

Use of ICT in English Language Teaching

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Abstract:

Technology has outstretched in almost every sphere of life. When it outreached the realm of education, it has changed teaching-learning process drastically. Language learning can be made interesting and creative by introducing ICT (Information and Communication Technology/Technologies) in the language classroom. For English is learnt as a second language in many countries including India, it is recognized as a link language across the globe. The teacher can introduce ICT into the language classroom to achieve the desired learning outcomes. With the help of ICT, the teaching-learning became flexible. Today the learners can learn at their own pace and at their own place. A teacher can make use of digital tools in the language classroom which is innovative, creative and interesting. In the modern world, teachers are not mere teachers but they are playing a role of a facilitator for the learners. They involve the learners in a variety of activities which enhance their learning and boost their confidence as well. ICT provides the opportunity to use different methods and techniques of teaching language in a diversified classroom, which is a mixture of different types of learners. It caters the needs of the different learners at the same time.

Keywords: Technology, ICT, Teaching-Learning, Learner, Teacher, Facilitator.

Introduction:

Language plays a crucial role in human life. One cannot presume this world without language. It is an undeniable fact that language is a means of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. History manifested how nations of the world strived to preserve their language and culture. But today we can observe how English is subjugating almost all the languages of the world. English has become a link language connecting the people across the globe. It is also known as a library language. It is portrayed as a window to the world. It is learnt in many countries including India, not as a foreign language rather as a second language. It is the highest learnt language all over the globe. In India, it has got hold of an eminent position in almost every higher education institution, including colleges and universities and these institutions employ English as a medium of instructions in their academics.

On one hand, English has taken the dominating position across the countries, on the other hand, technology also revealed its hegemony across the globe. The advancement of computer technology made remarkable reach in almost every sphere of human life. It is playing a vital role in our day to day life. It is used in almost every field i.e., science, health, sports, transportation, entertainment, industries, etc. Soon it has been introduced in educational institutions and many teachers incorporate this trend into their classroom and find it very helpful in their teaching experience. Technology has been integrated with the classroom teaching to make teaching-learning interesting, creative and result oriented. Use of technology can be extremely effective in enhancing the English language skills as well.

Imran R. Shaikh (2013), in the book 'Introduction to Educational Technology and ICT', says that:

The use of educational technology in the field of teaching and learning, thus, has given birth to a new approach, namely, the multisensory or multimedia approach to teaching-learning. (p. 45)

Definitions:

MHRD (2012), in its last version of National Policy on ICT, defines ICT:

Information and Communication Technologies are defined as all devices, tools, content, resources, forums, and services, digital and those that can be converted into or delivered through digital forms, which can be deployed for realizing the goals of teaching-learning, enhancing access to and reach of resources, building of capacities, as well as management of the educational system.

UNESCO (2007) in The UNESCO ICT in Education Program defines ICT as:

The term ‘information and communication technologies’ (ICT) refers to forms of Technology that are used to transmit process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. (p.1)

From the above definitions, it is clear that the term ICT means communicating and sharing information through technology. It is one of the means with which teaching learning goals can be realized.

Review of Literature:

Ruth Trinder (2017), in his work “Informal and Deliberate Learning with New Technologies” talks about how informal and implicit language learning takes place inside as well as outside the classroom using the technology. The author argues that language learning can be far exceeded and multiplied if it is learnt in an informal way. With the expansion of internet and technology, there is a rapid exposure to the English language all around the world. It made easy to have access to a variety of social platforms which leads to English language exposure. The research enquires about the following:

- How frequently is the technology used in learning a language?
- What are the reasons behind the technology choices?
- How helpful is the technology for enhancing the language skills among the learners?

For the study, 175 Austrian university students have been selected, quantitative as well as qualitative data collected using questionnaire and free text response to open questions. Collected data has been represented in the form of tables and bar graphs. Findings show that all the respondents own their smartphones and at least one other portable device such as notebook and iPad. Due to easy and cheap access to internet technology, the focus of technology-based learning shifted from teacher to student-initiated use. Students have the clear conception about technologies promote language learning. Teacher asks the students to find and share digital resources which are related to their topics using Facebook and other social media platforms to their close groups. The teacher can be a facilitator by promoting discussions, validation and encouragement of informal learning raising awareness about the benefits of underused resources, exploring reasons for use and rejection of these digital tools.

