



ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ICT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

Technology has outstretched in almost every sphere of life. When it outreached the realm of education, it has changed teaching-learning process drastically. Language learning can be made interesting and creative by introducing ICT (Information and Communication Technology/Technologies) in the language classroom. For English is learnt as a second language in many countries including India, it is recognized as a link language across the globe. The teacher can introduce ICT into the language classroom to achieve the desired learning outcomes. With the help of ICT, the teaching-learning became flexible. Today the learners can learn at their own pace and at their own place. A teacher can make use of digital tools in the language classroom which is innovative, creative and interesting. In the modern world, teachers are not mere teachers but they are playing a role of a facilitator for the learners. They involve the learners in a variety of activities which enhance their learning and boost their confidence as well. ICT provides the opportunity to use different methods and techniques of teaching language in a diversified classroom, which is a mixture of different types of learners. It caters the needs of the different learners at the same time.

Key Words: communication, develop, English, global, knowledge, language, learning, skills

Introduction

The modern age is termed as the era of knowledge explosion. English is as the most important language and played a major role in the process of globalization and knowledge explosion. It is the most common means of communication throughout the world. This is why it is called Link language, Global language, and Lingua Franca. In the Indian context, it is treated as ESL (English as a Second Language). Use of the 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 the school level itself. The government and other educational institutions are working at various levels and taking measures to ensure better learning and developing English language skills among the students. To teach English and develop English language skills, various approaches and methods are in use by people. But most of them are traditional, boring, ineffective and less motivating. So, it has become necessary to use modern approaches and tools of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for the development of better understanding and acquisition of basic skills i.e.

LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of English language among the students at the school level.

ICT has a lot of things to offer, to both the teachers and the students for the enhancement of their vocabulary and improvement of English language skills. This all 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).

Radio and Television

The radio and television are one of the most useful devices for teaching the English Language. Radio and television are two important instruments for distant education. Those who fail to get admission to colleges have to continue their education through open universities. Here radio and television play a vital role in the teaching of the language. We live in an age in which distance education has become the order of the day. A number of good English teaching programs are broadcast by the All India Radio, the material prepared by the CIFEL, Hyderabad and ELTIS, IGNOU and BAOU in India. They can be recorded and used for lifting sessions in the class. The television appeals both to the ears and eyes. In radio the only ear is employed with the help of both these technological devices, it is possible to teach the students the pronunciation. They may be taught to speak properly. Radio and T.V. can bring the experience of the real world into the classroom so that teaching does not become dull. The traditional teacher of books changes his/her role to become the teacher of the real living language. Today T.V. plays many roles in advanced countries. It is a companion, entertainer, and instructor. Today in our cities, most learning occurs outside the classroom.

It is an important tool for 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 an overhead projector. It is used as an alternative to chalkboard. Writings or pictures on transparencies are projected on a screen. It saves time by preparing the materials in advance. It is also important as it is a visual means of learning.

Internet

Internet in Education has been incredibly useful as it facilitates both information and communication. The Internet has increased the accessibility of education at all levels and has turned out to be a giant repository of knowledge. Students can access free video lectures online and refer to encyclopedia and study material in multimedia formats; teachers can make their lessons interesting by incorporating online-based projects in their study plans, and educational institutions can reach out to a wider audience by offering quality online courses. The Internet also acts as a platform for retired teachers to reach out to children in poor countries and educate them. Internet is not only a great place to gather and store information but also allows its easy retrieval whenever desired. In fact, it has turned out to be better than libraries when it comes to gathering information and doing research work. It also provided teaching learning material with multimedia. MHRD and IGNOU have also developed Sakshat Portal on the lines of MIT OCW as a digital repository of eBooks, study material and eJournals for students. IGNOU's eGyankosh is another digital repository of learning material.

Language Lab

Modern language labs are known by many names, digital language lab, multimedia language lab, language media center and multimedia learning center. A language lab creates a learning environment much more effective than traditional classrooms enhancing the capabilities of students and allowing a high degree of immersion and attention to diversity. A language laboratory encourages the participation and integration of the students in the different exercises. Language laboratories offer a number of advantages over traditional teaching systems, allow several students to talk and interact at the same time, you can record all these interventions, send different exercises to different groups of students, work with media, etc. In addition, the use of the language lab allows students to have access to the information quickly and easily developing many types of classroom exercises, personalizing the learning process, encouraging creativity, innovation and training. Language laboratories also favor a high degree of skill development, team and collaborative work eliminating sociotemporal barriers since information is not found in a particular and specific place and at the same time, they foster digital literacy responding to new educational and social needs.

