Role Of ICT In English Language Teaching

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Abstract

English is considered to be a global language and henceforth learning and comprehending it, has been acknowledged worldwide today. English has become the tool for learning, business and most importantly communication. In order to improve the whole experience of English language acquisition we have to integrate ICT (Information and Communication Technology) with current learning methodology. ICT has been discovered to be a very powerful tool for educational change and reform. We are in the Digital era today, and this is the age of technological learners. These technological learners know well how to use technological tools without any formal instruction as such. Even if they require instruction, they would be able to grasp and implement it very quickly. These learners interact and communicate with others mostly with the help of electronic mediums like mails, internet etc. They obtain most of the information from electronic devices, which has made such tools, a very essential component of their daily life.

Key Words: classroom, electronic devices, language, learning, methodology, tools.

Introduction

Using ICT in a classroom as a tool for language learning has a lot more benefit. It gives stimulus to undertake the tasks that the students may otherwise avoid. In an ICT enabled language learning class, the students would conduct the activities on the computer software platform and they will not have any sorts of hesitations or inhibitions. It would make repetitive tasks more interesting and would have content which could be in multi media formats. The use of multimedia while learning English could help in creating a long lasting impact on the learners. The role of Teacher will change from an Instructor's role to that of a Coordinator. Self paced independent learning methodology is what is being propogated with the help ICT enabled English Language Teaching.

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.

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 themupdated 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 updatesare possible only through

ICT.

Flexibility:

With the help of technology, the teaching-learning became flexible. Today the learners can learn at theirown 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, Whatsapp 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 studentstoo.

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 providinga stress-free classroom environment. With the help of ICT, a teacher can make their students to learn a languagemore effectively.

With the rapidly increasing popularity of the internet in recent years, the diversity of learning programs continue to shift and change according to the demands of society. Since the development of communicative skills, language learning requires social interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves, the use of computers has for a long time been regarded only as a support tool with regard to certain skill areas (Brandal, 2005).

The importance of computers in life cannot be overemphasized as they deal with learning, employment, productivity and fun (Okumbe, 2001). Colantonia (1992), points out that, computers are used in banks, offices, military installations, stores, factories, schools/colleges, government agencies and even other organizations. Computers have created a revolution in the production, processing and transfer of information, primarily because of their ability to handle colossal amount of data within a very short time. The main use of computers, regardless of the application area, is processing or manipulation of data fast and efficiently in order to obtain information that is complete, accurate, timely, economic and relevant.

Computer users today are not computer professionals; rather, they are people who need information to do their jobs effectively. Electronic technology was in the past very mystified. It was extra-ordinary and belonged to only the experts and specialists. Yet in the recent past there has been transformation of learning through technology in all levels, removing inhibitions, obstacles and challenges that were thought impossible (Zeleza & Kakoma, 2003).

Computerization has set off new image identities and subjectivities in the learning environment (Benner, 2003). It is therefore not surprising that modern curriculum, instruction and education thinkers and practitioners all over the world have been swept off-balance by the new technological transformation taking place around the world. Learners are more informed about the possibilities that a computer can provide more than their instructors (Leask & Meadows, 2000).

Information & Communication Technologies in ELT

Nowadays, teachers of English around the world prefer some form of communicative teaching and learning, rather than the traditional methods of ELT which dominate the teacher-centered approach and neglect the student" communication skills. The teacher-centered approach depends mainly on the learner's memory and did not care about the authentic use of language. Although, a successful EFL teacher is not necessarily restricted to one method or another, the ICTs have changed the pace of teaching strategies to suit the goals of his materials and the needs of his students. On the other hand ICTs have given the students, many opportunities to practice English in and out the classroom. With the help of the modern technologies they have time and freedom to understand, reflect and analyze what have been exposed to. Moreover, the ICTs put forward an influential base for efficient education. Now, we need the modern technologies for a better blended method of delivery to create apt teaching techniques to enhance the process of learning English language. ICTs are very motivating, because they help the learners to learn the language which is carefully designed to meet the prescribed goals.

Impacts of ICT on ELT

No doubt, motivation is the cornerstone in the process of acquiring or learning a foreign language; therefore, learners usually have a positive attitude toward computers. Even though, the modern technologies are double-edged sword, their advantages are acknowledgeable over its pitfalls; they have significant, positive impacts on ELT.

Availability of Materials ICTs are very stimulating because of the availability of the learning materials, whether it is computer-based, in the web or on CDs; therefore, the student can learn at his own pace with a very patient tutor (the machine). Meanwhile, the use of online telecommunications for teaching and learning via the computer in the classroom across the world will consolidate the improvement of different academic skills. The availability of images, animation, audio and video clips they help much more in presenting and practicing new language.

