Role of Chhattisgarhi Language in Promoting Digital Literacy: An Overview

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of digital literacy and the need of Chhattisgarhi language in promoting digital literacy. Digital literacy refers to the practices of reading, writing and communication made possible by digital media. This paper explains digital literacy and suggests the ways in which digital literacy can be embedded in Chhattisgarhi language instructions to promote digital literacy acquisition through Chhattisgarhi language. Specifically, this article addresses four aspects of digital literacy: using basic digital skills; creating and communicating information in Chhattisgarhi language; finding and evaluating information in Chhattisgarhi language; solving language problems in technology-rich environments. Digital technology is underutilized in language teaching and learning. This situation often arises from a lack of training. This article aims to address this teacher training need by providing the basis for a teaching methodology designed in Chhattisgarhi language to integrate new technologies via digital literacy.

Keywords: *Digital literacy, Digital contents, Digital technology, Chhattisgarh, Chhattisgarhi language, Pedagogy, Language learning, Teaching, Digital training*

1. Introduction

Chhattisgarh is fast becoming an information technology (IT) savvy state [1]. However, the rapid expansion of IT and Internet network and the consequent digital literacy in the state will remain constrained due to limited proficiency in English language among the Chhattisgarhi populace especially the Chhattisgarhi youths. In order to overcome this bottleneck, Chhattisgarhi language can be of great help. The usage of Chhattisgarhi language to promote digital literacy can have a vast positive impact on Chhattisgarhi youths in learning the basic digital skills and tools like MS Office, Search Engines, Browsing aids, Social media websites, Knowledge sharing websites, Trading websites, Government-Public interface websites and various Applications (Apps) like Digital payments, Online shopping, Railway/Airway/Roadway ticketing & booking, Hotel rooms booking, LPG booking, Banking Apps, Webcasts, Podcasts, Screen casts etc [1, 2].

According to U.S. Department of Education, the definition of digital literacy is the skills associated with using Internet technology to facilitate users to locate, evaluate, categorize, create, and communicate information and the proficiency to use those skills to work out problems in technology-rich surroundings. The most important aspect about being digitally literate is having the mindset to accept change, to be open to learning new ways of knowing and doing, to be willing to try and see, and to expect to make mistakes and to learn from them. Fundamental digital skills are needed to operate digital devices, including turning them on and off; keyboard skills; mouse using skills; touchpad skills. These skills also include knowing how to create, save, locate, and edit computer files as well as how to open, use, and close a variety of computer applications. These applications may include browsers for searching the Internet, mapping applications that provide driving directions, and applications for finding information. Basic digital skills also include having the necessary language and literacy skills to do things in a digital environment, such as sending an e-mail to a child's teacher or filling out a job application online [2].

2.   Need for Digital Literacy in Chhattisgarh

After the rapid growth of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s, transformation of countries from the industrial age towards the knowledge age in which the production, acquisition and flow of knowledge play an increasing and important role in generating and sustaining economic growth has become a hot topic on the policy agenda of most countries. Connectivity to the Internet and access to the information available on the web offer commercial opportunities, greater social participation and awareness, and enable informed decisions. Hence, the enthusiasm and motivation for Internet access and usage among youths in Chhattisgarh is a positive step toward the creation of knowledgeable citizens in a nation where knowledge and technology drives the economy. However, mere access to digital contents and resources is not enough to guarantee that youths will use those contents and resources in productive and enriching ways. Chhattisgarhi youths need to transform their beliefs about what it means to be literate in order to cope with the enormous changes of a technological and knowledge driven culture. In this culture, the exchange of information has been accelerated by the emergence of digital modes of information. Digitally literate has evolved from having the competence to access, evaluate and understand static printed texts to being able access, locate, evaluate, understand and utilize a dynamically rich variety of digital texts available via the Internet. Nonetheless, educators in Chhattisgarh often assume that majority of youths today are digital natives (youths who use technology easily like a naturalized and unthinking process) due to their constant exposure to digital technologies like computers, smart-phones, video games and the Internet [3].

