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Role and Importance of ICT in English Language Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has brought dramatic modifications in the paradigms and methods practiced in the developed countries. In recent years, the exploitation of ICTs in teaching and learning has been expanded in developing countries too. Nowadays, we use e-devices as a gateway in learning and teaching language in ELT classrooms. Despite many more advantages of implementing ICT into ELT in the context like ours, we have some challenge too. Shrestha has mentioned some pitfalls that can be existed in an ICT integrated classroom. We may have difficulties in infrastructure development. Similarly, ICTs may not be in the access of all the teachers and learners. They are quite costly. We may face problem of transportation and electricity. The teachers can have the problem of providing training to the students. Similarly, there can be the problems in time management and material development. Similarly, some other problems are related to practicality, lack of authentic materials, local English materials and cultural appropriateness. In the same way, there can be the problem of finding out expert teachers to handle their teaching with ICT. Besides, the use of ICT in learning language in daily life seems effective to develop intercultural communication skills.

Keywords: communication skills, development, ICT, language learning, teaching, skills

INTRODUCTION

Language is the mirror of human life which delineates the life of human. Language speaks man's personality. It is the cosmic medium like imparting the common information of society. English and ICT have become essential tools for a number of non-datum and emotions of everyday life. English language has become a global language because of its numerous functions and preferences over several other languages over the globe. English has become the window to the world. English is not only the mother tongue of Britain but also to so many countries like Canada, USA, Newzealand etc .It is also used as second language in many countries like Nigeria, Ghana etc. English has become a medium for business and interactional purposes among other functions .English is playing a major role in every field such as medicine, engineering, education, art and law, music etc. As the world is changing, there must be changes in language learning. But contemporaneous collide of globalization, the expanse of English and technological development have transformed our learning and teaching English as a Lingua franca in an unprecedented way.

In every aspect of human life, Science, Information, Technology are playing a vital role. Even in the field of education the technological developments have started a new page. Traditional methods of teaching are not showing great impact on the learners. Technology has become a tool for making the learners innovative and also became a source for motivating the learners towards learning.

ICTs, the digital technologies, are powerful educational tools; and their use has a significant role in the transfiguration of the pedagogy of teaching and learning (Ludvigsen & Morch, 2010; Sutherland et al., 2009). Angeli et al. (2015) view that a good combination of technology and pedagogy is very important to ensure that the learners are able to take advantage of technology inclusion for the opportunities of learning integrated skills of language. According to Davis (2007), the incorporation of the technologies into English classroom can help achieve: (i) cognitive gain by providing visual images, (ii) motivational gain providing fun, and (iii) interactional gain by providing convenience sharing. ICTs provide opportunities for exploring the communicative power of the English learner by engaging them in exploring literary texts and several other interactive activities in exciting ways (Richards, 2007). Likewise, computer-based activities enhance interaction and collaboration and provide unique opportunities for the development of the learners' spoken and written language capabilities (Andrew, 2007). A variety of technology-enhanced gadgets can create an interactive learning environment to develop learners' autonomy and meaningful learning, which provides a huge amount of exposure to language (Acevedo, 2016).

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in India. It is one of the core subjects both in the college level curriculum (up to bachelor level) and school level curriculum; and as equal weightage as other compulsory subjects has been given to English (CDC, 2007). However, the analysis of the results shows that the quality of English education is relatively less satisfactory; and teaching-learning of English is one of the more difficult jobs in both secondary school

