The Use of Information and Communication Technology in Communicative Teaching and Learning of English Language: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract : The impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on language learning has been acknowledged globally such that the integration of ICT in language learning has become indispensable in today's teaching-learning environment. This is because of the fundamental role it plays in the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in language learning. Technology plays a vital role in teaching English in a country like India where the English language plays a role as a second language in a multilingual setting. In olden days, the process of learning and teaching simply meant face-to-face interactions, reading books or printed handouts, taking notes from the teachers, and completing assignments generally in the form of answering questions or writing essays. In short learning and teaching were considered impossible without a teacher, books, and chalkboards. This is more so when the world is fast becoming a global village where the use of modern technological gadgets to improve language learning has become imperative. It has, therefore, become expedient to note that the effective teaching and learning of English has gone beyond the stereotypical to the regimented tradition of mere classroom teaching because of the emergence of various gadgets in information and communication technology.

Keywords: Language, mm-multimedia Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), CT-Communicative Technology, ELT- English Language, Teaching, TE-Teaching English, CA- Communicative Approach,FLT-Foreign Language Teaching, FLL- Foreign Language Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The English language is generally acknowledged as a global language, in view of its numerous functions and over several other languages around the globe. It has become imperious for English Language teachers and learners to realize the essential role of information and communication technology as a catalyst in the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in language acquisition which is a prerequisite to the viability of global economic development. The emergence of new tools to handle repetitive work, but also supplies for certain high-level human skills, part of our everyday environment at work and at home, in our production activities and in our leisure.

1.2 Teaching and Learning English Language in the Traditional Classroom Setting:

In the olden days, the process of learning and teaching was quite different; it simply meant face-to-face interactions, reading printed handouts or books, taking notes from the teachers, and completing assignments generally in the form of answering questions or writing essays. In short learning and teaching were considered impossible without a teacher, books, and chalkboards. Gone were the days when teaching English was restricted to all that the teacher had to say to the learners, a situation which made learners inactive in the teaching-learning situation. The time has come for teachers and learners of English to realize the fundamental role of information and communication technology not only in the area of language teaching and learning but also in the global economy where the proficient use of English is fast assuming the indispensable engine of growth and development. It has, therefore, become expedient to note that the effective teaching and learning of English has gone beyond the stereotypical to regimented/tradition of mere classroom teaching because of the emergence of various gadgets in information and communication technology. According to Brown (1980), second language education has changed considerably, pointing out the importance of the use of an "electric enlightened approach" to theory building but cautions that classroom contact is still very necessary for second language learners to give real-world validity to their theory building. Brown's theoretical comments about the classroom vignettes contribute to the attainment of this goal as major methodological approaches and current issues in language teaching are depicted in these vignettes, first with the direct method, grammar-translation, and the Audio-Lingual method. Similarly, Randall (2006) has admitted that technology has become a major component; a

must-have in many homes around the world, with its concomitant influence permeating all facets of human lives, including education. This is a welcome development by many as it shows the direction in which language instruction will be driven by new advancements in technology. Experts polled about the future use of ICT in FLT & FLL are unanimous in their view that ICT will play an increasingly important role as the new media become increasingly integrated into everyday life.

1.3 Language and Culture:

Language is a part of the culture and so reflects and interprets culture. It is a broad concept and so is distinguished as the big-C culture and small-c culture. The former constitutes factual knowledge about arts such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre and film whereas the latter comprises of a wide variety of aspects like attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms, values, social relationships, customs, celebrations, rituals, patterns of interaction, the use of physical space, and body language. Knowledge of both cultures is of great importance for successful cross-cultural communication. Some of the aspects of small-c culture like celebrations and rituals are easy to grasp but there are other dimensions that are hidden. These non-tangible cultural aspects have an enormous influence on people's ways of thinking, their linguistic and non-linguistic behavior which determines the expectations and interpretations of other people's linguistic and non-linguistic behavior. Learning English opens the door to a culture that enjoys high prestige allowing one to join an international community of English users which is particularly appealing to young people eager to communicate across the frontiers. English provides access to a knowledge domain and contact with others. By learning English the ESL or EFL students are enabling themselves to become users of international or rather intercultural communication. Thus the target language becomes a tool to be used in interaction with people all over the world, where communication in English takes place in the fields of science, technology, business, art, entertainment, and tourism. In order to function in a culturally diverse environment, our learners need to develop intercultural or multicultural competence. In addition to grammatical competence, a culturally competent learner needs to possess sociolinguistic competence, pragmatic competence, socio-cultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness.

2. SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT CAN BE LISTED FOR THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

We can have many benefits of multimedia as it can enhance learning in different locations and institutions of diverse quality; present opportunities to students working at different rates and levels; provide (tirelessly, without holding up other students, in the short term, for high student populations and limited numbers of trained and experienced teachers – in combination with robust teacher development. Updating content can ensure that teachers and students encounter to work with current and authentic sources. Such encounters tie learning to the most important events of our time and underscore the general idea that knowledge itself is not fixed and finalized, that there is a universe of discoveries and a library of analyses that can be available to students.

2.2 Overview of the use of ICT in FL teaching and learning the technology

The chief reasons for using technology can be summed up as follows. Technology facilitates exposure to 'authentic' language, access to wider sources of information, and varieties of language opportunities to communicate with the outside world, learner-centered approach development of learner autonomy. Before discussing the use and relevance of ICT in English teaching and learning, it would seem useful to review the technologies which are currently in use in education.

2.3 The technology is currently used in FL teaching and learning are:

Nowadays modern language teachers are widely using the most popular and most widely used devices. The use of animation linked to sound provides learners with exposure to all important elements of spoken communication: posture, gestures, pronunciation, proxemics, intonation, all embedded in natural, cultural contexts. Thanks to modern technology in this present scenario where social platform becomes an integral part of online education.

Telephone:

Now we have many means of communication. Due to the relatively poor quality of telephone and

analog transmissions, this medium has not been widely used for language teaching. Its principal uses have been limited to supplementary tutoring for those engaged in distance education, However, with the advent of digital quality and lower connection costs, there is now considerable potential for its extended use - including the possibility of conference calls.

Computers:

With the introduction of the multimedia computer, the learner and teacher have at their disposal an instrument which can combine all the advantages of the abovementioned media in a compact and easily accessible form.

Internet:

Extensive and profitable use is now being made by many language teachers and learners of email, the World Wide Web, text, audio, and video conferencing. As with other activities and tasks in the language classroom, the use of different media needs to be planned in terms of the relative effectiveness of the means. Research has shown that joint use of media, where collaborative tasks are set for learners to act and research jointly, is much more effective than drill-like exercises performed in isolation. Using the computer laboratory may prove to be counterproductive if not linked to tasks that require communication within a group of learners or with others outside the class. Training is a key factor in the effective use of the new media, where learning to use must give way to using to learn.

It is above all the teacher/trainer who needs not only to be completely familiar with the hardware and programs available but also to know exactly what the potential of learners is. Apart from the obvious need for teachers to become computer literate and have the confidence to use the available technology adequately, major changes in learning/teaching paradigms are called for.

They need to learn how to evaluate and select learning resources and how to solve practical and theoretical problems linked to the introduction of new media. As mentioned above, the integration of technology into the syllabus and the successful planning of lessons confront teachers with new challenges. Making efficient use of their higher-order skills, which go hand-in-hand with effective computer literacy learners, also, need skills training so that they are able to work autonomously. The new literacies linked to ICT (cultural, digital, critical, visual, etc.) must be mastered by teachers and learners alike if they are to benefit fully from the new tools.

Social media platform:

People across the globe practicing social distancing. Subsequently, there has been a huge spike in people spending time online — reading the news and using social media platforms. During this pandemic and on a national lockdown traditional media channels have taken a bit of hit. The use of various social media is increasing among students of many reputed organizations providing free subject material.

Conclusion

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) cannot be underestimated in language teaching and learning process because emerging technologies make it pertinent and practical to approach learning in ways that have been advocated by scientists, theorists, and educational psychologists. In summary, it can be said that the positive potential of ICT in ELT & ELL has been recognized, the technology and materials are available, but ongoing training is essential if we are to reap the benefits of the rich learning environment in which ICT offers for language learning.

It is imperative for modern-day teachers and learners to keep abreast of the modern trend at improving teaching and learning of the English Language through the use of Information and Communication Technology.The factors we have just recalled clearly underline the importance of human actors and also the cultural factor in the successful deployment of a training program involving the use of technology, but also the need to ensure adequate preparation of these doers so they can see the value of changes in which they are called to engage. To achieve ambitious but realistic, it is essential that a systematic effort is made to better understand the range of possibilities offered by modern tools both in terms of their educational effects that the conditions for their successful integration. Therefore, the integration of ICT in learning practices depends to some extent the degree to which these forms and distributions are perceived and recognized as belonging to the socially and culturally legitimate operation of the unit learning. The foregoing is culture. We must seek modernity that does not exclude this culture.

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