

Use of ICT in Improving the Teaching and Learning of English Language

Abstract

The world of technology and communication has changed rapidly during this millennium era and shaped the world to be more dynamic than ever before. ICT makes the learning process enjoyable and easier by offering a wide range of resources such as e-books, blogs, webcasts, newsroom, YouTube, multimedia, social networking etc. The utilization of ICT has started to appeal the potential and significant progress in language learning and teaching. The paper focuses on the use of ICT and its role in teaching and learning and enhancing skills in the Classrooms of English language. The paper also tries to explore its limitations. It also provides suggestions for English teachers for new and interesting ways to stimulate language learners.

Keywords: ICT, English Language, Learning, Teaching, Communication, New Media.

Introduction

“The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change.”

Carl Rogers

ICT has been publicized as potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform. The computers play a significant role in the learning process, especially in learning language. As Hartoyo (2008) stated in his book, a computer is a tool and medium that facilitates people in learning a language, although the effectiveness of learning depends totally on the users. The technology in this era has been grown up not only from the quality but also the efficiency. They are moving fast without any limit from every product. The need of technological innovation has brought the communication revolution and rapid development of technological application in teaching and learning. This technology made a contribution to improve language communication in India. The ICT and language learning are two aspects which support each other like two sides of the coin inseparable and proper use of it will enhance teaching and learning.

Review of Literature

The term information and Communications Technologies include technologies in which the computer plays a central role, i.e. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), the internet, and variety of generic computer applications (Fitzparick and Davies, 2002). Asynchronous tools like email, blogging and the collaborative development of wikis (Terrell, 2011; Wang and Vásquez, 2012; Woo et al., 2011) also has a significant role to play in facilitating the co-creation of content, where learners interact with peers by composing, editing and exchanging texts. More recently, the use of technology as a tool to develop the different language skills has received great attention (Dudenney, 2000; Chapelle, 2001; Young, 2003; Melor Md Yunus, 2007) so that ELT teachers are frequently exposed to new practices. Chapelle, C. (2001). The increase in investment in ICT by education departments around the world since 1998 has been well documented (Macaro, Handley and Walter, 2012; Becta, 2004) Many studies have also shown that digital technologies can improve the outcome of education and enhance students' engagement in study (Barak & Watted & Haick, 2016; Wang & Teng & Chen, 2015; Barrs, 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009)

Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition: Foundations for Teaching, Testing and Research (Vol.XVII) focuses on this foundation. *Role of Social Media & Its Impact on Civilization (2016)* throws light on the advance of computer technology enables us to get access to a variety of Information and Communication Tools (ICT) increasingly being used in educational fields. Internet, web 2.0, mobile phones and tablets, have a great impact on the process of education. Technology itself does not bring



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about autonomy, but with the appropriate support, guidance, training, and scaffolding, it can help learners to gradually become autonomous (Luzón-Marco, 2002; Arnó-Macià, 2012). Learning English online allows one to study English independently at one's own pace. Journal of Technology for ELT, volume-7, No-2(2017) throws light on the latest development in ELT field. Jyanti and Vijay Kumar's Article on the Use of ICT in English Language Teaching and Learning (2016) presents the current situation of the Use of ICT. Technology has broadened the English landscape for intrusion and innovation. Mohammed's Article ICT tools and English Language Teaching (2017) consider multimedia as devices that incorporate text, graphics, animations or real video into English lesson. Gary's Book entitled Innovations in Learning Technologies for English Language Teaching (2013) shows that: "Online games are gaining popularity among language teachers and learners (Godwin- Jones, 2005, Thorne, 2008), and there are wikis, blogs (e.g. <http://games2teach.wordpress.com>), and books (Mawer and Stanley, 2011; Sykes et al., 2012; Reinders, 2012) that explain how they can be used in a pedagogically sound way. Games have always been used in language classes however, recently the concept of gamification or game-based learning has been used to justify using online games or game-like tools and environments for learning (and other) purposes. It can be defined as making use of gaming techniques and features, such as awarding points or creating competition. The aim is to make learning more engaging, fun, and thus motivating (Sørensen and Meyer, 2007; Mawer and Stanley, 2011)." Related articles, books, Web sources, reports and blogs are studied by the researcher. Apart from curricular changes that come officially- usually from the Ministry of Education in each country workshops and short trainings introduce new techniques and activities or promote new materials.