education and higher education in India (Bista, 2011; Budhathoki et al., 2014; Mathema &Bista, 2006). Budhathoki et al. (2014, p. 17) point out that students are very weak especially in English, Maths and Science and that the overall fail percentage in English in SLC (school leaving certificate) is increasing (it was respectively 26.28, 32.23 and 35.21 percent in the academic years 2009, 2010, and 2011).Therefore, it is essential to find out the ways to enhance the educational quality of such subjects in both school and higher education in India. As several research studies (Acevedo, 2016; Davis, 2007; Dina & Ciornai, 2013; Somekh, 2007) have concluded that ICTs are useful educational tools, and they contribute a lot in ELTAL; the government of India has considered the need for ICT integration for the improvement of quality of education of all subjects recently. However, the integration of ICTs in education in the developing countries is rather slow; and particularly, ICT integration in higher education in India in teaching and learning of different subjects including English is at its initial stage. Therefore, it is essential to explore the opportunities and challenges in ICT integration in teaching and learning of English, based on the context of higher education in India because the knowledge gained from research studies is very important for tailoring the teaching-learning activities. Moreover, though multimedia and/or ICTs have been perceived as effective tools, ICT integration has 'a long way to go and attain to maturity' (Liu, 2012, p. 2334). Therefore, research and investigation on integration and use of ICTs in education and in ELT are becoming worthwhile day-by-day in order to achieve the full advantages of such technologies.

Context of Global Exchange

In the context of the global exchange the role of ICT has become inevitable in the 21st century. The use of ICT has become essential in every day classroom teaching and learning. Its use gives a chance to teachers as well as students to increase the quality of education and meet the requirements set by the coeval knowledge society.ICT has become essential tool for educational change and reform. Government of India has included ICT as one of the subject in school level education. The Methodology of English has started a new way of using ICT in teaching.ICT provides more opportunities for communication between peer learners. With the use of ICT there is a two-way exchange of knowledge between home and school/ college. The teacher abides key to the successful use of ICT for learning. The integration of ICT in language teaching and learning has become an interesting topic to many researchers and education practitioners.



MAIN TOOLS OF ICT IN ELT

Computer Assisted Language Learning:

CALL is a broad and an ever changing discipline. Beatty defines, CALL as "Any process in which a learner uses a computer and as a result improves his or her language and it covers the wide range of current practice in the field."The internet and different computer applications. Computer Assisted language learning(CALL) software, CD-ROMS ,and Office software applications have become common place in many teaching and learning environments. The computer can act as a stimulus which generates analysis, discussion and writing.

The Internet:

The internet offers the best way to learn language other than immersion in an English speaking milieu. The student's relationship with websites is more noticeable than with print based text. Internet users may return to sites frequently or

use internet for interaction to share their information and ideas. Digital technology is rapidly used by pupils and teachers not only in the classroom but also in the personal life.

The advantages of online learning:
The internet saves our time and energy. we can learn English lessons through internet without the need of travelling and without the need of leaving home or bedroom. With internet students can learn English anywhere at any time and whenever they want. The internet offers instant feedback to the learners which enhance the learning experience of the students.

E-Books:
An eBook is an electronic version of a traditional print book that can be read by using a personal or by using an eBook reader like iPods and kindle. EBooks also used to improve the teaching and learning skills in the classroom. In eBooks teachers and students can add images, info graphics, posters, video, and text, audio and so on. Learners can share eBooks with their friends. E=Books strengthen students' note making skills, the knowledge of English grammar and application skills.

Audio Books:
Baskin and Harris (1995:372) explain, "The first literature heard, not read."Audio books are not discovery of this century or even of the last one considering authentic books as equivalent to its content and not to its format (Baskin and Harris1995:372).Audio books are applicable for English language learners and young people who are craving for learning English with stories. Audio books develop the four language systems; phonological, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic. Audio books are recordings on CD or digital file of a book which are read aloud."The use of audio books with struggling, reluctant or second language learners is powerful since they act as a scaffold that allows students to read above their actual reading level. Play way is the new arrival regarding audio books .Play way does not need a separate players and it is preloaded and ready to use.

Webinar:
Webinar is the best example for online learning. Webinar is an interactive seminar conducted via the World Wide Web. Usually a live presentation, lecture or work-shop that happens in real time as users participate through chatting, video-chatting, file-sharing or asking questions with a microphone. Webinars are more helpful in learning grammar.

