



The Role of Language Lab in Learning Teaching English as A Second Language at College Level

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1. Introduction:

Language laboratory is an audio-visual installation used in modern teaching methods to learn the foreign languages. The language lab is a technological break for imparting skills in English. The language lab offers an exclusive result oriented and efficient to enrich the English language learning process. The multimedia-based language lab helps to learn and enhance the language proficiency by sharing the course materials with in a second where the teacher and the students involved effortlessly. The language lab is developed on the methodology of LSRW skills. Modern language labs are known by many names, digital language lab, multimedia language lab, language media center and multimedia learning center to name but a few. A language laboratory is a classroom with computers connected to the Internet and multimedia resources which can improve learning. There are several reasons to think of a language laboratory to improve learning/ teaching environment at college level.

1.1 Different types of Language Laboratory:

- a. **Conventional Laboratory:** This is the primitive form of the language laboratory. The conventional lab has a tape recorder and a few audiocassettes of the target language to teach the learners. The teacher plays the tape and the learners listen to it and learn the pronunciation. As it is used in a normal classroom setup, it is prone to distractions and this type of laboratory is no longer common.
- b. **Lingua Phone Laboratory:** This is again a conventional type of lab, with a little modernization. Learners are given a headset to listen to the audiocassettes being played. Here distractions are minimized and a certain amount of clarity in listening is possible. There is also a modernized lingua phone laboratory available today, which uses an electronic device that has two functions. It works as a cassette player with all the features of a normal cassette player on the left side, and as a repeater on the right side that helps one to record one's voice and play it back for comparison.
- c. **Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL):** uses the computer to teach language. The language course materials are already fed into the computer and are displayed according to the features available in the system. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the Internet. These are called **Web Assisted Language Laboratories (WALL)**. The development of CALL has been gradual, and this development has been categorized into three distinct phases: Behavioristic CALL, Communicative CALL and Integrative CALL (Barson & Debski, 1996). Though the development of CALL has been gradual, its acceptance has come slowly and unevenly.
- d. **Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory:** There is a lot of software available on the market that can be used in the multimedia language laboratory, for example



- a. RENET
- b. Aristoclass
- c. Hiclass
- d. Globarina
- e. Console OCL-908W
- f. Online software

1.2 Modern Language Labs in General Offer the Following:

- Text, images, audio and video can easily be integrated; teachers can alter materials to fit their requirements.
- Learners can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with each other and the teacher, and store results.
- Teachers can intervene and control the learners’ computers via the teacher’s console, track of learners’ work, etc.
- Self-access for independent learning which includes access to resources outside class
The purpose of a language lab is to involve students to actively participate in language learning exercises and get more practice than otherwise possible in a traditional classroom environment.

1.3. Common Components in a Modern Language Lab:

- Teacher has a computer with appropriate software for conducting language exercises.
- Teacher and students wear headsets that block outside sounds and disturbances.
- Students have a media player/recorder for listening to audio and recording speech.
- Teacher and student positions are connected via LAN (local area network), in some cases also via separate audio cabling.
- A server computer or a separate storage device is often used to store lesson materials in a digital format

2. Why Use a Language Lab in Language Teaching?

In an average foreign-language class, all students combined speak only 23,5% of the class time (DESI 2006, pg. 48-49).

In a 45-minute long class 23,5% equals approximately 10 ½ minutes. As this number is the speaking time of all students put together, the time each student gets to practice speaking becomes less as class size is increased.

How much speaking practice each student gets during a 45-minute foreign-language class, depending on class size:

	10 student class	30 student class
Traditional classroom	~1 minute	~21 seconds
Classroom with language lab	~11 minutes*	~11 minutes*

With a language lab, all students in the class can speak simultaneously without distracting each other regardless of the class size. Without a language lab, in a class of more than 10 students, each student gets less than one minute of speaking practice.



2.1 Advantages and Benefits of Language Lab

- Auditory Oriented: The direct sound transmission gives step by step guidance from the teacher to the heads of the students with crystal clear clarity.
- Better Attention: The Lab software is more attention enthralling for the students, where they are engaged with individual systems.
- Comprehensive quickly: The Lab increases the pace of comprehension as students coaching is purely based on the level of study.
- Damper the idea: The Lab regulates the language through the different thoughts created in the mind of the students.
- Effective learning: The lab provides to learn the foreign language practice in a focused setting that eliminates the feelings of self-consciousness.
- Focus Veracity: By using text, audio and video can easily be integrated with actuality in every day situations.
- Guide the group: It is easy to guide the groups by monitoring each student independently without disturbing the others students. 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.
- Independent learning: access to resources beyond the timetable encourages independent learning.
- Janitor for learners: It care takes the learners to become skilled at the language that they are learning.
- Kaput the fear: 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.
- Medium of interactivity: The students can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with the each other and the teacher, and store the results.

Today's educational climate is increasingly diverse. Art has long been seen as a visual language. The language lab plays a key role to learn the foreign language in a happy atmosphere and in a successful way. Both the teacher and the students' inputs are very important in this kind of learning activity. The efforts of the both make the above points victorious. The computers are just an aid and not a solution. The well-planned contents and practice help the learners learn the language very quickly. Though the language lab is believed as self learning accessible, we need an expert to handle the classes. Multicultural countries like India, students are taking taut try to learn the English language and its proficiency. So, we need a solution that facilitates the second language learning in a trouble-free way.

Foreign language learning lends itself naturally to the use of media. 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.



The students feel different when they learn in different atmosphere. Apart from the traditional classroom, lab creates an easy atmosphere. Language lab plays a pivotal role in learning the spoken English. The basic proficiency in spoken English is imparted to students through the language lab.

It is concluded that the language lab is the solution and need of the hour to learn the English language. The quality of the language proficiency will be more when they learn it from the multimedia, digital and computerised Language Lab. We need some trained expert to teach the faculties to know how to handle the language lab and the students in a proper way. Surely language laboratories represent the single largest investment and installment of audio resources in education. By high merit of its unique equipment and its unambiguous pedagogy, it stands alone. The computer now fulfills all the need of language educators and gives life to language for many learners.

**Note: actual speaking time per student can be considerably higher depending on what type of exercises teacher conducts.*

Sources:

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4. Richards, J. (2001), *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.
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