

## 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE ROLE OF ICT

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### Abstract

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play a pivotal role in language learning. The use of computers and networks improve the quality of teaching and learning. It is an umbrella term that integrates store, retrieve, manipulate, and transmit or receiving information electronically in a digital form. It creates a new dimension for classrooms, teachers and students. The latest method of teaching is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) which is an effective method of teaching and learning English language skills. Using computers and the Internet makes the class learning more vivid and pleasant. It add variety that breaks the monotony of teaching. ICT has the potential to meet the needs of new generation students to fulfill in English teaching and learning. This paper tries to explore on how language learning and teaching is enhanced by using information and communication technology.

Keywords: blog, CALL, computer, digital, MALL, ICT , internet,

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become inseparable parts of our daily lives. They change the way we live, the way we spend our spare time and the way we work. It's almost impossible to even imagine the modern facilities without the use of technology. Therefore, education process too could not remain untouched by these inventions. In this digital era, the new generation students are attracted towards technology, technology based learning than lecture based learning. The role of technology in teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education policy (Rosen and Well, 1995; and Thierer, 2000). ICT can expand access to language programmes, use of computers and networks and improve the quality of teaching and learning in general English language in particular.

There is no one best way to teach English language in a single optimal set of teaching materials. This is because learners will vary both in how they learn and what they need and want to learn. Therefore, no single 'magic bullet' offers to support language learning of ESL students across all ages. Looking at the current provision of language teaching, and at the future languages strategy, there are a number of key roles that information and communication

technology ICTs have the potential to fulfill in English teaching and learning. A number of tools exist to help learners work on their writing/publishing collaboratively, often linked in a local area network. Language learners use ICT to help them publish their work using word processors, DTP (desk top publishing), audio recording and editing tools, digital cameras and presentations with the help of Power point.

The application of ICT gives more opportunities for communication between peer learners. They can exchange information in real time, can participate in blog discussions, work in teams on different projects, exchange emails, search for information, etc. By using the authentic material provided by the Internet, the learners will have a better insight into the culture of the country and people. Various kinds of technology commonly use in English language learning context are interactive media, Computer Language Labs, Audio devices, Internet, Radio, Television, and Mobile gadgets etc.

Interactive media: Interactive media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic text, graphics, moving images, audio, games and animation sound, into a structured digital computer-based environment that allows people to

interact with the data for appropriate purposes. The digital environment can include the Internet, telecoms and interactive digital television.

**Radio:** Radio presents the best speech model to the ESL learners, it is a source of learning pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation etc. it helps in developing the comprehension by listening.

**Television:** Television can be used effectively in teaching English. It has the combination of sound and imagery renders it a powerful aid to learning. It brings live and real events as they actually happen.

**Overhead Projector (OHP):** Overhead Projectors project transparencies onto a screen or a white wall (Salaberry1996:428). It is as simple as effective. A light is shone through a transparency the size of a sheet or a note paper, projecting it onto an ordinary film screen or a white board or wall, which will focus the student's attention. This provides the lesson with effective, quick interaction from both teacher and students (Jones 1982:9). It is also possible to photocopy texts, pictures, diagrams.

**Audio:** Audio extracts are very motivating for students especially for the young ones, as they usually involve breaking classroom routine by means of songs, games or dialogues performed by young native speakers. They should mainly be designed to improve the understanding of oral messages.

**Video:** The most outstanding feature of using videos is the ability to present communicative situations in a complete way (Lonergan 1984). The combination of both sound and image shown in a context is a powerful tool in the ESL classroom. The speakers, the setting, the gestures, can be seen and heard and at the same time. Technical features of video players allow the teachers to be stopped, replayed or played forward in part or full and can even be used with sound muted. It is also possible for students to make their own video performances, reacting their own stories, video-clips, dialogues by using the video camera. The main advantage of using video recordings is that they provide language within a natural context.

**Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL):** The computer as a tool refers to the usage of computers as vehicles for delivering instructional materials to

learners for understanding language through spelling and grammar checkers, desktop editing programmes. All these steps belong to CALL (Computer-assisted language learning). Computers are used widely in schools, colleges and universities. Using computers as a tool in language classroom can enhance students' language learning skills. Many studies have found positive effect associated with technology aided instruction (Burnett, 1994, and Fitzgerald and Warner, 1996). Higher education institutions get advantage of information and communication technology in order to facilitate a rich teaching and learning environment (Beatty, 2003; Chiu, Liou, & Yeh, 2007; Hancock, Bray, & Nason, 2002; Hemard, 2006; Higgins, 1993; Scrimshaw, 1993; Wang & Zhang, 2005; White, 2006).