Interactive White Board:
Gareth Davis says that "IWB brings everything together at one placemat one time with the use of authentic materials."IWB acts as a motivational tool.IWB has to be connected to the computer and data projector.IWB offers teachers to comprise video clips, films interviews ,electronic microscopes, different websites etc .It improves the social skills of the students like cooperation and participation. In IWB lessons can be recorded and saved for further use. Bactra states that The power of images and capacity for collaboration is very significant in White Board's impact on learning."IWB teaching is completely different from traditional methods of teaching. According to Cunnings worth "vocabulary was a neglected area of foreign language teaching but it has gained its due recognition in the last few years" New vocabulary, word formation and sounds are practiced easily by IWB.

Mobile Apps:
Mobile digital devices like laptops, iPods, tablets, smart phones have made English language learning easier .At present there are so many apps available in the App store and Play store (Android) markets. These apps furnish students with quizzes, games, dictionaries, Podcasts and tests. Simultaneously teachers can now constitute the "gasification" element in teaching which put out interest in the students for a given topic. Mobile apps can perform as a personal 24/7 English language teacher. Some mobile apps which are amending English language learning and teaching are Dictionary.com, Hangman, Grammar's, Quizmaster, 60- Second Word Challenge, Mobile Air Mouse, Ankhi Flash Cards, and English Idioms Illustrated etc.

Audio-visual aids:
In the 21st century the use of AVA has become inevitable. It has started a new genre in the field of teaching and learning language. Apart from traditional teaching teachers must adopt the topical and innovative teaching techniques.
1 The use of AVA makes the students active.
2 Students can get rid off their boredom and dullness in the class.
3 Provide attentiveness and enthusiasm.
4. They help to nurture the power of surveillance and independent judgment.
5.They give clarification about the content in the text book.

Over head projectors/slides:
To make ideas explicit we need some visual aids. Slides and slide projectors are used for unveiling objects in full colour. Over head projectors are used in language teaching and learning to supplement the black-board.

Tape-recorder/gramophone:
This is useful for teaching pronunciation, stress and intonation. Recorded information can be reproduced in the classroom. It gives a chance to the students to develop interest towards pronunciation. It helps the students to test their speaking skills.

Television:
The most efficient medium for teaching is television. The television appeals both to the ears and eyes. We can record some language teaching programmers in CD or Cassettes and can telecast them. This shows significant impact on the minds of the students. Radio and television give us the experience of real world into the classroom. Here teaching is very active process. Television is a companion, entertainer and instructor.

Film projector:
Knowledge acquired through films has a lasting effect. We can project some educational films, dramas etc. This can develop the listening and speaking skills of the students.

Language laboratory:
This is the latest innovation in the language teaching. In this we have sound equipments and projectors, computers etc. which can give the students the practice of listening and speaking.

Web 2.0 applications:
It has come into light in 2005. It encourages sharing between users. In this we can have variety of applications such as blogs, social networking websites etc. The learners can be encouraged to write their own blogs. Social networking sites like face book, bebop, and flicker have become very popular. These can be useful for language learning.

Mobile phones:
Mobile phone has also become very essential tool for learning a language. It is a mini computer in every one's pocket. Mobile phones function in many ways like the addition of texting, email, functions etc as computers do. In mobile phone assisted language learning we can find portability, social interactivity, community, individuality and immediacy.

CONCLUSION

Today science, information and technology (ICT) have left their impact on every aspect of human life. Most of the significant developments that one can observe today can be attributed to the impact of science and technology. As technology has created a change in all aspects of society, it is also changing our expectations of what students must learn in order to function in the new world. Even in education sector, we witness that technological advancement and innovations have made a visible impact and have changed a scenario. The word 'ICT' includes any communication device such as computer, mobile phones, radio, television, satellite system etc. Now the role and use of technology as a tool for teaching of English language is increasing as educators have understood its ability to create both independent and collaborative learning environment in which students can learn English with much ease. Traditional methods of imparting higher education have become less motivating. Here, technology plays an important role in creating innovation and motivation for the learners.

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