biography, research project, or introduction to a lesson.

Fig. 3 Storyboard for English Phrasal Verb 'To hand out'

The fig. above is a readily availabe picture that the teachers can use for the class. But the tool has option of creating your own story using animations available.
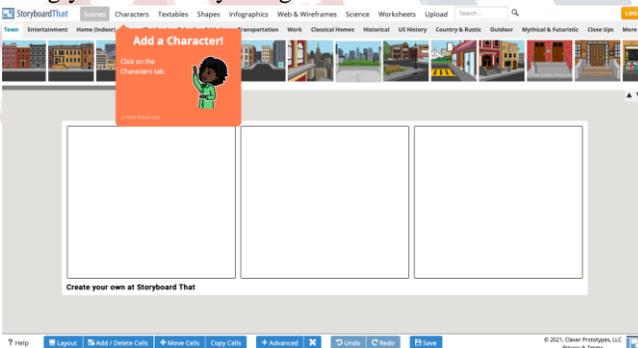

Fig. 4 Blank Format to Create Own Story by Storyboardthat

As seen in the fig. above, the teachers can create their own story using background setting, characters, shapes and infographics etc. Teachers can assign each student to complete their own storyboard, create their own encyclopaedia of a topic they are studying. These storyboards can be used as references or visuals.

Classkick: Classkick allows the teachers for real-time monitoring, feedback, and assessment on student work 1:1 in classrooms. It can be easily linked to your Google Classroom for sending assignments and saving work. Teacher creates or uploads an existing assignment into Classkick and assign a roster. The teacher can check and give feedback to the students' work in real time and students can respond right away. The can also help each other.
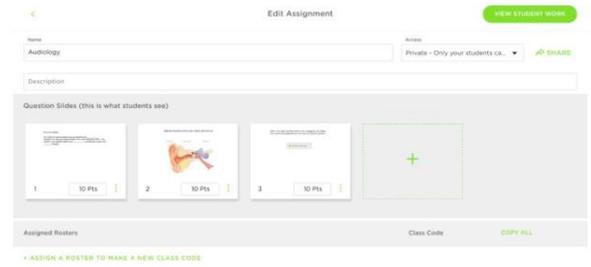
Fig. 5 Editing Assignment in Classkick

After uploading multiple assignments in one go, the teachers have to add all students CVS file for the contact list. Once the assignment goes live, the students can complete the assignment using pen tool. They can even take help from their peers or the teacher in between. The students can upload video or images as a part of the assignment as well.

LessonWriter: LessonWriter comes with the motto: make it easier to teach better**.** This tool helps to create reading lessons. English language teachers can paste a text that they want to use in class. This tool automatically generates vocabulary, pronunciation, word roots and grammar support to help students. Exercises and questions related with the given text can also be added. Teachers can also have full control in creating the reading lesson from scratch. Lesson writes also provides a lesson plan to the teacher.

Fig. 6 Creating Reading Task in LessonWriter

As can be seen in the above fig. the teacher can paste the reading item from the digital text or a web page. LessonWriter creates the grammatical and vocabulary items on its own. The teachers can create express, standard and detailed lessons as per the requirement. In short, the teachers can have customised lessons at their fingertip.

Conclusion

Integration of ICT in language teaching has become a phenomenon. In order to make teaching learning effective, the teachers need to have more focused idea of the needs of

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the students and the components of the lesson. The students also have equal responsibility to make such learning a success that they have to be prepared for the class in advance and be alert and attentive. Web tools, ultimately, increase the self-efficacy of the students as they learn with different pattern which help them to clear the concepts in depth. Technology does not guarantee success in language learning. It is clear that. "... the key to successful use of technology in language teaching lies not in hardware or software but in "humanware" – our human capacity as teachers to plan, design and implement effective educational activity" (Warschauer, M., & Meskill, C. 2000: 304). It can only become effective and useful in language teaching and learning environments if the teachers are competent. If the teacher can successfully understand the language needs of the students and then integrate Web 2.0 in language education, then only these tools would meet the pedagogical needs of teaching situation.

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