TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE THROUGH ICT – CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The process of teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) has metamorphosed into various vicissitudes with chalk and board method to online teaching and learning at present. The challenges before every learner of English language across the globe are varied and they have inherent problems including family backgrounds, sociological fabric, psychological inbuilt attributes, and geographical differences. The ethnic backgrounds and even religious beliefs have their own impact in the way of learning English as a Second Language. In order to overcome these linguistic challenges, there are a slew of approaches and theories with a number of tools and methods to assist the teaching and learning process. Among the one is the ICT which is of recent origin after the advent of computers. After the explosion of computers in a number of areas of human knowledge, it is being exploited for the assisting of teaching languages. After the computers, the internet, mobile technologies and gadgets, almost all process have become easy including designing teaching materials, implementation of the materials to the learners, the testing and evaluation of the language skills – almost every process in the language learning process is being done with the help of ICT viz., Information and Communication Technology.
Keywords: ICT, Second Language Learning, ESL, TL, SL.

1.0 Introduction

Language learning has become quite interesting after the advent of Internet. In the 21st century, the learners find the chances of learning a second language very easy as there is a convergence of Information and Communication Technology. This new tool ICT enables the language learners to have easy access of the information, materials, curriculum, learning strategies, various techniques, assessing tools including self-assessing tools, and the final outcomes. In this context, it may be noted that in second language teaching, it can be seen that a paradigm shirt recently. The focus is given on intrinsic motivation to a concern with extrinsic factors which have its own consequences. According to certain linguistic experts, the process of learning a language is in itself intellectually beneficial. Apart from the other benefits of the second language, the purpose of learning languages is to understand other cultures and thus define our own and ourselves. As the teaching of language has been a purely technical problem, without personal or ideological significance, it is significant that many language practitioners have found it necessary to repudiate an under-emphasis on the total involvement of any learner in the acquisition of a new language. As more and more people have begun using ICT in a number of other domains, language experts too have started using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to teach English as Second Language.

1.1 Role of ICT

English has been a global language ever since the British began to colonize countries across the length and breadth of the earth. In order to facilitate and ease the process of learning

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English as second language, the use of ICT is a novel experience and it does improve the whole experience of English language acquisition. The crux of the matter in this research paper is the ways and means to integrate ICT (Information and Communication Technology) with current learning methodology. Of course, the ICT is found to be a very powerful tool for educational change and reform. This is a Digital era and the age of technological learners. The language learners have the advantage of the technological edge. The required learning materials are available almost at the press of the keyboard of the computer, or smart phones, or ipads, or laptops, the LCDs in the classrooms, the televisions. The E- Readers have become ubiquitous now with almost numerous opportunities. How the chances could be harnessed is the crux of the problem. Smart classrooms have also become a norm in many educational institutions, therefore, it may be noted that using ICT in a classroom as a tool for language learning has a lot more benefit. Of course, the ICT gives stimulus to undertake the tasks that the students may otherwise avoid. In an ICT enabled language learning class, the students would conduct the activities on the computer software platform and they will not have any sorts of hesitations or inhibitions. It would make repetitive tasks more interesting and would have content which could be in multi media formats. The use of multi media while learning English could help in creating a long lasting impact on the learners. The role of Teacher will change from an Instructor's role to that of a Coordinator. Self paced independent learning methodology is what is being propagated with the help ICT enabled English Language Teaching.

1.2 ICT and Other Approaches

According to **Hartoyo (2008),** the English language teaching is shaped by the search for the 'one best method' of teaching the language. He further states that regardless of whether the focus of instruction has been reading, the grammatical rules and vocabulary of the target language (e.g. Grammar Translation Method), speaking (how to communicate the target language such as Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language, Communicative Approach), or other issues (e.g. The Total Physical Response Method), the attempts of the teaching profession have been shaped by a desire to find 'a' better way of teaching than the existing method. The latest method that is developing is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Some experts and practitioners of education learning language in CALL, strongly supports the utilization of ICT in language learning to improve efficiency and effectiveness of learning that can improve the quality of understanding and mastery of the language studied. Of course, the purpose of the learners also is very important as what skill he proposes to enhance. Among the four skills viz., Writing, Speaking, Listening and Reading, what specific skill the student intents to improve is also important in this context. Apart from the above methods discussed by Hartoyo (2008), the integration of ICT in the field of language learning is inevitable known that the ICT and language learning are two aspects which support each other like two sides of the coin inseparable (Hartoyo, 2010).