ICT is the new idiom of the new change in the way the world operates today. In Education today it is the need of an hour to make use of the ICT and to integrate it in its entire core processes teaching, learning, evaluation, research administration. KCG conducts training and workshops for creating awareness and for promoting the use of ICT in education. It has been observed that technology has been an integral part of education and teachers dealing with the courses in higher education have also started utilizing the computers and ICT. SANDHAN is creating a platform which provides an excellent opportunity for the use of Audio Visual medium for the telecast of lectures in a very innovative and manner with an aim to provide a very creative base for faculty and students to fulfill the need for having the Audio-visual aids for imparting education in the higher education. This program was conceptualized and implemented by Commissionerate of Higher Education with the purpose that the VSAT facility of BISAG, Government of Andhra Pradesh could be leveraged better by setting up an All Andhra Pradesh Integrated Classroom. Thus, SANDHAN is a unique initiative. Academicians are invited to deliver lectures on several streams-Arts, Commerce, Science, Law, etc. Some of the lectures have also been uploaded on YouTube also. The Phone-in-facility and the Roobroo Two-Way Video communication software is systemized too make the lecture interactive and thus it adds liveliness to the programs provides satisfaction to the quest of the students (SANDHAN).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) transforms English Language Teaching (ELT) by shifting classrooms from teacher-centric lectures to interactive, student-centric environments. It is vital because it provides access to authentic materials, enables self-paced learning, and builds real-time communication skills that are critical for modern global literacy.

Key Roles and Importance of ICT in ELT

- **Authentic Language Exposure:** ICT bridges the gap between the classroom and the real world. Students have instant access to audiobooks, podcasts, and news from native speakers, ensuring they learn contemporary, conversational, and culturally relevant English.
- **Skill-Specific Development:**
 - *Listening and Speaking:* Language labs, voice-recognition software, and pronunciation apps allow learners to hear native accents, record their own voices, and receive instant feedback.

- *Reading and Writing*: Digital dictionaries, online forums, and word processors make reading interactive and help students refine their writing through spell-checkers and collaborative editing platforms.
- **Student Autonomy and Flexibility**: Technology empowers learners to study anytime and anywhere. They can revisit difficult grammar lessons or practice vocabulary at their own pace using mobile apps and e-learning platforms.
- **Enhanced Engagement**: Multimedia tools—such as interactive whiteboards, educational games, and digital storytelling—make complex linguistic rules easier and more fun to grasp, improving overall knowledge retention.
- **Global Connectivity**: Social media and online meeting tools allow students to practice their English with peers globally, fostering cultural exchange and building communication confidence.

Top ICT Tools for the English Classroom

- **Interactive Whiteboards & Projectors**: Used to display engaging multimedia, videos, and slides to keep the entire classroom visually stimulated.
- **Language Learning Apps & Software**: Platforms like *Duolingo*, *Babbel*, or custom CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) modules help with targeted vocabulary and grammar drills.
- **Podcasts and Audio Tools**: Listening to or creating podcasts (e.g., via *Spotify* or *Apple Podcasts*) vastly improves listening comprehension and speaking fluency.
- **Digital Dictionaries and Translators**: Instant access to word meanings, pronunciation guides, and synonyms (e.g., *Merriam-Webster* or *Cambridge Dictionary*).
- **Video Conferencing & Collaboration**: Tools like *Zoom*, *Google Meet*, and *Microsoft Teams* facilitate virtual group discussions and global peer-to-peer interaction.

Integrating technology requires balancing digital resources with strong pedagogical methods, ensuring that technology directly supports learning outcomes rather than overshadowing them.

ICTs, the modern technologies for storage, manipulation, and dissemination of information, include both hardware tools such as laptops, smart phones, projectors, and software tools such as email, Skype, Facebook, and YouTube. These technological tools have brought a revolutionary movement in the field of education and information communication. Education, which makes wide use of information communication, has been highly influenced by the use of ICTs. In recent years, ICTs have been exploited in the teaching and learning of all subjects including Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English. ICTs in English Language Teaching and Learning Teaching and learning of the English language is one of the main concerns of many educational institutions because English is not only an international language and a lingua-franca of the world's citizens, but it is also the storehouse of knowledge (Bhattarai, 1995; Harmer, 2007). Therefore, attempts have been made to enhance English language teaching (ELT) and make it more advanced.