Aim of the Study

The paper focuses on the use of ICT and its role in teaching and learning and enhancing skills in the Classrooms of English language. The paper also tries to explore limitations of ICT. It also provides suggestions for English teachers who for new and interesting ways to stimulate language learners. Digital storytelling, Mobile Applications, i-Pads, Digital Notebooks, Tablets, Smart Phones, Recorded audio-video materials, Online tutorials, Digital pronunciation dictionaries etc. The study shows 'how integration of ICT in the field of ELT has affected language learning and development of English language skills.'

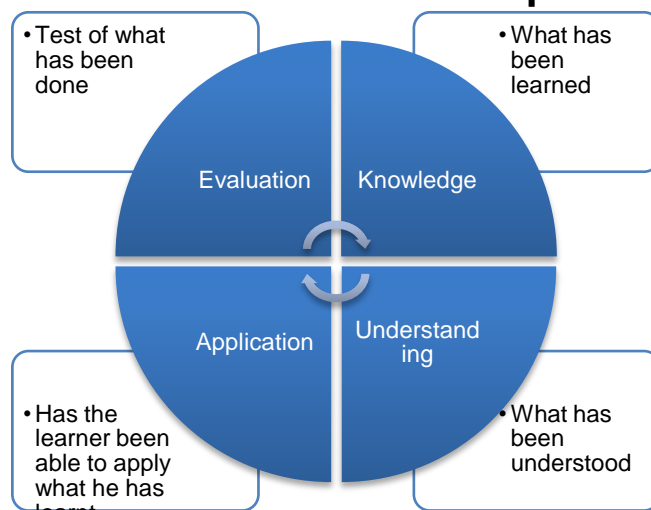
Use of ICT in Language Learning in English Language Teaching

The development in the use of ICT, like language lab, videos, satellite broadcast, video conferencing and web seminars have supported quality of education. It harnessed several views of scholars which established the fact that ICTs are indispensable tools that facilitate the teaching and learning of English Language. Multimedia technologies i.e the videodiscs, CDROMS, DVD, and power point projectors can be applied to the teaching of different aspects of English Language such as literature (plays, prose or poems), writing, vocabulary development and grammar. The tools like e-mail, websites and e-library can be utilized by the teacher of English Language to facilitate teaching and learning.

Success Seen in Studies

It is clear that the education sector increasingly recognizes the importance of ICT in supporting educational improvement. For example, a study conducted by OFSTED (2002) indicates that ICT has become more than just a teaching tool but has the potential to improve the quality of language learning (OFSTED, 2002). The results of the ICT research conducted by British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) are almost consistent with the results of OFSTED. It was stated in the research that even though research looking at ICT usage in relation to modern foreign language is not extensive comparing to the other subjects, the research shows that when ICT is used in foreign language teaching and learning, there are a wide range of positive benefits. Some of the identified key benefits of the use of ICT in modern foreign languages based on the analysis of the research are as follows; a) increase in motivation, enthusiasm and confidence, b) positive association with attainment, c) potential for differentiation according to the needs of the learners and so on (BECTA, 2004). It can expand equal access to learning, facilitate personalized learning, provide immediate feedback and assessment, enable anytime, anywhere learning, ensure productive use of time spent in classrooms, build new communities of learners, support situated learning, enhance seamless learning, bridge formal and informal learning, minimize educational disruption in conflict and disaster areas, assist learners with disabilities and improve communication and administration (UNESCO, 2013)

ICTs are to be effective as learning tools, but they have to be used in a long-term sustained manner; and learning from media often provides unexpected results. Despite all this history, we need to evaluate ICTs and ICT content before taking any decision to use them in learning settings. The picture below shows the important phases for the users of ICT:



Technology offers effective oral modeling via text-to-speech synthesis and access to other tools like electronic dictionaries. Specialised software can record, measure and track progress in reading, and interactive fiction (IF) promotes active reading by enabling learners to affect outcomes. "Technical audio-visual aids are important in learning technical EFL. They stimulate the learners and encourage them to learn foreign languages. Technical audio-visual aids communicate facts and ideas through the eyes to the mind and emotions. Technical audio-visual aids include computers, videos, overhead projection, instruments and tools of industrialist." (Rajeswari, 2011)

Current Application of ICT in English Language Teaching And Learning

ICT defined as technology, which the function is to support the process of conveying information and communication. The ways of conveying information don't have to be carried out directly between the communicator and the communicant. The development of ICT makes the process of communication between the communicator and the communicant can be conveyed in easy ways.