As more and more methods and tools are coming into vogue with fancy names, the use of Computer Assisted-Learning language (CALL) has caught the attention of English teachers. According to Prinzessin Nadia, consideration of Computer Assisted Language Learning is using

computer. This tool is flexible, rich and interactive. It is flexible in the term of time and place. It has also assumed that more than other media can encourage students in learning language. This is due to the computer's ability to present material is more diverse ways than either book or video does. In addition, CALL is able to generate interaction and improve communicative competence, including providing authentic material to the class or self – learning.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main aims of this research article on the use of ICT in learning English as Second Language are:

1. To introduce the concept of ICT to Tamil speaking learners of English as Second Language
2. To integrate the use of ICT along with other devices and methods in teaching and learning process
3. To apply the tools of ICT having the essential components such as curriculum, topics, and teaching.
4. To find learning materials in ICT various original sources
5. To help students to find articles from international journals, the students can get it just by sitting in front of computers connected to the Internet network.
6. To teach the students to share information available through various gadgets including USB and storage devices.
7. to introduce teacher and learner about the effect of technology in language teaching and learning

1.4 Review of Related Literature

As pointed out earlier, the teaching of English as a second language has come a long way using various methods, tools, principles and approaches. The use of ICT in teaching English has evoked tremendous response among the learners across the globe and the support of the respective governments is also highly encouraging. Therefore, there are a number of authors have put in perspective the use of ICT in the classroom atmosphere. The teacher is expected to create interactive teaching and learning to make students interest. Therefore, according to practitioners of English as second language, in the history of the development of education, information technology is part of the medium used to convey the message of science to many people, ranging from printing technology a few centuries ago, such as printed books, such as telecommunications to media, voice recorded on tape, video, television, and CD. ICT in education point of view refers to "information and communication Technology (ICT) such as computers, communications facilities and features that variously support teaching, learning and a range of activities in education (QCA Schemes of Work for ICT in Kent Country Council. 2004), according to Kent. ICT refers to technologies in which the computer plays a central role, i.e. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), the internet, and variety of generic computer application (Fitzparick and Davies, 2002). The development of information technology, the internet, directs the history of educational technology in the new groove. Online services in the education of both degree and non-degree are basically providing educational services to users using the Internet as a medium. Online services can be composed of various

stages of the process of educational programs such as: registration, test entry, payment, learning, case assignments, case discussions, exams, assessments, discussions, and announcements.

1.5 Electronic Books

Electronic book or e-book is one that utilizes computer technology to deliver multimedia information in the form of a compact and dynamic. In an" e-book can be integrated impressions" sound, graphics, images, animations, and" movie" so that the information presented is richer than conventional books. Type e-book of the simplest is a mere transfer of conventional books into electronic form displayed by the computer. With this technology, hundreds of books can be stored in a single piece of solid disc / CD" or" compact disk (capacity of about 700MB), DVD or digital versatile disc"" (capacity 4.7 to 8.5 GB) and ' 'flash" (currently available capacity up to 16 GB). A more complex and require more rigorous designs such as the Encyclopedia Britannica and Microsoft Encarta encyclopaedia which is in multimedia format. Multimedia format allows e-book provides not only written information but also sound, images, movies and other multimedia elements. A description of the type of music, for example, can be accompanied by footage of the sound of music so that the user can clearly understand what is meant by the renderer.

