

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH ICT

Satish Badugu,
Trainer, Godavarikani,
Karimnagar, Telangana, India



Abstract:

In the current scenario, English exists in almost all fields of life. It has also gained the status of a global language. There is a vast gap between the students learned knowledge from the educational institutions and the knowledge needed in real life situations outside the classroom. In fact, there is no correlation between the learning of a language and using it in everyday life. Learning English is a big challenge for the learners. One of the best strategies is to make students to meet their challenges and needs by using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the ESL classroom. Like English, ICT occupies a major place as a means of effective communication. Hence it is considered as the finest strategic technique to teach the English language through ICT. The 21st century is commonly known as the age of Information and Communication Technology. ICT is an advanced technology and provides ample opportunities for students to face global competition needs while promoting good proficiency in English. Thus ICT provides the student's chances for interacting with a variety of texts which give them the complete background to the mainstream of academic courses. ICT can be considered as a medium to facilitate learning a language as well as to master its skills. In further ICT motivates learners towards learning the English language and makes it self-directed learning and leads to independent learning. This paper discusses the significant role of ICT in teaching the English language. It also examines the distinction between the traditional classroom and ICT classroom in pertaining to teaching and learning the English language.

Keywords: ICT, English language, ESL classroom.

In present scenario Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as the foremost contemporary force of this century in shaping the global economy and resulting in rapid changes in the society. However, ICT tools have mostly changed the way people use to communicate. Today it is not surprising if an individual does not use mobile or computer or internet for their transactions. ICT has created considerable transformations in every walk of human life in the fields of industry, agriculture, medicine, business, engineering, and education etc. Coming to Education, ICT has demonstrated its potentiality to transform the nature of education to enable the development of quality education. In spite of all these, one can feel it is only a beginning and ICT is about to bound to further reform education both substantively and methodologically.

It is commonly believed fact that development of a country generally depends on the quality of its human resource along with economic, social and scientific factors. Education plays a major role in developing human resource, which is capable of meeting the challenges of a fast-changing world. In this present context, English constitutes the most vital input in the field of education as it is a part and parcel of quality education. Therefore one needs to improve their proficiency in English in order to up to date to enrich their knowledge, skills, and competence from time to time.

English is a national and an international language is spoken by many people across the World. It plays a major role in the countries where it has been accepted as the official language and has also used as a medium of communication. This is primarily true in India where it is used as a language for both intra-national and international communication. It has emerged as a major component in all spheres of human life: press, politics, advertising, broadcasting, transport, communication etc. The English language is used as an important medium of the press for several years and literary reviews, journals, and technical reviews, scholarly journals etc are published in English. The significance of the English language in the educational field is very clear from the fact that English has a special place in the curriculum of schools, colleges, and universities in India. It is well-established fact that the future of English as a language is very secure. Accessing the new knowledge is possible only through the English language. It is not surprising to say that the day is not far when this language will become the single language of the world like a single currency.

In order to master a language one has to achieve native-like competence and it is necessary to master all the four skills i.e. - LSRW. They are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Of all the four skills of English Language, Listening and Reading are referred to as receptive/passive skills, that is one receives messages and sends out messages through listening and reading. The other two skills are Speaking and Writing, and they are referred to as productive/active skills. It is known that we produce the language to express our views or ideas in two ways, spoken and written form. The chief objective of teaching a language is the ability to use the language for communication. It will be achieved through ICT easily.

Need for using ICT in the ESL classroom:

In English language teaching, learners are facing many problems in acquiring required proficiency in the English language due to traditional rote learning, teachers under qualified, huge student population, high drop-out rates of students and weak curriculum. All these negative aspects result in poor proficiency in the English language. This creates a huge gap between the students learned language from their educational institutions and the language needed to be used in real life situations. Learning English has become a big challenge for most of the learners. As a result, rapid changes could be done to the traditional teaching method with increased access to ICT. There is an extreme need to create interactive media and hypermedia where computing and communication technologies are combined to provide computer-based education. This method combines media such as writing letters, paragraphs, and videos, using graphics and computing to form virtual classrooms. This helps in implementing e-learning through integrated voice, video, data, and other internet sources. If I could be the best strategic technique to help students learn the English language.

Traditional classrooms Vs ICT classrooms:

The chief objective of Teaching is not only giving information but to develop understanding and application of the concepts, decision making ability, speed and vocabulary, improving comprehension, self-concept and value clarification, expression power, reasoning and thinking power, judgment and tolerance and ambiguity, proper study habits, scientific temper, risk-taking capacity, etc. It is extremely difficult to achieve all these objectives with the present infrastructure, availability of teachers and class size, training of teachers etc.

ICT classrooms make use of print texts, Internet, film etc to enhance their linguistic knowledge. Through their interactions with different texts on the topic of interest, students become more and more familiar with academic vocabulary and language structures too. It creates interest and motivates the students towards self-directed learning which results in learner autonomy.

Using ICT in teaching the English language:

ICT can be defined as “a diverse set of technological tools and resources which used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, retrieve and manage information.” Computers, Internet, What's App, Skype, broadcasting technologies like radio and television, Films, LCD projector, YouTube, Mobile phones, you etc are some of the most important applications of ICT and can be used in Teaching English.