In the explanation of Daniels (2002), the use of Information and Communication Technologies in the educative process has been divided into two broad categories: ICTs for education and ICTs in education. ICTs for education refers to the development of

ICT specifically for teaching learning purposes, while the ICTs in education involves the adoption of general components of ICTs in the teaching learning process. Effiong (2005) emphasized that ICT use in school curriculum depends highly on the teachers who will use ICT to teach the students. This requires that teachers should have the ability to incorporate ICT into teaching and learning. Okereke (2008) noted that, application of ICT to teaching and learning makes instructions more effective and productive. In this regard ICT is viewed as innovations that enable English Language teachers facilitate teaching and learning of English language.

English Language is an academic subject that helps students to be exposed to realities of business practices. The subject is designed to introduce students to the foundational knowledge of the principles and practices of business. Okute (2008) opined that English Language is the fundamental subject which has to do with acquisition, conservation and expedition of wealth. Osuala (2004) stated that English Language help the students to make informed decisions in the everyday business of living. Obi (2005), explained that English Language prepares students for several careers or enables those in that career become more efficient and advance to higher positions in terms of speaking and writing. In the view of NERDC (2007), English Language will enable the students to:
a.   acquire the basic knowledge of English Language;
b.   develop the basic skills in office occupation;
c.   prepare for further training in English Languagre
d.   have basic skills with which to start a life of work;
e.   have basic skills for personal use in future;
f.   relate the knowledge and skills they have acquired to the national economy.

These objectives can be achieved through teachers' effectiveness, who is the implementers of curriculum.

A teacher is an individual who is trained in pedagogy and teaching areas of a particular subject to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes to students in an institution. According to Olaitan, Alaribe, and Nwobu (2009), a teacher is a person who communicates knowledge, skills and attitudes to someone in a school. Okute and Agomuo (2010) noted that a teacher is a facilitator of learning; who helps students to realize their full potentials educationally, emotionally, and socially in career selection and transition. Garba and Dambe (2007) defined a teacher as one who possesses practical and theoretical knowledge of his vocation, has clear understanding of the students he

teachers, and ensures that he increases in the knowledge of his field at all times. There are male and female English Language teachers. These teachers are trained in different higher institutions of learning where they obtain various qualifications. In this study, a English Language teacher is someone who is trained in pedagogical areas of English Language and is charged with the responsibilities of imparting acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes of English Language to students in junior secondary schools.

Computer appreciation entails the general understanding of the basic building blocks of the computer systems, literacy in operating the computer and using the window interface called window explore and other similar interfaces. Azuka (2000) explained that keyboarding should be emphasized along with the traditional typing; the author identified closer relationship between them likewise word processing, data processing and the use of the internet.

Word processing is the application of computer for manipulating text-based documents; the electronic equivalent of paper, pen, typewriter, eraser, and most likely, dictionary and thesaurus (Encarta, 2009). According to Agomuo (2005), word processing can be likened to a typewriter inside a computer in that it incorporates all the duties of a typewriter which basically are: the ability to type and produce text on paper, store and manipulate text in documents and get printed copies. But when using computers, it deviates a little from the common typewriter. There is the enter key replacing the carrier movement and there are commands (simple ones) for paragraph, indent, spacing and so on. In addition, one can: store the document for future reference or use; make corrections to the documents very conveniently; format your documents to a wide variety of specification; automate some functions such as page numbering, generation of indexes; check the spelling of text in your document for correctness; and have greater control over page layout attribute such as margin and so on. Other area where computer is most useful in daily activities is in the use of the internet and data processing.

The internet is a computer-based global information system (Comer, 2009). It is composed of many interconnected computer networks. Each network may link tens, hundreds, or even thousands of computers, enabling them to share information. The Internet has made it possible for people all over the world to communicate with one another effectively,

inexpensively and to have free access to useful data for further processing.

Data processing deals with the analysis and organization of data by the repeated use of one or more computer programmes (Kogge, 2009). Data processing is used extensively in business, and in all areas in which computers are used such as education, to process data educationally by the teachers and other education administrators. The researcher observed that English Language teachers in the state have some difficulties in teaching the ICT component of the curriculum; therefore, they need improvement.

Conclusion

With the help of ICT enabled English Language classes, the faculties would find it more easy to conduct classes. It has been proved to be an excellent method of enhancing the teaching and learning process. This is the technology era, and these days even a toddler is familiar with the use of computers and laptops. This is major reason as to why technology has come up with the idea of ICT enabled learning methodology, which could help the children of today's generation in a better way and enhance their skills. It has been explained that ICT enabled language learning can help one to ameliorate the efficieny and effectiveness of their learning process. It is a very flexible, interactive and rich platform that would provide the users a whole new different experience.

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