

THE IMPACT OF ICT ON EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract:

India is a diverse nation; it is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious abode for a heterogeneous mix of people. This indigenous plurality and diversity gives an ample scope for the Indian media to spread its wings and match the varied tastes, sensibilities and ethnic identities of its multiple communities. The unprecedented advances in interactivity and multimedia capabilities together with a myriad of emerging technologies have enabled the creation of virtual learning environments that could be utilized to boost the development of English language skills among Primary, Secondary and Higher level students. The lust for quality is still on. This is the age of information dominated by the Digital Technology. The digital technology has influenced all aspects of human life. Education is not an exception. Now the technology is the process of change from Digital to Photon. In fact, Photonic Technology is available for the use of the society. One such device is computer. The computers were never developed for improving quality of teaching-learning process. But researchers started using it for teaching purpose. It also gave birth to Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), Computer Managed Instruction (CMI), Computer Based Instruction (CBI), etc. people started developing CAI for teaching different subjects at School as well as Higher Education level. Technological change in the learning method and access to information redefine the process of knowledge acquisition as well as skill development. Comprehensive technology enabled learning solutions that serve the needs of their users in innovative, intuitive and inspiring ways is needed. It is the new and useful gadgets and equipment which help us to this.

Index Terms- English Language; Innovative Teaching; Globalization of Education; Comprehensive Technology; Information and Communication Technology.

Introduction:

English language teaching in India has come a long way from year 1880 when only a few primary schools used English as the medium for teaching. Up to 1940, the grammar-translation method flourished and the spread of English remained confined to education and office circles, yet again in a haphazard manner by 1970, structural linguistics started making its presence felt in Indian classrooms in the shape of drills and exercises. The experimentation continued with bilingual method, direct method and finally, the modern audio-lingual method. Around this time, all professional courses began to be taught in English, which had also become established as a library language and a subject for autonomous subject in other English as first-language countries around 1940, English language teaching emerged as an autonomous subject in India as late as 1980.

With the advent of the new technology language is also changing its face, style and its expression. Language is manoeuvring the mind of the people through media. It is the most powerful tool of media to reach the audience and users. Media circulate words, sounds and images that surround us. It tells us who is famous-from movie stars to scientists-and gives reasons why? News reports tell us who these people are in 'real life'. Fictional presentations such as books, movies and television dramas tell us what people do and are like. At the same time mass media get us wondering how we fit in; they may also encourage feelings of connection with people whom we have never met. Newscasters, textbooks, and even advertisements tell us that we are part of a society that extends far beyond what we can see. All this is possible, because of the existence of language; without it media wouldn't have existed too. Language is the soul of media. Without it media won't be able to survive and prosper.

With the advent of globalization of Education, English language has reached the height of its utility. Its communicative capacity has bestowed bliss as global English. English has been used all over the world not out of imposition but because of its progressive power. Today, English is accepted by almost all the universities in the world as an effective medium of education. It is dynamic and flexible. Besides, it is difficult to find out proper substitute to English in the universe. It has been taught and learnt as a second or third language by the speakers of other languages. However, its significance having communicative and educative value cannot be overlooked. India is very fertile and where English has been nourishing for more than 150 years. It came to India through our oppressors and sought a suitable place in the hearts of Indians. Gradually, Indians became intimate of English studies and began to learn, speak and write English. It took long period for Indians to honour English as a native identity. Today, English has become the fundamental need of younger generation of India. They have understood the significance of the language in almost all the walks of life. Considering the importance of English, youngster especially in rural areas are curious to acquire the knowledge of it. They want to learn, speak and write English like that of the native of the target language. But their economic, social, political, psychological background becomes major obstacle in learning English. They are completing their under graduation in colleges located in rural areas of India. These learners lack primary knowledge of English because of lower standard of teaching at primary level. Many anyhow memorize the materials in English and reproduce the answers without knowing the meaning. Many do not know even the very basic grammatical rules because they never have had an opportunity to use full and complete sentences in English.