Computers:

The computer is an electronic device which stores unlimited lessons or references and can be accessed from anywhere at any time and accurately. Through Computer Aided Learning and Teaching (CALT), teachers are trained to use technology in designing and producing instructional materials. Computers can be used to develop a lesson plan, self-instructional

modules, test construction, quiz, puzzles, etc can enhance quality learning at less cost. Computer knowledge is very useful for teachers to learn how to teach students. Computers are also useful to draw and print graphs etc. Moreover, Computers can generate and print appropriate question papers and score the objective type answer sheets including multiple choices, true or false etc.

Internet:

Computer technology has provided Internet and is merely a source of information available in the form of articles, conferences, and courses. In the educational field, the Internet provides the students with a wide range of collection of English language texts in various discipline departments. Students can improve their English language in terms of practicing these texts at any time without the teacher's assistance. Students may use many software applications available on the Internet at free of cost to practice the English language. By reading English articles, stories reading skill will be improved and through some group activities speaking skill, by listening to audio aids listening skill, by practicing activities available on internet writing skill will be improved. The teachers and learners can choose the difficulty level they want to train.

Skype:

Skype is one of the developments of this 21st century and it provides boundless possibilities for the teachers and students to collaborate with each other from anywhere at any time in the world. It provides immense opportunities for the teachers and students in terms of having English classes in face to face mode through online from anywhere. Using Skype the teachers could monitor students' homework regularly in order to help the learners. Students also do work collaboratively with other students for their research projects. It will help them with professional development.

Radio and Television:

The radio and television are one of the significant useful audiovisual aids for teaching the English Language. These two are the most important devices for distant education. It promotes self-learning by having distance education. Many English teaching programmes are broadcasted by All India Radio and the materials are prepared by the EFLU, Hyderabad by the ELT experts in India. They can also be recorded and used in the ESL classrooms (Krishnaswami, N Krishnaswami Lalitha). The radio appeals to ears but the television appeals both to the ears and eyes which helps to develop pronunciation, speaking skills, and listening skills etc. Radio and Television could bring real-life experience into the classroom. Therefore the teaching is lively.

Films:

Films offer the reading materials in the form of stories which helps as a technological aid to present systematic knowledge of the subject. The fact is that knowledge acquired from the

films has an everlasting effect (Rai B.C). We can also make students to play Shakespeare plays while teaching English Literature in the classroom which provides self-learning.

LCD Projector:

An LCD projector is a very useful technological device and alternative aid to the chalkboard. Movies, stories, powerpoint presentations, pictures on transparencies can be projected on a screen. It saves time while preparing the materials in advance. For this use, appropriate infrastructure is required for the use of such kind of equipment. (Krishnaswami N., Krishnaswami Lalitha).

Mobile phones:

Mobile phones are another technological tools which have a wide range of various applications. The teacher can use these applications in the ESL classrooms by asking them to prepare documentaries using the camera in the mobile phones. Understanding the significant impact of the English language, Eenadu Telugu daily newspaper is conducting spoken English programmes through mobile phones to reach the rural people. This is how mobile phones can be exploited for teaching English.

YouTube:

YouTube is another technological device and its videos can be used in the ELT classrooms to improve the proficiency level of ESL learners. It helps the learners to teach different aspects of English to enhance pronunciations, accents, vocabulary, voice modulation, and sentence formation etc. The main advantage of using YouTube in the ESL classroom is that it offers authentic examples of everyday English used in real life situations. Therefore the teacher can use it as an innovative pedagogical tool for teaching the English language.

Therefore ICT can be a good teaching aid to develop overall proficiency in English. If the teacher is well trained with necessary online training in order to update her knowledge, automatically the student will be trained well. It is possible only through using ICT in the ESL classroom

Advantages:

- ICT can supply a valuable resource for curriculum plan through the wide-ranging materials available on the internet.
- It will provide accessibility to get information easily and quickly for academic purposes.
- ICT and its tools can be a good teaching and learning models.
- It encourages learners to set a learning goal in developing certain technology competencies.
- E-learning provides innovative learning.

- ICT classroom does not require the educator and learners are in one room and it results in the development of virtual classrooms
- Digital language learning system encourages the students to talk freely and lose their inhibitions while talking in front of their peers.
- Students can easily interact with the teacher without disclosing their names.

In this context, ICT plays a major role as the "media" bridging and enabling the learning process towards communication between the students and teacher though they are not presented in the same room or place in certain time. ICT can be used as a reference-book in ESL classroom.

Disadvantages:

- The advancement of ICT may lead to the violation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) which causes plagiarism to commit fraud.
- Sometimes there is recklessness in running the system which may be dangerous.
- Television trains children to think in a short time i.e. short span of attention and do not let them think broadly.

Conclusion:

The recent developments have shown that C.D, D.V.D, e-learning, Radio, T.V, Powerpoint presentations, educational videos etc are very important teaching aids to teach the English language in the ESL classroom. Moreover, in the competitive world, everyone is thriving hard to get success and it needs technology to teach a language. It makes learners feel relax and comfortable to learn the language and speak freely. It also leads to learner autonomy. Therefore ICT suits the best strategic technique to teach the English language.

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