Many research scholars (Acevedo, 2016; Ince 2014; Liu, 2012) in their research studies have concluded that English language teaching and learning (ELTAL) is effective and more successful with the integration of ICTs. According to Adams and Brindley (2007), “English is a subject ready to think about new ways of constructing reading and writing, and about the pedagogical value of collective work and the possibilities afforded by the renaissance of learning made possible through ICT” (p. vii). Likewise, Rank et al. (2011) discuss that the web 2.0 applications can be exploited to the advantages of the students learning English

language and literature, which create several possibilities of learning opportunities such as exploring and investigating, composing and creating, reflecting and evaluating, presenting and performing; and communicating and collaborating. ICTs, the digital technologies, are powerful educational tools; and their use has a significant role in the transfiguration of the pedagogy of teaching and learning (Ludvigsen & Morch, 2010; Sutherland et al., 2009). Angeli et al. (2015) view that a good combination of technology and pedagogy is very important to ensure that the learners are able to take advantage of technology inclusion for the opportunities of learning integrated skills of language.

According to Davis (2007), the incorporation of the technologies into English classroom can help achieve: (i) cognitive gain by providing visual images, (ii) motivational gain providing fun, and (iii) interactional gain by providing convenience sharing. ICTs provide opportunities for exploring the communicative power of the English learner by engaging them in exploring literary texts and several other interactive activities in exciting ways (Richards, 2007). Likewise, computer-based activities enhance interaction and collaboration and provide unique opportunities for the development of the learners' spoken and written language capabilities (Andrew, 2007). A variety of technology-enhanced gadgets can create an interactive learning environment to develop learners' autonomy and meaningful learning, which provides a huge amount of exposure to language (Acevedo, 2016). The spreading innovations in ICTs such as personal computers, Internet, mobile phones, and many other ICT tools, have caused a 'paradigm shift' in teaching and learning of all subjects; and the traditional model of teaching and learning has been replaced by transformed pedagogy (Juceviciene, 2008; Somekh, 2007).

A paradigm shift in education is a change in the concept and procedures of teaching and learning. For example, the activity of encouraging learners for creative learning instead of rote learning is a good example of transformed pedagogy. Likewise, different types of paradigm shifts such as (i) a shift from behaviorism/habit formation-based teaching to rationalism/cognitive-based teaching, (ii) a shift from 105 teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach, and (iii) a shift from psychometric-structuralist testing to psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic testing, are being practiced in the field of education. (Li et al., 2012). Consequently, various language learning online/offline software, language learning platforms; and the methodological innovations like computer-assisted language learning (CALL) have made language learning easier and more effective (Dina & Ciornai, 2013). All these advancements that improve the quality of education make wide exploitation of ICTs. English is taught and learned as a foreign language in India. It is one of the core subjects both in the college level curriculum (up to bachelor level) and school level curriculum; and as equal weightage as other compulsory subjects has been given to English (CDC, 2007). However, the analysis of the results shows that the quality of English education is relatively less satisfactory; and teaching-learning of English is one of the more difficult jobs in both secondary school education and higher education in India (Bista, 2011; Budhathoki et al., 2014; Mathema & Bista, 2006). Budhathoki et al. (2014, p. 17) point out that students are very weak especially in English, Maths and Science and that the overall fail percentage in English in SLC (school leaving certificate) is increasing (it was respectively 26.28, 32.23 and 35.21 percent in the academic years 2009, 2010, and 2011).

Therefore, it is essential to find out the ways to enhance the educational quality of such subjects in both school and higher education in India. As several research studies (Acevedo, 2016; Davis, 2007; Dina & Ciornai, 2013; Somekh, 2007) have concluded that ICTs are useful educational tools, and they contribute a lot in ELTAL; the government of India has

considered the need for ICT integration for the improvement of quality of education of all subjects recently. However, the integration of ICTs in education in the developing countries is rather slow; and particularly, ICT integration in higher education in India in teaching and learning of different subjects including English is at its initial stage. Therefore, it is essential to explore the opportunities and challenges in ICT integration in teaching and learning of English, based on the context of higher education in India because the knowledge gained from research studies is very important for tailoring the teaching-learning activities. Moreover, though multimedia and/or ICTs have been perceived as effective tools, ICT integration has 'a long way to go and attain to maturity' (Liu, 2012, p. 2334).

Opportunities created by the Integration of ICTs in ELT Many research studies have concluded that ICTs are beneficial to language teaching and learning. According to Kumar and Tammelin (2008), ICTs provide three main benefits for foreign language learning and teaching:

(i) providing authentic language learning resources and contexts, (ii) creating co-operative and collaborative environment, and (iii) providing opportunities for effective teaching and learning. Likewise, Rabah (2015) finds better students' engagement and enhancement of their learning process as the benefits of ICT integration in teaching and learning. The findings in this study show that the teachers and the students took some advantages with the integration of ICTs in their ELTAL process in spite of different challenges they encountered.