They can communicate through telephone, internet, e-mail, satellite, television, video conference and so on. The process of those communications applies in language learning. In language learning, there is a communication between teacher and student. The process of learning is not always carried out by subjecting teacher and students in the certain room or a certain place directly. As the example, the teacher can use the internet as the medium to give lessons, assignments, or other information to their students.

In the context of language learning, ICT has an important role as the "media" bridging and enabling the learning process, or direct communication between students and teacher although they are not present in the same room or place in certain time. Language learning program can be created to enable students to learn the lessons with guidance, instruction, information or further explanation. ICT in language learning used as a reference-book. Computer can store unlimited lessons or references, which can be accessed anytime, anywhere and accurately. Fitzpatrick and Davies (2002) sets out the seven ways in which ICT used in language learning. The picture below presents the Seven ways:

Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps in understanding the material well Eg-Text base,audio-visual
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different exercise types possible
Authoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> either purchase readymade material or form own material
Cumputer Aided Assesment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and assessment
Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word processors,audi-recording ,editing tools to record interviews,discussions,learning material,webpages
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> email,Tandem, Social networking,chatrooms Computer meditated Discussions etc
Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis,critical thinking,discussion,and writing eg-Webquest,Action Mazes,Adventure G ames, Sunpower,Real life Simulation,Video-conference etc

Prospects of the use of ICT in Language Education

A Technology rich learning environments provide opportunities for better development of life skills. These skills include organizational, problem solving, inquiry, and collaboration skills. The learning environment is improved by providing more cooperative learning and reduced competition. Technology integration increases the chance of interaction within the learning environment. When many new technologies are interactive, it is easier to create environments in which students can learn by doing, receive feedback, and continually refine their understanding and builds new knowledge. The new environments, provides interaction between the participants in the learning community. These facilities have paved the way of individualized learning and provided freedom of learning anytime, anywhere according to the needs and convenience of the learners.

It facilitates not only the improvement of the four basic language skills (LSRW) but also development of high thinking skills. It provides rich banks of resources and information and paves way toward individualized learning. Electronic media have shrunk the world so that contact and communication have become reachable, rapid and convenient via gadgets like Tabs, Mobiles with internet connections, etc. Thus, in economically based countries, literary practices are shifting from print based to screen based medium. Texts which appear on the www now include not only the written mode, but also the graphic pictures-static or moving, audio and video files. These texts are known as multimodal or hypermedia and have been seen as constituting a new communicative order. It is clear that new digital world; literacy has taken a changed and extended role. In traditional literacy based reading and writing take place through print based materials. In contrast, in the knowledge and technology based world, a great amount of literacy happens online. In the field of language education, there is now so much emphasis on on-line learning, which has been seen as the great liberator by freeing both teachers and students to accomplish learning in new and exciting ways by sourcing information from the Internet (Schrum, 2000). The smart board and the clever boards are the successful entry gate to introduce other types of technology in the classroom.

Creative use of ICT in the classroom can promote inclusion and reflect cultural and linguistic diversity. Pupils who have had very little experience of using ICT can engage in exciting activities that are accessible even with very limited English language knowledge. Similarly, ICT literate pupils can explore ICT based activities that are not dependent on an equivalent level of fluency in English. The use of multimedia in presenting information is an important way of supporting access for the learner. ICT gives us the means to add pictures, sound and video, to use key visuals and graphic organisers, and to use the

wealth of content rich sources from a range of cultures, that can be found on the internet. The use of word processing technology, in particular talking word processors, opens up an infinite range of opportunities. The combination of spoken, written, visual and picture support gives the learner the scope to engage in meaningful curriculum focussed activities at a linguistic level that is matched to their level of English language development.

