RESEARCH ARTICLE

INCARNATION OF ICT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the fundamental component of today's technological society. People are eased to accomplish the complicated and sophisticated problem with the aid of technology. The teacher and the taught have to upgrade their soft skills for survival in this high–tech era as technology has perpetuated the field of education on a par with the sector of trade and transaction. Though technology minimizes the role of a teacher to a mere facilitator, it can be used effectively to bridge the lacuna that exists between the conventional and modern methods of teaching as it is an effective tool to enhance both teaching and learning process. The highlight of this article is to deal with the pertinent questions in the field such as how far is the ICT useful in higher education? What is the role of the ICT in teaching English language? What kind of methods and approaches could be used to overcome the students' problems? Can it empower student community? Can it improve their proficiency of learning, especially the engineering students? and so on. Moreover, the study proposes to help the, teacher and student that the role of technology is being used to help them to achieve the objective of education.

Key Words: Information and Communication Technology, Competence, Curriculum, English Language Teaching, Tools, Objective, Proficiency, Globalization, Pedagogy.

Language learning is meant not only for imparting knowledge, but also for acquiringthe basic skills of learning. The teacher enables the students to help practicing, developing and sharpening the skills.The language learner is expected to practice and acquire the skills of listening, speaking, reading and then writing with proper grammar and pronunciation. The enhancement of technology makes the methods of teaching keep on changing. Other factors including motivation and inspiration also influence the students to learn a foreign language. The teaching pattern has to get adjusted according to the trends of the present time. The teacher has to infuse innovative methodology with

technology. Through language teaching, the students' communicative function, types of communication, functional and notional level, can be tested so as to meet the linguistic demands. Teachers of English, especially in professional institutions are not bound as teachers of grammar and structure but are expected to be efficient communicators with the knowledge of soft skills.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Skills of communication can be developed by collecting and organizing information by the way of analyzing facts, contrasting the difference between facts and inferences and there by competent enough. Any firm or institution or an organization becomes an organized whole because of its prompt and effective communication. It is this smooth flow of one to one communication that enables the workers to work together and enhances better understanding. It is the tool with which the management achieves its target. Without proper communication everything will come to a standstill position. Thus, communicative competence at all levels is vital.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH

Spread of English colonization during the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries lead to the prominence of language in Canada, US, Australia and New Zealand. The up growing economic and cultural impact of the US and its image as a super power has promoted the language worldwide. English is being spoken by 53 countries as native language and one of the six official languages of the US spoken by more than 300 million native speakers and between 400 and 800 million foreign users.Working knowledge of English bridges the gap in the process of communication from different parts of the world. English has replaced German as a dominant language of science and noble prize laureates.

As far as English is concerned, the British and the American English are the two accepted varieties. For a few decades, English is taught and learnt with the educated native speakers as a model. Owing to economic and technological forces, English has succeeded in re-inventing itself as the language of global communication.

The British Council Data, published in 2000 AD stresses the fact that English is ahead of other languages when it comes to communication across continents and people. There is tremendous development of English and changes take place in a much faster phase in the history of the language which every speaker of English must be sensitive.

Moreover, English Language, the lingua franca, is required for interaction as a language for communication, science, information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment, radio and even diplomacy. English is one of the most significant tools available to all the teachers and the taught. It is an international language, a tool combining various countries, cultural groups, companies, organizations and communities.

EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

Technology has permeated every walk of human life. It has not left the field ofeducation also untouched. Sarat Kumar Rout says,

The term Educational Technology [ET] by nature is very inclusive which comprises wide range of conventional aids like maps, charts, diagrams and models, audio visual aids such as film projector, overhead projector; audio cassettes/radio and video cassettes/television. It also includes newer digital based media such as computer, fax, email, interactive multimedia, all forms of teleconferencing online classroom, web based learning, blogs, pod cast, e-learning, etc. The purpose of newer digital based technologies is not to oppose the traditional technologies but to solve the teaching and learning related problems more prudently than in the past. However, the traditional technologies merged with the newer technologies and incarnated in new 'avatar' namely 'Information and Communication Technology' [ICT] because of its pervasive nature and increased learning opportunities as per the needs and convenience of the education system.

Advance in Information and Communication Technologies [ICT] during the last 20 years in India have had a significant social and economic impact in general and educational domain

in particular. The ICT has potentially revolutionized the human thoughts, feelings and behavior by enabling any person to exchange visual and aural experience with any other person at any other place in the world. The ICT is not confined to production of an audio, video or any form of media presentation. It is a holistic approach to the design, development, implementation, management and evaluation of learning environment which engage learners constructively. Furthermore, it refers to the process in which learning problems are analyzed and solutions are thought of through application of principles of communication, learning instructional design and mediated pedagogy. These days, the newer and more powerful technologies are being introduced to shape the future of education for delivery and managing extensive amount of information. Thus, the development of technology and worldwide networking together with innovative pedagogical changes transformed conventional education to a new pedagogical paradigm namely the IT supported and the ICT enhanced learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Different people have envisaged Information and Communication Technology in different ways. According to Hartoyo, ''Information means the processed data in a meaningful and purposeful form''. ''Communication'', according to Potts, ''is a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding''. Brown (2011) stated communication as transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver. Technology is derived from the word 'techno' which means technique, art, skill, or 'logos'. Thus, technology can be defined as a scientific knowledge of art or skill.