ICT Need of the Hour:

Technology, in today’s scenario, is an inseparable part of the modern world. From dawn to dusk everyone seems to deal with the variety of activities with the help of technology. It crept not only into professional lives of the people but also in their social lives. Today, especially the young children are obsessed

with the use of ICT in the form of different social networking sites such as what's app and the Facebook. It is undeniable fact that ICT when outreached the educational arena, it has changed the teaching-learning milieu drastically. To make the teaching-learning activity more interesting and productive, ICT is used not only in core subject classrooms but also in language classrooms. It can be used as a powerful tool to engage the diversified classroom consists of average, exceptional or below average students. The Teacher can exploit ICT to its maximum to achieve the desired learning outcomes from the learners.

Language Learning through Social Media Platforms:

Learning a language involves social aspects which influences the way in which individual learns a language. Staying connected with different peoples across the globe provides the opportunity to learn the language more easily and even informally. Today, youngsters are obsessed with the use of ICT in the form of social media platforms like What's app and Facebook. There are different words that are creeping into the English language every day. For example ASAP, OMG, Obvs, Unfriend, etc. These connections can make them updated about the trends and styles of languages that are in vogue. They not only learn new vocabulary words every day but also able to use these words in our day to day conversation. These global connections and updates are possible only through ICT.

Flexibility:

With the help of technology, the teaching-learning became flexible. Today the learners can learn at their own pace and at their own place as well. In the boundaries of the classroom also it provides the flexibility to switch over to a variety of activities related to language learning. Video conferencing, audio conferencing, What's app group and the Facebook group can be used to involve the students in group discussions in a language classroom. There are institutions which provide online courses for language learning.

Digital Tools:

Traditional Teaching Aids requires a lot of energy and time to prepare which is normally used for a single period plan. Unlike these, the digital tools are innovative, creative and time-saving. There are plenty of digital tools which can make the teaching-learning process a fun. They are available in various themes and colors which creates the interest among the young learners. They are easy to use and organize. Powerpoint presentations and YouTube videos can be used in the classroom to make it alive. Google calendar is one of the digital tools with which one can organize events, schedules, and activities and it can be shared with the students too.

Blogs and Wikis:

The Blog is a discussion or informal website published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete, often informal diary-style text entries (posts). It is a regularly updated website, typically one run by an individual or small group that is written in an informal or conversational style. When the language learners have the opportunity to blog, they can share their perspective. It also gives them the opportunity to play with words and sentence structure.

On the other hand, Wikipedia is a free encyclopedia, written collaboratively by the people who use it. It is the special type of website designed to make collaboration easy, called a Wiki. The Wikipedia supports language learning and is intended to collect information, methods, and tools on language learning. It uses several sites as an aspiration to collect and disseminate the best language learning content, into an easy to use references.

Teachers as Facilitators:

In a modern world, teachers are not mere teachers but they are playing a role of a facilitator for their learners. They involve the learners in a variety of activities which enhance their learning and boost their confidence as well. It enables the learner to come up with creative ideas and remove the hesitation by providing a stress-free classroom environment. With the help of ICT, a teacher can make their students to learn a language more effectively.

Assessment and Evaluation:

With the help of Google sheets, a teacher can maintain the assessment records of the learners. It is one of the digital tools used to organize the scores and grades of the students. It makes the data pop with colorful charts and graphs. There are built-in formulas, pivot tables, and conditional formatting options. It saves the time and simplifies common spreadsheet tasks. One can share the sheets with colleagues and can work together on the same spreadsheet at the same time. There are options with which one can see when someone is editing their spreadsheet, even they can see the cursor as they make changes or highlight text.

Conclusion:

ICT in one of the effective ways through which a teacher can achieve the desired learning outcomes from the learners in a language classroom and make the teaching-learning a fun. With the help of digital tools like powerpoint presentations, YouTube video clips and different educational blogs, online dictionary and variety of educational apps, the teacher can create interest and creativity among the learners and also grasp their attention in the classroom. ICT can be collaborated with classroom teaching to cater different type of learners at the same time. There are visual learners, audio learners, tactical learners and so forth. ICT is one of the best methods to involve all the learners and cater their needs at the same time, with the given time limit to the teacher.

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