- The advantages of computer programs allow users to edit and save a written text.
- E-mail exchanges also allow students in different areas to communicate with each other quickly and easily.
- The use of computers in language classrooms helps students to learn or conduct activities independently, in small groups or with some support from teachers.
- By utilizing the computers, students can search various sources for learning materials, can interact with people in different countries, and can receive immediate feedback by getting their exercises automatically corrected.
- Provides appropriate feedback and assessment of content knowledge and English skills.
- Offering opportunities for meaningful practice of language in authentic contexts.
- Offering opportunities for maximal progress in language acquisition through responsive diagnostic and feedback systems.
- Learners are able to access high quality teaching and learning at any time and any place.
- Information previously available only through a professor or an instructor is accessible on demand through computers and the internet.
- Well designed multimedia learning materials can be more effective than the traditional classroom methods because students learn more easily and quickly through illustrations,

animation, different structuring of materials, and increased control of interaction with learning materials.

- New technologies can be designed to develop and facilitate higher order learning skills, such as problem solving, decision making and critical thinking.
- Interaction with teachers can be structured and managed through online communications to provide greater access and flexibility for both students and teachers.
- Computer – mediated communication can facilitate team teaching, use of guest faculty from other institutions, and multicultural and international classes.
- Computer makes the students to increase their self-expressions and active learning.

**CALL Lab:** The CALL laboratory is a computer based laboratory set up to facilitate the teaching and learning of languages. This laboratory enhances the atmosphere for language learning by providing students with the opportunity to use the computer as a learning tool through language interactive activities and computer simulations. There is a lot of software available on the market that can be used in the multimedia language laboratory, for example: KVAN solutions, Globarina, Online Software, Magnetic Infotech etc. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the Internet. These are called Web Assisted Language Laboratories (WALL). The multimedia language lab helps to learn and enhance the language proficiency by sharing the course materials within a second where the teacher and the students involved effortlessly.

**Internet:** The Internet refers to the electronic networks that link people and information, through computers and other digital devices, allowing communication and information retrieval. It can be used as a medium of language learning through e-mail, which allows language learners to communicate with “Web pals” in other countries. WWW (World Wide Web) offers a wide range of authentic material and promoting development of new learning strategies. Students can also create their own web sites or projects, according to their

individual needs, inside and outside the classroom; using chat- rooms, articles, class-conferencing, Skype, etc. All these allow the learner to participate in the target language culture.

**Blog:** A blog is a type of website which has post or entries appearing in reverse chronological order. Blogging has become very popular, especially in the sphere of education. It becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as writers who write and post, as readers or reviewers who respond to other writers’ posts and as writer-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts. It is easier to share information and generate discussion through blogging. Instead of text books and traditional methods, many educators prefer using these new techniques to teach students, and gain experience with various forms of social media. By means of blogging, students can sharpen their writing skills.

**Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL):** Like Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) may also prove to be very helpful in honing language skills. Teaching of English as a Second Language demands a high level of innovation and integration of various teaching techniques. In the context of India, the teaching of English is quite challenging as it offers a teacher plethora of opportunities to apply modern means of communication in order to cater to growing requirements of learners and improve their language skills. There is no doubt that technology is changing the learning environment and teaching experience as well. Mobile devices are gaining immense popularity among masses as these devices are small, smart, portable, and comfortable to utilize. Mobile devices cover cell phones, personal digital assistants, smart phones, tablets etc. All these devices can be used in language classrooms easily.

Now a days, technology based education is just like fast food to the minds of students. ICT provides opportunities for students in the era of globalization. It is very essential key component factor to develop LSRW skills. It creates something new beyond the human mind or human resource. In the field of ICT, Internet literally plays a major role which provides

unlimited features to browse the web, visit companies, governments, museums, universities, colleges and schools etc. read the news, explore libraries, read books, get software, play games, watch videos, get a degree, have a discussion, chat, read programs on other computers, exchange messages. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was a topic of relevance mostly to those with a special interest in that area. These new technologies are bringing the real world into the classroom. We can make use of new technologies in our classroom which depend on the availability of an internet connection: we may use ICT either on-line or off-line.

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