ICT appears as a 'bridge' to break the distance and 'survive' the learning. In case of distance, teachers can use ICT through video conference to enable them teach or monitor the student's learning process. Therefore, the development of ICT is seen as a better way of teaching and learning a certain language compared to the existing methods. Through the internet, teacher or learners can obtain as many as possible sources related to the learned – language; such as text, songs, stories, etc. Those sources can contribute as models of the learned – language use in the real context and in a proper manner. Nik Peachey in an interview says "Technology is not to be used in place of effective teaching, but interactive tasks, text-to-speech conversion and online tutorials allow students to translate on-the-go. Independent learning, with access to relevant teaching material for support, means more practice and therefore more confidence to push perceived limitations – students are given the courage to try books beyond their current reading level."(Interview)

As we know that recently, there has been a new trend in the ICT world which is called the social network. Social Network has been defined by many and generally viewed as referring to networked tools that allow people to meet, interact and share ideas, artifacts and interests with each other. (T. Aderson, 2010). This social network has opened up new opportunities of interaction and collaboration between teachers and learners. The use of social network has become a popular in everyday communication. It is even used for collaborative learning especially in language learning. Social network applications such as facebook, twitter, LinkedIn and many others alike have been phenomenally popular in the communication world. Other prospects of ICT in language can be summarized as expanding access to language programmes, improving the quality of teaching and learning , providing access to current/up-to-date materials and offering teachers and learners an avalanche of materials in different modes.

It is pertinent to note that television with its array of foreign channels, as provided by DSTV and other cable channels can be of tremendous help in language acquisition. Information and communication technology helps the students to perform better in language learning than with regimented traditional classroom teaching. Online learning has the potentials to offer anyone with an internet connection access to a wide expanse but inexpensive education just as e-learning and computer allow schools to deliver classes to students anywhere in the world (Educause, 2010).

The latest method that is developing is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Some experts and practitioners of education, learning language in CALL, strongly supports the utilization of ICT in language learning to improve efficiency and effectiveness of learning that can improve the quality of understanding and mastery of the language studied. Website materials for teaching English language may include texts for reading such as novels, plays poems etc or samples of writing tasks such as letters, essays, memorandums or emails. (Jayanti N. Shalini And Vijay Kumar, 2016) The focus on listening and speaking activities with gradual and increasing emphasis on reading and writing proves to be helpful. Grammar and vocabulary need to be taught in meaningful contexts, and students need to be given enough opportunities over time to use the language they have learnt. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is one of the most interesting emerging types of technology enhanced learning. The mobile phone has evolved from a simple voice device to a multimedia communications tool which is capable of downloading and uploading text, data, audio, and video – from text messages to social network updates to breaking news, the latest hit song, or the latest video. This can be used as a teaching and Learning device. The Teachers role has increased. This extended staffroom is particularly important for ESP teachers, whose multiple roles, for example as teacher, materials designer, collaborator, assessor, and researcher have expanded and evolved through IT, allowing collaborations with field-specific experts and other colleagues around the world, and giving them more easy access to an abundance of multimedia materials for even the most specialised of fields in order to design materials and courses that meet their learners' needs (Arnó-Macià, 2012: 90). Today's technology makes it further possible for teachers to create more sophisticated and professional looking (multimedia) materials and online or blended courses.

The use of ICTs enhances English Language competence as well as the quality of learners' experience. The effective use of ICTs removes the time and space limitations found in traditional teaching, as classroom dialogue can now extend beyond the time and space constraints. Digital texts and Electronic books, inspire children to read. It allows students to learn more autonomously and thereby raises self-esteem and confidence. It enhances learners' interaction, verbalization and involvement in group collaborative learning.

Problems/Constraints of the use of ICT in Language Education

It can be easily said that integrating ICT into education provides many opportunities for the learners like the increased availability of the materials and improved teaching/learning process and so on. However, there are some key challenges which restrict the possible opportunities provided by the use of ICT. The lack of teachers' ICT skills is seen one of these key challenges to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, a lack of technical and theoretical knowledge creates a barrier, especially for language

teachers to integrate language learning technology into curriculum (Lee, 2000). As Kumar (2008) states in order to provide an ICT enhanced education, the teachers must be well trained about ICT tools. There are also many studies showing that teachers' ICT capability is an important issue in order to integrate it into curriculum (Pope & Golub, 2000; Albirini, 2006). Therefore, teacher training programmes or courses which attempt to integrate ICT into pre service teacher education are strongly suggested.

