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## TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LANGUAGE IN VIRTUAL MODE

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### *Abstract*

In this new epoch of Information Communication technology (ICT), especially during and after Covid-19 pandemic, the teaching and learning of language has changed wholly. It has created a major change in the Education system, where the teaching from traditional classrooms shifted to virtual or digital mode. Rapid evolution of communication technologies bring about a new change in teaching pedagogy and use of language, bringing new forms of discourse, authorship, and ways to learn the language. New online applications such as Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams have been adopted for smooth and effective learning for the students. It is a challenge for teachers to make English language learning more authentic, holistic and meaningful in these virtual modes than the offline mode. This paper is going to discuss the role and importance of teachers, student's perceptive, new understanding and strategies of English language and communication, critical knowledge of the relationships amid language teaching, learning, communication, and new trends in the technology in virtual world.

**Key Words:** language, English, teaching, learning, technology, virtual mode

### **Introduction**

Although teaching through virtual mode is not new but the Covid-19 pandemic era has made the whole world technological driven. Learning and teaching mode from traditional mode also shifted to virtual mode. The advancements in technology over the years have helped educational institutions to create open, interactive, and flexible environment for students for e-learning (Baber, 2020). The sudden shift from regular offline classrooms was initiated through the use of various online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft teams, Google meet etc and increases the dependency on digital material and resources.

In this whole process of digital transformation of education, language learning and teaching has crucial clench. As the language learning involves lots of interaction and communication, it has to adopt various new strategies and skills which is not a easy task. Faculties are using various different methods to tech their students in best possible ways. Taking online lectures with use of whiteboard, power point presentations, videos, and quizzes etc are incorporated in order to teach students language. Although teaching language through virtual mode is not new as Coursera, Byjus, Unacademy etc have been already incorporating online medium. However, during the year, the use of online mediums has seen an efficient increase (Motzo & Proudfoot, 2017).

The pandemic has caused a major shift in the teaching pedagogy for students around the world at different levels, making it crucial to understand the effectiveness of the online teaching method (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

### **Importance of English as Language**

In the world, the most widely spoken language is English. There is hardly any country where English is not a part of the curriculum. It is language of Information Technology, science, tourism and diplomacy. In 45 countries it is the official language and where it is not official language there also is spoken widely and is mandatory in many fields and jobs.

Learning English language is somewhere difficult to some people and to some it is impossible. That idea is a compilation of many years being taught with wrong methods and tools that have caused mental blocking, reducing the English language teaching learning process effectiveness (Aning, 2018). But if the teacher has good inculcation, uses proper techniques and masters the content, language can be learned without any difficulty. Whatever the teacher performs in the class has to have only one objective that students learn.

Covid 19 pandemic has made us aware of the importance of Information and communication technologies (ICT). Today's information age has had drastic, deep progress and changes in almost every field, and one of them is the teaching of English. According to Kriscautzky (2020): "In order to be a citizen of this era, it is not only necessary to read and write in the traditional way, but also to be able to perform and communicate through reading and writing using different digital tools."

This pandemic has made the whole education system and teachers to use digital tools for continuing the teaching process, that has created challenges in the correct use of technology, to determine which information on the digital world is true and which is fake, or its effect which is suitable as per the subject to be concerned to endorse the teaching and learning process in the best way.

### **Virtual or Online Teaching**

From the very beginning, in education system, traditional method of teaching and learning has been followed where in classroom instructions are directly given by the teacher. Teacher provides clear instructions as well as adequate resources in the classroom and is responsible for every activity of classroom.

In past few years with the advancement of technology, virtual or online mode of teaching has gaining popularity. It is becoming the good alternative to the traditional mode. This enhanced mode of teaching became extremely useful for schools and college as during Covid 19 pandemic learning become easier. But one must know the difference between virtual and online teaching and learning.

Virtual teaching means instruction in a learning environment where the teacher and students are separated by space or time, or both, and the teacher gives course content by means of the Internet, course management applications, multimedia resources, email and video conferencing. Students receive the subject matter and communicate with the teacher through the same technologies. While online classes are based on virtual teaching but with a new feature: Real time. In other words, teachers and students concur in time. The students are supposed to attend live classes or meetings where they concur with their teacher and classmates.

## Challenges & their overcoming

Teaching effectively in the virtual or online mode has some major challenges:

- i. In e-learning situation, how to make the teaching effective for students learning interaction.
- ii. How the students or learners, who are the end-users, are supported by the teacher.
- iii. How to manage learner participation.
- iv. Motivation

In order to deal virtual teaching, teachers must have some basic digital skills. The first and foremost is to be computer friendly and have good typing skills. To make lectures effective, instead of making them in notes form, power point presentation should be preferred. Also the teacher must know the use of internet in order to access the websites and to download the information. The teachers must need to have effective communication skills as in virtual mode body language and facial expressions are not seen mostly. In addition to the knowledge of basic computer, typing, and communication skills, teachers in the virtual classroom must have the ability of managing students online. It is entirely different from managing students in an offline class. No matter how experienced the teacher is, IT skills are must as applying skills on virtual mode is totally different.

For teaching English language, various tasks should be prepared including grammar exercises like sentence formation, blank-fillings etc, writing reports, conducting interviews. For virtual classrooms students should be encouraged to perform tasks individually as well as pair work. Group activities are usually not workable due to poor attendance, log in issues, and network problems. To manage the learner participation in virtual classroom is in fact a challenging task.

In virtual learning the most important fact has nothing to do with technology and subject matter, but is how to motivate students to be active in classroom. As the facial expression and body language is almost absent, the teacher's enthusiasm plays a vital role in motivating the students. Motivation is the most important characteristic for success of class. Teacher can use various techniques to let the student speak during virtual class such as write in text chats, solve riddles, making stories, praising them on simple answers, using icons of smile or claps or giving bonus for participating.

Learning language through virtual mode is the liberation of the education processes from the bounds of physical limitation with high technology support. These virtual teaching promotes collaborative work in class, not only between teacher-student, teacher-teacher, student-student, within the same institution, but amid the students from anywhere in the world. As English is the global language virtual teaching provides an opportunity for everyone everywhere. Covid 19 pandemic opens a new door for virtual teaching and learning. The traditional lecture method is replaced with web-based courseware. Students learn through optimized online interaction using the well planned online courses.

## Conclusion

Just like the traditional classroom learning, successful virtual teaching and learning of English language, must provide a proper interaction between students and teachers. In order to assure the teaching language in more innovative, effective, and creative way, teachers must be given proper training for prepare the right content and activities to teach through virtual mode. For the interaction and participation of students the teachers must expertise to specific digital skills.

They are assured that a knowledgeable online teacher will be a benefit to the students. In order to attain this, they require more expertise in online teaching. Covid 19 pandemic makes all to shift to online platforms like zoom, google meet, and Microsoft teams. Online learning situations endorse student-content interaction and

online learning self-efficiency that is directly related with increased student satisfaction and positive learning outcomes. Technology problems are not major challenges in the virtual teaching and learning mode. What teachers need to focus on is how such challenges can be minimized for effective learning outcomes.

The most important point to remember is that technology never teaches; it facilitates the delivery of information and budes the task of learning away from the teacher to the learner.

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