With increasing rapid knowledge transfer and technological diversity becoming a global phenomenon, it is essential to examine whether Chhattisgarhi youths have similar digital literacy skills, like those expected of digital natives, to perform tasks effectively in a knowledge based society with digital information and meanings represented in multimodal forms. From this perspective, this overview study is important to assess the digital literacy competence of Chhattisgarhi youths, specifically students in universities and colleges, to effectively access and use digital texts for obtaining information needed for academic tasks. Students who possess higher education and digital literacy skills will most likely be able to retrieve more relevant and useful information, which will then be translated into academic, commercial, political and social advantages. Additionally, this issue has implications on employment opportunities since more and more employers demand that their employees have some digital literacy skills. Digital literacy skills enhance students in society; those who are excluded from such involvement will be left behind and are seriously disadvantaged in their ability to participate in future education and employment opportunities. The theoretical background for this overview study is based on the fact that literacy practices mediated by digital technology involve interaction with resources in many different modes of representation which require multiple literacy skills [3].

3.   Role of Chhattisgarhi Language in Promoting Digital Literacy

Chhattisgarhi language learner, knower or expert can understand digital media, digital literacy and digital skills better through reading, writing and communicating modules designed in Chhattisgarhi language. This assumption is premised upon the fact that, a person learns best in his/her mother tongue language. In recent times, information and communication tools and its associated digital literacy skills & practices for social interactions have changed significantly. These changes can be credited to two interconnected sets of factors. The first set of factors relates to rapid developments in information and communication technologies, which have facilitated: a) new forms of multimodal representation based on interactive hypermedia and computer-mediated communication; b) new kinds of joint text-making practices where remix and collaboration are common; c) the formation of globalized, online affinity spaces where linguistically and culturally diverse participants interact with one another about their shared passions, engaging in the amateur creation of knowledge and culture in online gaming communities, in fan fiction

sites or in the webpedia. These advances have been accompanied by a second set of social changes related to economic globalization, with increasing migration leading to greater linguistic and cultural diversity in local communities. The impact of Chhattisgarhi language on digital practices can be immense. Apart from better understanding of digital literacy, it may give rise to learners of Chhattisgarhi language also due to a) new needs of language learners in the digital age, and b) new globalized, online framework for language learning. The Chhattisgarhi language learners/experts with digital literacy will promote Chhattisgarhi language through digital trans-language in social networking sites, evidence of language learning in out-of-class YouTube comments, language socialization in webpedia writing projects, and the digital practices of Chhattisgarhi language teachers both inside and outside of the classroom [4].

4. Envisaged Tasks for Chhattisgarhi Language Teachers in Developing Digital Literacy Course Material in Chhattisgarhi Language

In today's world, a great deal of reading generally comes from the Internet; such a habit is no longer adequate. Because barriers to publication have gone, an infinite amount of information is now available in digitally written form and these digital writings varies massively in terms of quality, facts & trustworthiness. Plagiarism is also a major concern in these digital written texts, articles, stories and other pieces of information. When learning to read digital texts, language learners need to establish a set of information management strategies like ways to find texts online, ways to evaluate those texts, ways to differentiate genuine from fake websites etc. Learning of online reading of a webpage means acquiring the skills to not only understand the text but the whole multimodal assembly of writing, images, layout, sound, graphics and hyperlinked texts. The major emphasis in teaching digital literacy should be language pedagogy related to digital media and Internet. The action oriented and pluralistic based approaches can be envisaged upon recent methodological developments along with the value addition of digital technologies. A tangible pedagogical framework needs to be designed allowing practitioners to develop digital tasks based on a insightful use of online resources and technologies. Language engineering for the utilization of digital tools and resources like open educational resources (OER), text-to-speech tools, concordances can be used to promote the autonomous growth of the essential linguistic and intercultural skills necessary to engage in online interactions [5]. Language teachers can support learners in building personal learning environments using pertinent resources, software and apps to progress towards an independent practice of Chhattisgarhi language in online interactions [5]. Another approach in which technology can expand the walls of the classroom is by providing independent online learning opportunities that can be coordinated with what is happening face-to-face in the classroom [2]. Other varied task-based online interactions to encourage learners to develop interactional skills can be:

i.   Facilitate collaboration among schools within the web network of Chhattisgarh state [5].
ii. Pedagogical framework for the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) based on a critical analysis of current research and recent publications [5].
iii. Training modules on an online platform [5].
iv. Trainer kit [5].
v.   Webinars [5].
vi. Podcasts: A recorded audio file that is put online for others to listen to or download [2].
vii. Screen casts: A video file that records what is on a computer screen; it can also be narrated by a person on the computer [2].

5. References

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