Effective communication is the lifeblood of human relationship. It promotes the spirit of understanding and cooperation among all the aspects concerned with his relationship. Effective communication has certain conditions to fulfil like clarity of message, consistency in message, completeness and adequacy of message, information systematic arrangement of message, suitability of message, feedback conciseness, correctness, careful use of body language, etc. Communication through English is the most wanted asset of the modern time. Good communication is the backbone of the teaching and learning. Without proper communication the teaching-learning process is futile. Teaching-learning is a two-way process. Therefore, teachers and learners both have to communicate for this purpose properly. All the communication skills, such as, reading skill, listening skill, writing skill and verbal skill, are needed. These skills can be developed and acquired through the help of word-building, English vocabulary, and knowledge of English grammar, reading habits, listening habits, watching movies, English programmes, and writing habits. But during the teaching learning process, teachers face many difficulties. The difficulties are of various kinds. It can be because of the lack of proper exposure of the students or the lack of proper educational atmosphere. Most of the students are from the background which is devoid of education and knowledge. Sometimes, they do not know the ABC of the English language even after the completion of their school-level study. They suffer greatly from the problems of spelling, pronunciation, reading, and writing and communication verbally. Those difficulties of the students create problems for the teachers also. Teachers have to cope with those problems with the aid of information and communication technology (ICT).

Language is the means for understanding easily and communicating clearly. It is the outcome of the society. The English language is a connecting language. The use of English language is in vogue. The English language plays pivotal role for the development of the personality and for the establishment of the career. People need it very much in spite of its great necessity. It is also difficult to get command over the traditional standard of the language. The traditional English language has prescriptive grammar. It is full of complexities. The traditional rules and methods are complicated and burdensome. They mar communications. They are like a speed-breaker or anti-motivator. They discourage students from learning and communicating freely. Hence, the motto of the teaching should be capturing interest, boosting confidence of learners, and applying modern tactics and methods for promoting and developing communication skills with knowledge of English. Though, the traditional methodology is considered useless, even then it is helpful for supporting the backbone of the language. It cannot be ignored totally. The soul cannot be removed completely. The body without soul cannot survive. It is true that learners/speakers need to learn and speak easy, simple functional English. They need fast methods of learning. The time promotes computer English/ mobile English, but for the proper knowledge of the language, conventional English is important and useful. New methods of learning and teaching should be used innovatively and novel methods such as body language, audio video aids, mimicry, group discussion, dialogue construction, enactment of drama etc. would be very helpful for creating atmosphere for learning language and boosting confidence of the learners. In this fast shrinking world learners survive and non-learners perish. Technological change in the learning method and access to information redefine the process of knowledge acquisition as well as skill development. Comprehensive technology enabled learning solutions that serve the needs of their users in innovative, intuitive and inspiring ways is needed. It is the new and useful gadgets and equipment which help us to this.

Audio-Visual: Language Laboratory:

With the fast development of computer technology, language teaching in a setting other than the traditional class room is a promising trend and Digital Language Laboratory will definitely prove itself to be the most effective techware of language. In this era of information and technology, the teacher of English must be in competent in using audio-visual aids now a day. As 'change is the law of nature' the teacher in 21st century should shed traditional concepts and techniques of classroom teaching and should adopt the recent and innovative teaching techniques. An audio-visual aid is simply a tool that enhances teaching if used aptly. Teaching can be made innovative, interesting and effective by various techniques and strategies. Hence so as to compete with the other countries, Indian teacher has to adopt such techniques and skill to change socio-economic scenario of the nation. In other words, it can be said that such innovative techniques will assist for the betterment of the students. In this way audio-visual aid plays an indispensable and significant role in teaching English. Technically, a language laboratory is an instructional technology tool consisting of a source unit than can disseminate audio material to any number of students at individual seat or carrels. A language lab is a facility where a student or any aspirant can learn and familiarize with the language with the help and guidance of a teacher through a system, to improve his/her speaking and listening capacity. The language laboratory contains one teacher console with different switches representing number of students and switches for different functions. This also has a microphone and a set of headphones. There is a sound and light indications for the student asking question or raising a query. The student units have one request switch one headphone and one microphone. There is a set of amplifiers and speakers with built in audio recorder to broadcast pre-recorded tapes and record student performance.

