Research Article

ROLE OF ICT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

English is one of the most important languages which have played role in the process of globalization and knowledge explosion. It is the most common means of communication throughout the globe. This is why it is termed as Link language, Global language as well as Lingua Franca. In Indian context it is treated as ESL (English as a Second Language). Use of English language has become vital for better learning and earning. Therefore, it is necessary to teach English and develop English language skills among the students from school level. The government, NGOs and educational institutions are working at various levels and taking measures to ensure better ELT (English Language Teaching) and developing English language skills among the students. To teach English and develop English language skills various approaches and methods are in use in our country. But most of them are traditional, less interesting, ineffective as well as less motivating. So, it is necessary to use modern approaches and tools of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to develop better understanding and acquisition of basic skills i.e. LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of English language among the students at school level. ICT has a lot of things to offer to both teachers and students for the enhancement of their vocabulary and improvement of English language skills. Now a day's ICT tools and approaches are being used widely due to their convenience, omnipresence, effectiveness and being economic. Some of these approaches, facilities and tools are CAI (Computer Assisted Learning), CALA (Computer Assisted Language Assessment), CALI (Computer Assisted Language Instruction), CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning), Blogs, Wiki, e-mail facility, Digital libraries, multimedia, mobile learning, free and open source software and social media, MOOCs, Virtual classrooms, documentaries, Digital storytelling, Mobile Applications, i-Pads, Digital Notebooks, Tablets, Smart Phones, Recorded audio- video materials, Online spoken tutorials, Digital pronunciation dictionaries etc. Modern studies and researches show positive results of integration of ICT in the field of ELT and development of English language skills. These facilities have paved the way of individualized learning and provided freedom of learning anytime, anywhere according to needs and convenience of the learners. So, we should take proper step to integrate ICT in the field of ELT to make the learners well versed in English language skills.

INTRODUCTION

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. Inorder 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.

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 efficiency 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.

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 multimedia 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 propagated with the help ICT enabled English Language Teaching.

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The modern age is termed as the era of knowledge explosion. This explosion has become possible due to the progress of science and technology. Each and every aspect of human life has changed due to the effects of science and technology. The use of science and technology in the field of communication has revolutionized the whole world. Use of modern technological tools has led to the rise of ICT (Information and Communication technology.) Now ICT is being used in a number of fields like, health, entertainment, games and sports, transportation, education, industries, fashion designing, textiles, agriculture etc. With a single click, we can get exchange a lot of information of the world due to the use of ICT. The field of education is not untouched by the ICT. Now we cannot imagine education without the use of Information and communication Technology. It has made exchange of thoughts, ideas, experiences and feelings easier. With the help of ICT a lot of persons can get education and training simultaneously at low cost. Now ICT is being used in all the aspects of education. Use of computers, Internet, television, radio, projectors and mobile phones, e-mail facility, online audio and video conferencing as well as new applications has made the Teaching Learning Process and Training attractive and convenient. It is also helpful in saving time, energy and money. So, we can say that ICT is playing the most important and pivotal role in Teaching Learning Process. Hence it is also playing an important role in the learning of language, especially English Language Learning.

Some of the Important ICT Tools and Applications Used In The Field of English Language Teaching Are Following

1. **Computers:** This is the most important tool of information and communication technology and backbone of modern human life. All the modern communication process are impossible without the use of computers. It is helpful in storing, preparing, collecting and preparing of data for communication. It is helpful in the development of listening and speaking skills. It is helpful in English language speaking and listening skills.

2. **Over head projector:** It is an important tool of displaying information and processes to a large number of people simultaneously. It can be used in teaching and training of personnel. Prepared forms of information are easy to display with the help of over head projector.

3. **Lingua phone:** This tool is very important in language training of the students. A number of students can practice speaking and hearing drills with the help of lingua phone. It is especially useful in the training of English language listening and speaking skills.

4. **Radio:** It is very useful in education and training of the students of rural areas. Many distance and open education programmes are being conducted with the help of radio. It is also useful in audio conferencing. Programmes relayed on radio are helpful in the development of language skills, especially dialogues and dramas.

