

# Integrating ICT in Language Teaching

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**Abstract**— The present era is an age of digital natives where the young minds are evolved acquiring the technology as naturally as they acquire their native language. Technology is widely administered and acclaimed in every sphere of life. Education is one such important field where technology has taken the lead above all. Today, diverse set of tools are used in the schools across the globe to achieve predetermined objectives in teaching. Information and Communication Technology has become so important and inseparable in education that in the absence of it teaching and learning cannot be imagined to exist. To maintain upkeep with the learner and teaching –learning system today, it is a prerequisite for teachers to know how to match with the tech-savvy minds. This paper tries to highlight the potential benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a powerful tool for the teaching of English Language and its vital role and relevance in the present day learning system and the way it has brought revolutionary improvements in language teaching.

**Keywords:** ICT (Information and Communication Technology), ELT (English Language Teaching), Pedagogy, Learner-Centric

## I. INTRODUCTION

Digital revolution has played a crucial role in taking ELT forward and has become critical for language teaching. Experts from all the times have analyzed the methods of teaching English and making it most effective for the learners. Keeping in their minds different set of classroom environments the experts have studied the aspects that play major role in language teaching and have continuously worked for building better language classroom. In place of rudimentary assignments, tech-gadgets are considered to be more practical and friendly and they also provide scope for self learning which is just not bound to classroom walls any more. Teaching and learning has become more collaborative and interactive.

If we have a look into the past then we realize that from the introduction of audio-visual aids to the establishment of language labs we have come a long way to the virtually equipped classrooms. Overhead projectors have been successfully replaced by smart boards. The use of applications on windows, Android and IOS smart phones and tablets has made English language learning a self-regulated thing.

## II. UNDERSTANDING ICT

As stated by Margaret Rouse (2005), “ICT (Information and Communication Technology – or technologies) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. ICTs are often spoken of in a particular context, such as ICTs in education, healthcare or libraries.”

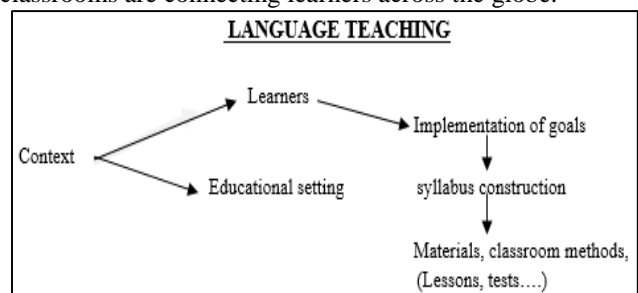
Daintith, John,ed (2009) stated, “ICT covers all forms of computer and communications equipment and software used to create, design, store, transmit, interpret and manipulate information in its various formats. Personal computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, transport systems, televisions and network technologies are just some examples of the diverse array of ICT tools.”

In an English classroom the devices that have been widely used are tape recorders, television, radio, projectors etc. if we talk about today then internet has taken the lead on all other multimedia devices. It has brought a revolution in instruction strategies. The usage of these things is at the disposal of the teacher and it’s the teacher only who can bring about different ways of teaching in the classroom with the usage of these technologies. Here the most important and noteworthy fact is teachers’ updated knowledge and application of ICT in the classroom without which the set objectives will not be accomplished. In a proper IT enabled classroom a teacher can easily challenge the problems faced in the large class sizes. Bigger class sizes deeply affect teacher’s performance and students’ learning ability. With the advent of these technologies teaching has become an enjoyable and accomplishing task.

## III. PEDAGOGICAL GOALS IN ELT AND THE ROLE OF ICT

One of the primary concerns in an English teaching classroom is to bring innovative practices every other day and in every other topic. Innovation itself is considered as a practice which is the result of vast study and experimentation and it helps the learner to achieve their goals using new practices. These innovations may consists of activities, lesson plans or teaching strategies with latest elements covered in them. Even this too is not sufficient. As stated by Edge and Mann (2013), “Innovation demands concentration in process.”The teaching methodology that is practiced in the classrooms has taken a new role and dimension. Great scholars have talked about the paradigm shifts in language pedagogy. The primary shift was from pre-structural linguistics in which grammar-translation played a dominant role in teaching language to the phase of structural linguistics where direct method took a lead. The next shift was the change in focus to the learner-centric scenario.

Cultural boundaries need to be broken to develop a healthy learning environment. Emerging new trends in teaching focus on learner more than that of culture. Virtual classrooms are connecting learners across the globe.