1.6 ELT through E-learning

Any learning process taking place through any electronic means using computer and internet facility is e-learning. ESL is done through this process for a long time. The main definition is given by Victoria L. Tinio as any type of learning taking place at all levels, formal and informal, which uses a computer network (intranet and extranet) for the delivery of teaching materials, interaction, and / or facilitation. As most of the process of learning that takes place with the help of the Internet is often referred to as online learning, e-learning is defined in SEAMOLEC as any type of learning through electronic services. Therefore, e-learning is learning by using electronic technology as a means of presenting and distributing information. educational television and radio broadcasts is also a form of e-learning. Other than these means, learning through the media of radio and television education is also a form of e-learning. In the 21st century the ICT assumes more importance because it converges all devices and technologies into one process reaching a unified results using internet technology. In the advanced level, the web-based learning in its simplest form is the "website" are used to present learning materials. It helps English language learners to access learning resources provided by the speakers or facilitators whenever desired. Through e-mail, chat channel, or via video conference, ICT works far better in enhancing the four skills of the learners viz., Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. One must understand the definition of ICT to harness its energy to make use of its vast powers in teaching and learning languages. It may be any type of languages for various purposes. This tool 'covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receiving information electronically in a digital form'. In this method, personal computers, digital gadgets, radio, e-readers such as Amazon Paper white e-readers, Smart phones, Ipads and Ipods, digital television, email, robots etc., These devices have many

facilities including the storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission or receipt of digital data. Of all the advantages, all these devices can be synchronized and synergized. ICT tools are being used in the context of language learning generously. Interactive multimedia is a powerful tool to enhance the language skills of the learners in all areas. It is 'the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic text, graphics, moving images, and sound, into a structured digital computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes. The digital environment can include the Internet, telecoms and interactive digital television'(Finney, 2011). Audio devices have spawned a slew of opportunities for the language learners by using stand alone speakers, with other units, Bluetooth speakers, headphones, earphone, compact discs and other devices. In this context, the use of Internet may be underlined. The search engines such as Yahoo!, Google, UC, Safari are revolutionizing the entire gamut of the interface learning by proving translation simultaneously. All the information could be accessed even though it may be in another language. The internet technologies provide the learners with text, audio and video conferencing facilities. Through personal computers, intelligent and smart televisions, telephones, mobile gadgets such as smart phones with internet connectivity, the language learners can access a number of services by synergizing the devices and the software including chatting, browsing, and discuss each other with the wider range. Interactive multimedia, audio-graphic computer teleconference, and interactive television via satellite, Interactive whiteboard are really a boon in the ICT context for learning a second language. Practice, Authoring, Computer-Aided Assessment (CAA), Publishing have become easy for both teachers and learners of English language.

1.7 Merits and Demerits

Any system or any methods have its own overt and covert merits and demerits while being implemented. What one should look up is the merits which accrue while the students adopt the method in order to enhance their language skills. In the ICT model, many of the things are highly accessible especially the information which is required learning purposes. The ICT tool is modern, novel and highly attractive to the second language learners. This innovation in learning is growing in the presence of e-learning innovations that further facilitate the educational process. The testing of the learners in ICT is easier while assessing their progress. In addition, the ICT would hardly require the help of the teachers. The physical presence of both the teachers and learners is disappearing fast in this method. Virtual classroom or classroom-based teleconference would make the process easier. This tool could be used to administer in a centralized place and this facility could be used for others also. Mass learning process could be initiated instead of one to one or group to group. In addition, it may be pertinent to review the uses as found by Herington (2002):

a. ICT facilitates exposure to authentic language
b. ICT provides the access to wider sources of information and varieties of language
c. ICT gives the opportunity to people to communicate with the world outside
d. ICT allows a learner – centered approach
e. ICT develops learner's autonomy.

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As for demerits are concerned, the physical contact is less in this method. Legally talking, one should be wary of using ICT tools its materials carefully for infringement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The chance for plagiarism is common as materials being downloaded from the internet through various devices such as computers, ipads, smartphones, E-readers etc., could be in trouble.

1.8 Conclusion

To conclude this research paper, it may be pointed out that ICT is a form of advanced science technology which could be used to enhance the learning atmosphere and the process. This tool is a boon to the learners of English as a Second Language. ICT throws a slew of learning opportunities for students in the era of global competition. The innovative ICT-based learning would definitely a powerful tool and it gives vast opportunities for students to hone and promote competence on an international scale. Of course, the availability of the devices count much in this methodology but due to the support from the governments, the students could access to free devices available in public domain and arena. At present, free wi-fi connections are available everywhere and the smartphones have become less expensive. The other devices such as television, ebook readers, laptops, ipads are also helping the learners a lot with powerful mental attitude and self-reliance. More and more devices based on ICT are coming out with useful software applications which is really a boon to the SLLs.

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