The Development of ICT:

The development of Information and Computer/Communication Technology- electronic mail, internet, multimedia, language laboratory, possibility to use collaborating platforms, undoubtedly, influences the process of using them in every day classroom teaching and learning. Actually it provides a new and new possibility of using ICT in the modernization of teaching-learning process and with its help to increase the quality of education and meet the requirements set by the contemporary knowledge based society. In order to be successful in one's professional career today's school graduate alone with the key competencies needs also the computer literacy. ICT no longer serves to be a simple additional means but ICT is an indispensable part of the modern and contemporary learning environment. In order to achieve significant results in implementation of ICT in education, there is need of state level strategic projects, the goal of which is not to equip school with qualities and up-to-date hardware but mainly the pre-service training of teachers for the pedagogical interaction of ICT in teaching and learning provides a powerful learning environment to ensure project based activity and cooperative learning and different interactions; students-students, teacher-students and *vice versa*.

Networking of computers gave birth to Information Technology (IT). UNESCO considered Information Technology as 'Scientific, technological and engineering disciplines and management techniques used in information handling and processing, their application, computers and their interaction with men and machines, and associated social, economic and cultural matters'. According to Smith and Campbell (2002), a mosaic of technologies, products and techniques have combined to provide new electronic dimensions to information management. This mosaic is known by the name of Information Technology. OECD (2007) treated Information Technology as 'a term-used to cover technologies used in the collection, processing and transmission of information. It includes micro-electronic and info-electronic based technologies incorporated in many products. Prior to IT, people were using only the print material for searching the information. It limited the search; this limitation has been overcome by the IT.

Initially, IT was limited only to the textual mode of transmission of information with ease and fast. But the information not only in textual form but in audio, video or any other media is also to be transmitted to the users. Thus, the ICT = IT + Other media. It has opened new avenues, like, Online Learning, e-Learning, Virtual Universities, e-Coaching, e-Education, e-Journal, etc. Fourth Generation Mobiles are also part of ICT. Mobile is being used in imparting information fast and cost effective. It provides e-mail facility, multi-media facility, and social networking facility also. One can access it anytime, anywhere. The ICT brings more rich material in the classrooms and libraries for the teachers and students. It has provided opportunity for the learner to use maximum sense to get the information. It has broken the monotony and provided variety in the teaching-learning situation. The ICT being the latest, can be used both at School and Higher Education Levels in the following areas like- Teaching, Diagnostic Testing, Remedial Teaching, Evaluation, Psychological Testing, Development of Virtual Laboratory, Online Tutoring, Development of Reasoning and Thinking, Instructional Material Development.

It is a well-known fact that not a single teacher is capable of giving up-to-date and complete information in his own subject. The ICT can fill this gap because it can provide correct information as comprehensive as possible in different formats with different examples. ICT provides online interaction facility. Students and teachers can exchange their ideas and views, and get clarification on any topic from different experts, practitioners, etc. It helps learners broaden the information. ICT provides variety in the presentation of content which helps learners in concentration, better understanding and long retention of information which is not possible otherwise. The learners can get opportunity to work on any live project with learners and experts from other countries. The super highway and cyber space also help in qualitative improvement of teaching-learning process. ICT provides flexibility to learners which are denied by the traditional process and method. Flexibility is must for mastery learning and quality learning. On the Internet many websites are available freely which may be utilized by teachers and students alike for understanding different concepts, improving vocabulary, developing reasoning and thinking. ICT can help in preparing students for various entrance and competitive examinations.

It also helps pupils learn in English by enabling them to communicate, edit, annotate and arrange text quickly and flexibly. It can help them to access, select and interpret information; recognize patterns, relationships and behaviours; model, predict and hypothesize; test reliability and accuracy; review and modify their work to improve the quality; communicate with others and present information; evaluate their work; improve efficiency; be creative and take risks; gain confidence and independence, etc.

Conclusion:

ICT thus, can be used to integrate speaking, listening, reading and writing. It enhances interactive teaching and learning styles. It also extends pupil's ability to exercise choice, work independently and make connections between their work in English and in other subjects. For example, ICT can help pupils use a wide range of strategies to explore contrasts, comparisons and connections dynamically; annotate text in innovative ways; enrich or broaden the context of literary study; see texts in alternative versions; use a wide range of analytical and critical techniques; sort and process text and data quickly and efficiently; order and arrange text and data experimentally, using combinations of word, image, sound and hypertext; save, record, edit and adapt their work quickly and efficiently; retain evidence of the editing process so that it can be examined; change the organizational structure and qualities of texts; select from a wider range of audiences, throughout the world; exercise choice of medium and design while composing.

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