The purpose of language teaching in the present day scenario incorporates multifarious goals such as manipulating language for the sake of better future opportunities, creating skilled work force, connecting with different cultures, for the promotion of intercultural peace and understanding. The overall goal can be regarded as multi competence.

#### A. *The Five skills of English Language and ICT*

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Thinking

Having looked at most of the ELT textbooks and language experts, most of the attention is given to speaking and writing and to some extent reading. It seems like listening skill has been forgotten or left behind. Not much relevance has been given to that. With the advent of latest technologies, listening skills have gained due importance. Listening is that core skill that is solely responsible to develop the focus of the learner. It is the ability to perceive and interpret the message in the process of communication. If the listening is not effective, message will be misinterpreted and the communication breaks down.

Listening skills help students develop their communication and critical thinking. These skills are essential in numerous avenues of daily life. Interactions take place at classroom and at workplace. Successful interaction depends on effective interactive skills. (Thompson et al., 2004)

There have been several technologies already in use by the teachers such interactive boards that can display teaching modules that are designed keeping in mind the topic to be delivered in the class. With the smart boards in class a teacher can make efficient use of time as the lesson is already prepared in a manner that all the objectives are fulfilled within the time. Internet is an infinite source of information of all sorts. If used wisely and under adequate supervision, it can create wonders in the classroom. With the access to internet while teaching the teacher has the access to all sorts of information with just one click and that information can be instantly shared with the students.

Latest ones are

You tube is regarded as very useful source to teach listening skills to all levels of students. Integrating you tube videos in the educational practices have a deep impact on learning paradigms. The learning environment can be made class stimulating, interesting and meaningful to the students with the help of you tube. Relating to the topic, you tube videos can actually bring in to the class the real picture of things and scenarios which provide better understanding of the topic. Students can also upload their self made videos and assess their speaking and listening skills and this can boost their confidence level. The standards of listening and speaking skills can be well developed by using podcasts in the classroom. Podcasting is a technology that can bring upon learning from validated materials about the current issues and events. It can easily be downloaded from the internet and listened as per one's convenience. It is not only creative but also a great motivating tool. It is quick and updated and also available on mobile devices. Fluency can be practiced, book

reviews can be written, recording can be done and students can reflect upon their assignments also. With Google Voice, students and teachers can leave voicemail messages for one another. Audio books and publications assist users to listen to the text, available indifferent formats such as audiocassettes, CD's and MP3 players. This tool helps both in listening and reading skills.

Speech recognition software is a program that works with word processor. Here the user dictates in a microphone, the words spoken by him then appear on the computer screen. This program helps those people who are good at spoken English but they struggle while writing. The software assists them in improving their writing. Spell check programs are being widely used for those who struggle in writing and specifically vocabulary. They help to select or identify appropriate words and correct spellings in the process of writing and thereafter proofreading. There are talking spell check softwares available also that read aloud the words on screen thus making corrections a much easier task.

Electronic books or e-books are the most compact format of large files. With this hundreds of books can be stored in a single disc. Thus making reading much convenient, mobile and approachable anytime and anywhere.

Reading and writing are of equally important status among all skills of language. While reading information is picked up by our minds and we connect with information that we already know. Various new trends are emerging that are very useful for both teachers and learners for reading and writing skills. One of such popular tools is the use of blogs. As stated by Kelley and Safford (2009), "blogging provides "a real world digital medium for communication." Teachers can also make use of various social networking tools like Face book in order to share academic information and to hold discussion among students. Teachers can encourage the students to write blogs in the area of their choice and thus making them spontaneous at writing. Smart phones and the applications are also available to make language teaching far more interesting than ever. Various android and I phones have apps which are specifically meant for language learning. Today a teacher can design a lecture, class activities, class work, homework and activities in her mobile phone itself.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

ICT is an indispensable tool that facilitates the teaching and learning of English language in large classes. Its benefits are countless. The four basic skills of English language-listening, speaking, reading and writing(LSRW) are well developed and groomed in a much better and advanced ways with the use of various ICT tools. A teacher can manipulate several tools appropriately for a lesson being taught to facilitate delivery, learning activities as well as evaluation. Teaching in the large classrooms today with huge strength of learners has become more meaningful and purposeful. Classrooms have become more interactive, live and cheerful platforms of enjoyable learning. The study has therefore shown how ICT is changing language classrooms scenario and transforming them into the boundless space for learning with the interesting tools and techniques of ICT.

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