Based on the experiences shared, some of the important benefits of ICTs integration for the teachers have been discussed below:

Preparation: One of the main advantages of ICTs for the teachers is that the tools can be useful for them for their preparation of the classroom presentation. They can use different web browsers for the teaching materials they need such as reference books, articles, videos, audios, conversation models, grammar references and so on. They can download those learning resources and save in their computer file for their future use. Similarly, the Internet is helpful for finding out several recent research studies on their subject matter to update themselves for current trends and methods.

Presentation: The teachers can exploit ICTs for their presentation of their lessons in the classroom and delivering the contents. The tools such as laptops, projectors, and several websites can be used by the teachers for making their presentation attractive and effective to facilitate students' learning.

Motivation: The teachers can attract the students' attention towards their presentation through the use of ICTs. The combination of sound, text, image, color, and motion through a multimedia projector can help motivate the students and to increase the students' concentration towards the lesson. Moreover, the use of technology increased the students' engaged learning involving both visual and auditory sensory organs.

Interaction: ICTs can help create a student-centered learning environment where lots of opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous communication take place.

The tools such as email, Facebook, Messenger, Skype, and Viber all make interaction between the teacher and students, and among the students more frequent. Sharing their ideas and information is possible whenever and wherever they stay. (v) Providing the students with learning resources and feedback: With the integration of ICTs, the teachers can provide the

students with lots of learning materials to increase the students' amount of exposure to the English language. Using their learning management system (LMS) or email the teachers can send the students the learning resources that are more content-specific and useful for them in the form of reading texts, videos, audios, hyperlinks, or websites. Likewise, ICTs are helpful for the teachers for providing the students with written comments and feedback to the whole class, group-wise, or individually. Pun (2013) discusses several advantages of multimedia technology in English language teaching and learning as such that they provide opportunities for ELTAL, and they enhance interaction among the teachers and students. Likewise, they develop students' communicative competence, they motivate students to learn, and that they widen the students' knowledge about the English language. Similar to Pun (2013), 110 the students were found to take some advantages through the integration of ICTs in ELTAL process in this study too.

Based on the FGDs conducted, some of the important benefits to the students found in this study have been discussed in the following points: (i) Amount of learning resources: One of the important benefits of the integration of ICTs for the students is that they can use these tools for accessing information and learning resources. Among many others, LMS (i. e., CIS and MOODLE) is very useful with which the students can find coursespecific resources. Besides, they can use web browsers and websites through which they can search and download learning materials such as e-books, e-journals, e-articles, e-newspaper, videos, audios, slides, and more for practicing their listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar-related skills. They can also use different mobile apps designed for learning the English language. (ii) Interaction: ICTs can enable the students for easier and faster communication with their friends and teachers. They can easily interact about their problems or queries through the tools such as email, SMS, Skype and so on. Both synchronous and asynchronous communication through ICTs help them exchange their ideas and opinions. (iii) Collaboration: Collaboration with their friends is another important benefit of integrating ICTs for the students. They can work together in peer or in groups to solve problems or given tasks. Through ICTs it is easier for the students to be involved in talking and discussing, sharing, evaluating, and constructing their knowledge. ICTs help them to create such an environment for collaborative activities. In such activities, the students can feel more relaxed and comfortable to share, discuss, and debate than in teacher dominated classroom. The tools such as email, Facebook, blogs, Skype, google docs are more useful for the students while carrying out collaborative activities. (iv) Exposure to English language skills: ICTs help the students to find several English language skills specific online or offline learning resources. The students can be involved in practicing listening and speaking skills through the resources such as audios, videos, conversations songs, Skype, Viber, or online talking. Likewise, they can improve their reading and writing skills through several reading materials such as e-books, e-journals, or e-papers. They can also use several web-browsers and online or offline mobile apps for practicing the skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. (v) Developing learning autonomy: Another important benefit of using ICTs is that these tools help in accessing various learning resources, which encourage reading and analyzing the contents. Likewise, ICTs help to share the information and learning materials with their friends and to give comments on them. This environment created by ICT integration is helpful for developing students' habit of independent and autonomous learning, and to develop their learning autonomy.

Conclusion

ICTs are found to contribute several benefits to ELTAL in higher education in Andhra Pradesh. The technologies are useful for the teachers for collecting teaching-learning

resources, preparing and presenting the lessons, motivating the students, making more frequent interactions, and providing the students with feedback. Likewise, ICTs are helpful for the students for collecting learning resources, making interactions and collaborations, increasing exposure to English, and developing their learning autonomy. However, there are many problems and challenges in the integration of ICTs in ELT in higher education institutions in A.P. The teachers and students encounter problems related to infrastructure management, technological skills, pedagogical skills, curriculum and textbooks, and attitudes of the parents. For effective integration of ICTs in ELT, more attention is needed to minimize such challenges.

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