Based on the definitions derived from three components, ICT as a whole can be considered as the utility of technology to support the effort of conveying information and communication specifically in the area of education. The technique makes use of digital technologies mostly of electronic information – processing technologies,

such as computers, internet, mobile phones, networks, broadband, etc.

The ICT covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, and transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form. For example, personal computers, digital television, email, robots and so on. So the ICT is concerned with the storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission or receipt of digital data. Importantly, it is also concerned with the way these different uses can work with one another.

The ICT application as a tool for learning subjects such as mathematics, physics, languages, environmental education, is well established. The ICT use is common throughout society. What isneeded is the skill and the wisdom to use the ICT efficiently and wisely to enhance learning?

BENEFITS OF THE ICT

The utilization of the ICT in teaching and learning process is a topic of interest to many researchers, including educationalists and ELT practitioners. Use of the ICT can be applied in three different scopes like: curriculum, topics, and teaching eye, based on application. The scholars, students and the teaching fraternity in general can get benefitted by computers with internet network. Using the internet, all information gathered can be presented in a short time. The learning materials thus obtained are copied and printed directly so that it can be used as effective learning materials. At present, teaching and learning are facilitated by computer which has been the demand of the hour.Acknowledging the importance of the ICT, it has been imbibed in the curricula and syllabi meant to be used from pre-KG to post graduation.

The ICT is found to be advantageous in several ways as mentioned by Herington (2002), (1) technology facilitates exposure to authentic language; (2) technology provides the access to wider sources of information and varieties of language; (3) technology gives the opportunity to people to communicate with the world outside; (4) technology allows a learner – centered approach; (5) technology develops a learner's autonomy. The ICT helps people to get information and to communicate with one another in wider range.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ICT IN OPEN DISTANCE EDUCATION

E-learning or Virtual learning employs similar methods but exploits the internet and web for providing access to learning materials and groups. In some countries, Distance Education has now become synchronized with the use of the ICT. Digital data involves a variety of signal types, like text, audio, and video, are now handled within the same application. The merging of mass-media communication technologies [radio and television] with telephone technologies and data network technologies [radio and television] are under way. Such convergence of technologies means that the ICT will be increasingly ubiquitous in society, and easier to access and use. It will therefore become more of a complementary and core technology in teacher training [Amrita Maheshwari].

INTEGRATION OF THE ICT IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

The integration of technology into English classroom are multifarious and the 21st century teacher utilizes technology during the class hours and builds the confidence to learn how to use technology in the following meaningful ways:

1. The pedagogical integration of technology in which they are for practical experiences
2. The future teacher's degree of computer literacy
3. The pedagogical integration of technology by instructors during university education of future teacher
4. A future teacher's expectations of success in integrating technology
5. The value placed on technology by future teachers as laptop computers, interactive whiteboards and broadband internet become cheaper and more available around the world begin to introduce them into classrooms, often and sadly without appropriate training. This is the decade that one learns of digital immigrants and digital native, which create an extra gap between teacher and students, who were often, considered in separate camps. They also had to learn a bunch of new acronyms [TWB, ICT, URL, etc], as if they did not have enough already in to their classroom.

The development of information technology, the internet, directs the history of educational technology in the new groove. Online services in the education of both degree and non-degree are basically providing educational services to users using the internet as a medium. Moreover, these services can be composed of various stages of the process of educational programs such as: registration, test entry, payment, and learning, case assignments, case discussions, exams, assessments, discussions, and announcements. The positive impact of various studies on the use of the ICT to support learning in educational institutions is mandatory to have the prospect of a future that allows for deploying the ICT in supporting learning.

CONCLUSION

The entire English teaching fraternity has to come forward to analyze the seriousness of the situation and make the students realize that proper English communicative skills is a passport to their prosperous future without which the latter would be branded as inefficient in spite of their other academic excellence.Let English be taught in schools as a language and not as a subject.Curriculums could be made flexible by applying technological aids in education catering to the needs of the 'click and go'generation.With the advent of the ICT, learners could access and interpret to quench the thirst of their ever increasing knowledge.

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Ms. R. ABILASHA has several years of teaching experience in imparting English Grammar and Language. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor of English handling courses on Communicative English to the B.E./B.Tech students and Literature and Language to the M.A./M.Phil students. She is pursuing Ph.D in ELT under the guidance of Dr. M. Ilankumaran. Her areas of interest are English Language Teaching and Comparative Literature. She is a committed language teacher who has ardent fervor in uplifting the communicative capabilities of the students.