5. **Television:** It is useful in education as well as entertainment of the people. It is found that It is helpful in developing listening skills, useful in learning situational language as well as It is highly motivating also. It is very helpful in understanding the language of mass media. A large number of students may be benefitted with the programmes of television simultaneously. Many distance and open universities are running their educational programmes on television, such as Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maulana Azad National Urdu University etc. It is an important tool of audio video conferencing. Live telecast of training and discussions are done through this.

6. **Internet:** It is the most important facility of communication. All the modern communication takes place through this. It has made the communication facility very fast, convenient, economic, and attractive.

There are lots of facilities available for communication on internet. Some of them are following

1. **Social media:** Social media has become an important tool of communication. It provides a platform for sharing thoughts and ideas. Blogs are made on it. Students can add themselves with the English language learning groups and take advantage of sharing information. Lots of social sites are available on it like, Face book, Twitter, Instagram etc. It is very helpful in learning situational language.

2. **Online facilities for English language learning:** A lot of online facilities are available on internet for the development language skills. Some of them are e-guidance, e-tutoring, e-teaching, e-journals, e-magazines, e-books, e-library, online training, virtual classes etc.

3. **Online language related courses:** These courses are available on internet. Some of them are free and some of them are payable. Students can enroll themselves in these courses and get education and training easily on their own place. Some of the agencies which are providing on line courses are following MOOC, Future Learn, NPTEL, and IIT's, Concordia University etc. Students can watch online and offline videos of language learning for the enhancement of their language skills.

4. **Feature Films in Teaching English:** Films can be used in the teaching of English language. Films may be documentaries, educational and entertainment based. These can arouse high level of motivation. It results in a most satisfying learning experience.

Uses of ICT for an ELT teacher: we cannot think of better educational environment without a better teacher. In earlier times the teacher was the focal point of education, but now the role of teachers has changed a lot. He is considered as a guide and friend of students who helps in learning, does not provides knowledge. To teach better a teacher need to be update with the changes. For this ICT helps a lot. ICT can be useful for a teacher in the following ways.

a. It is helpful in the professional development of the teachers. A teacher can learn various language skills with the help of information and communication technologies. He can do various certification programmes in English language teaching run by the famous educational institutions like Cambridge University, British Council etc. These programmes help in enhancing his capacity to teach English language and to make his subject content easy, economic and more understandable.

b. A teacher can increase his domain of Knowledge English language with the help of e-journals, e-magazines and e-library that can be achieved only through the use of ICT. He can also participate in discussions and conferences with the experts of his English language teaching to improve his knowledge and skills ELT through audio and video conferencing.

c. ICT helps a teacher to learn innovative methods of teaching. He can work with the students on various project and assignments. It also helps him in providing teaching contents, home works etc.

d. He may participate in various in-service training programmes and workshops which are essential for his professional development with the help of information and communication technologies.

e. ICT helps a teacher to guide his students about the English language learning materials available on internet, e-books, e-journals, e-magazines and social sites like linked-in which are helpful in better learning of English language skills.

f. ICT also helps him framing curriculum of English language learning. He can study curriculums ELT of different countries to study their pros and cons, challenges as well as sociological and psychological issues related to English language learners. All these things helps him in framing a curriculum that leads to achieve the aims and objectives of English language teaching.

Limitations of ICT tools: Though ICT tools are very helpful in the teaching and learning of English language, still these tools have some limitations. Some of the limitations are discussed below:-

1. Often student fail to learn the targeted objectives of the English language teaching.

2. Due to freedom of time and space often students become careless about their targets and indulge themselves in meaningless works.

3. Repeated use of recorded programmes creates boredom in the students that leads to the problem of indiscipline in the classroom.

4. Most of the times students remain passive and inactive in the teaching learning process because they get less opportunities to participate actively in the teaching learning process.

5. The use of ICT tools needs technically trained teachers that lacks and create problems in the TLP.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussions it is clear that ICT tools have changed the paradigm of English language teaching learning process. 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. So it is essential for a teacher to be familiar with modern ICT tools and use it properly to achieve the aims of English language teaching

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