The rise of technology usage in language teaching has led a change in the roles of the teachers. Teachers are now not regarded as the source of information, but as the facilitators of information. So, language teachers and teacher candidates are expected to have a high level of ICT knowledge and ability to use them in their classes. In India, The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools was launched in December, 2004 and revised in 2010 to provide opportunities to secondary stage students to mainly build their capacity on ICT skills and make them learn through computer aided learning process. The Scheme is a major catalyst to bridge the digital divide amongst students of various socioeconomic and other geographical barriers. Under the ICT in Schools, to promote computer enabled learning and usage of ICT in teaching in Government and Government aided Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools has provision for instituting the National Award for innovative use of ICT to motivate the Teachers and Teacher Educators for innovative use of ICT in teaching-learning (http://mhrd.gov.in/ict_overview)

In order to train individuals equipped with the skills of learning and succeeding in today's world, teachers at all levels of education, including colleges and universities increasingly need to serve as good models of using information and communication technologies. Progress of ICT will also occur of violation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the easy access to the data that is causing people plagiarism will commit fraud. Besides this, a lot of time and energy needed to be spent on 'learning how to use ICT effectively' and Teaching and learning can be negatively affected by what can be called 'computerized classroom syndrome.' The modern gadgets and networking websites are making people isolated from real life and in the terms of language proficiency, many young people write incomplete or slang English words which are not found in English dictionary. Use of abbreviation are also confusing such as btw (by the way) and atm (at the moment). The English language is constantly changing to accommodate developments in technology and culture. Some words appear quickly and then fade away, others become so commonplace that they immediately become permanent fixtures of language. Although some people claims that social media is not ruining language, but rather simply changing the ways in which we use language to express ourselves. "The excessive usage of undecipherable initialisms, incorrect abbreviations, incorrect grammar and punctuations and emoticons are some examples of the negative side of social media." (Sharma, 2016)

Jose remarks about Social networking sites, "can be a potential hazard for teachers as some applications allows users to communicate" and "the content can lead to discrediting or defamatory messages". (Picardo 2011). So, it can sometimes be very difficult to measure the 'effectiveness' of practices. In some areas there may still be limited computer access. Getting 'intelligent' feedback from computers can be indeed difficult. ICT suits some communication skills more than others and ICT use can lead to major changes in teacher's role, which may not always be positive. The study, therefore, recommends that tutorials and practical sessions on the use of the computer as an ICT tool, especially for reading and writing skills. In addition, teachers should encourage the use of ICT tools in teaching and learning to ensure that students receive enough exposure and practice in ICT skills. "ICT tools have been reported to yield positive results in ELT classrooms. in fact, judicious use of ICT tools to teach English boosts learning in terms of attitudes, autonomy and authenticity." (Mohammed. 2017)

A well-balanced ITC environment will enable students to feel the above and stay motivated throughout the learning process. Motivation, individualisation, learning in context and the activation of the learner are often a part and a parcel of a successful ICT support. Training teachers for the use of ever evolving technologies, upgrading their skills continuously and keeping them abreast of the latest developments and best practices is a difficult task. English language teaching in India has to undergo a sea-change focusing upon multiple skills development of language learners through technology woven learning and exposure to global executive programmes. The school/institution's authorities, teachers, parents and students should be rewarded with an excellent opportunity to network and develop a perspective as well as an understanding of modern-day dynamics of the changing educational scenario. (Saryana, 2017)

Conclusion

As ICT is seen as a vital part of professional development of teachers, UNESCO has also determined general teacher competencies in infusing ICT in education. Examples of general teacher competencies are "Understanding why, when, where, and how ICT tools will contribute to learning objectives", "choosing from among a wide range of ICT tools those that are most appropriate to stimulate students' learning", "choosing ICT tools and teaching methods that integrate ICT into the whole curriculum" and "planning a whole learning programme that allows a range of ICT tools and teaching methods to be used, as and when required (UNESCO, 2002: 53-54). ICT can have some demerits along with its advantages that cannot be ignored. ICT can be compared to the rainfall and may convert into greenery or may cause flood or disaster. So optimum and intelligence use is required from the side of teachers as well as learners and the advantages of the ICT can influence teaching and learning activities only when adequate training is offered for its use.

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