

Significance of Information and Communication Technology in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

*“English Language Teaching is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world.
The use of new technologies is an integral and driving component of this growth.”*

- **White**

Technology has intervened in every discipline of Education. It has supremely modernized learning and teaching atmosphere. Therefore, English Language Teaching is not an exceptional. ELT has been transformed greatly because of influx of technology. ELT which has a very short history of 300 years has been evolved to a great extent due to digitalization. A range of different methods, techniques and approaches were adopted through the years to meet with the needs of learners. ELT started its journey with Classical Method and now has entered the most dynamic phase of its evolution where ICT is dominating in learning and teaching. Due to the excessive use of ICT in ELT, now this field of study offers several innovative techniques and tools to the learners and teachers of English

Information and Communication Technology plays a major role in all aspects of this modern period. It is a tool that can change the nature of learning. The use of technology in various fields has been so successful and beneficial for teachers to reach some particular goals especially in education and for those who are learning a foreign language and literature. The technological aids in teaching and learning the English language are Skype, Mobile devices, ipod etc. **Skype**, which is a relatively a newly emerging technology and potential application of it to the language. We can speak with native speakers of the language and compare their pronunciation. Speaking skills can be developed by using this application. **Mobile Devices** can also be defined as "any service or facility that supplies learner with general electronic information and educational content that aids in acquisition of knowledge regardless of location and time" **ipods**, are one of the mobile media devices which enable users to produce, organize, deliver, and use media. Users can share texts, images, audio or video with their peers and teachers.

Keywords: Blog, Skype, English Language Teaching, Digitalization, Portable.

Introduction

Technology has immensely affected every walk of life. It has incredibly revolutionized the life of human beings in many ways. The thinking process and living style of man has changed to such an extent that without technology it seems impossible to survive in this modern age. On the one hand, there is technology which has become the necessity of life. On the other hand, English is the requirement for the survival of professionals in this new era of technology and knowledge. The amalgamation of technology and English is introducing and opening new horizons of learning and teaching.

Web-based technologies and powerful internet connections provide various new possibilities for the development of educational technology. English is the only language that has attracted many people around the world, for the most part, due to the globalization. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology in educational institutions. It is quite clear that

English has become a necessity today. Over the past two decades, technology devices have become mobile — portable and networked — to the point that they have become pervasive in everyday life. The use of mobile devices has become common due to affordability and availability (Newhouse, Williams, & Pearson, 2006).

Role of Technology Using Various Tools in Language Teaching

Some of the technological aids in teaching and learning the English language are mobile devices, Skype, weblogs, and YouTube.

Mobile Devices

Providing English language learners (ELLs) with iPod Touches, or other portable devices can increase learning time and motivation, according to a study from The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education. Mobile devices like iPod Touches offer them an academic

advantage in that they have 24/7 access to learning resources on the Internet. This can help them do their homework anywhere, anytime.

The most affordances of mobile devices are their inherent portability and their wireless connectivity. The ability to take the tool anywhere and connect to the Internet allows the user to not only retrieve information from a global Web 2.0 system but also support the users in "sharing, organizing, managing and creating information" from remote locations at any given time (Chen & Huang, 2010, p. 70). Learning happens at any time of day, on working days or weekends. The learning practice is thus "mobile" about location, time and also topic area and as a consequence technological tools in support of learning.

Skype

The internet chat and Skype activities could be made more meaningful and curious for the learners which make possible to interact with the speakers. Skype helps to understand native English diction, sentences, and intonation. First of all, the Skype classroom will give you an amazing chance to practice your conversational English. Also, teaching via Skype gives both the teacher and the student unlimited access to English teaching materials.

Secondly, the teaching effectiveness of the classes is improved as online whiteboards, and Skype screen sharing enables the teacher to share visual material during the class. Thirdly, with Skype, students can now access their very own private teacher and engage in clear video and audio interaction.

Advantages of teaching languages using Skype:

- Teach from home or anywhere
- Teach students from all over the world
- No travel costs to language school or private homes
- No time spent in traveling to lessons
- No need of renting out for school premises
- Teach at any time that you like
- Teach a group of students via conference calls.

Weblogs

A weblog or blog can be thought of as an online journal that an individual can continuously update with his or her own words, ideas and thoughts through software that enables one to do so easily. It is a tool to creative aspects of language use in English. Three kinds of blogs are suggested for teaching English through the internet. They are:

Teacher blog is a type of weblog run by the teachers for the learners. Any entry made by the teacher ought to

encourage further exploration of the internet in English by linking to related articles and content based websites. Entries in the blog can also serve to remind students about home works, assignments and upcoming discussion topics.

Learner blogs are either run by individual learners themselves or by small collaborative groups of learners. It encourages the use of search engines and net surfing in English empowers the learner to direct the reader to sites of choice for further reading. Individually, blogs is used as journals for writing practice or as free form templates for personal expression.

The Class blog is the result of the collaborative effort of an entire class. In conversation based classes it could be used like free form bulletin for learners to post messages, images, and link related to classroom discussion topics. It could also be a space for them to post thoughts on a common theme assigned for homework.

Bloggng can improve students' writing skills and build their confidence as writers. By blogging, students can take ownership of their writing, become better observers of others' writing, and develop a more immediate and persuasive understanding of the audience.

YouTube

YouTube is an exciting web device which helps to understand easily through audio and video. It gives new opportunities by allowing teaching and learning to become more interesting and meaningful. It also provides English learners and classes with a new tool to improve listening skills. The real advantage of this technology - at least from a language learning point of view - is that it offers authentic examples of everyday English used by the people. To illustrate, one can listen to all kinds of spoken language (formal, informal, colloquial, slang) and all genres (songs, debates, talks, poems) and learn a lot of vocabulary in context, which, without doubt, will help learners to memorize more easily. Language teachers can benefit from YouTube in terms of reading comprehension and the use of YouTube texts to start discussion or writing tasks. Also, language teachers could help their students to explore the world of online language learning possibilities.

Conclusion

Now at present time ELT has entered its new phase of evolution where inventions are emerging almost on daily basis. The application of digital technologies has turned into "normalized" (Bax, 2011) in present time. The use of electronic devices such as computers, tablets, laptops, smart phones has become a matter of daily routine. These digital devices are influencing all disciplines of learning in

general and ELT in specific. In this technological world, ICT became very essential for the teachers and students as well. Emerging technologies play a major role in effective teaching. Application of technology in learning and teaching English provides a meaningful and interesting process as the modern youth are allured towards it. Also helps to educate oneself from the place where they live or reside providing availability of 24x7 for learning. Technology provides a platform for sharing the knowledge through various means of internet facilities. The most significant feature is that it provides a global classroom.

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