

Integration of ICT into English Teaching-Learning Process: An Assessment with Consideration of English as Second Language

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ABSTRACT

The process of acquiring the native language is through a subconscious method during the early formative years of a child where a child remains unaware of syntax and grammatical rules, whereas, learning a second language or foreign language requires direct instruction and regular assistance with a high degree of collaborative ambience. This becomes more challenging when the instructors and learners are both of countries with multiple languages and dialects in daily usage. India is the best example of multicultural and multilinguistic country to learn English which is more a foreign language for Indians than second language. However, technologies have drastically and dramatically changed the lives of people in general and India is not an exception. In terms of teaching-learning process of English in countries of multicultural and multilinguistic backdrops, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can widely be integrated, as it has shown its capacity, into the English teaching-learning process to record considerable improvement in English language skills. It can be asserted that language education is such an area where virtual classrooms, online courses, open-access resources and social networks based on ICT can be increasingly used to give learners a wide and variety of access to information, promote interaction and communication, and enhance their digital literacy skills.

This paper fundamentally aims to decipher the advantageous output in terms of English teaching-learning process after integration of ICT into the whole process of English teaching-learning. It puts forth that ICT plays a key role in enhancing the English teaching-learning process and it also discusses on the various teaching models developed through ICT to create collaborative learning environment. It focuses on wide integration of ICT to improve the English teaching-learning process which would bring remarkable competence in the learners of English as second or foreign language.

Key Words: *Integration, ICT, English, Second-language, skill*

1. INTRODUCTION

"A new age demands a new paradigm!" -Walter McKenzie

In this age of explosion and expansion of knowledge, the developing countries cannot remain secluded from the mainstream processes and techniques of language teaching-learning process. Since, India is remarkably doing well in a number of fields including science and technology; there remains great possibilities and need to enhance the forte of English teaching-learning process

through integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all possible ways and avenues. ICT, in countries of multicultural and multilingual backdrops, can be integrated in wide range as it has all the capacity to promote English teaching-learning process with high rate of efficiency and revolutionize the communicative world. This is indeed right to say that for effective teaching –learning of English as the Second Language or Foreign Language, a collaborative ambience is required in which both traditional methods and ICT tools are better to get integrated for learners of especially, rural backgrounds. Since English is undoubtedly the most important language for communication and businesses, it has to be taught and learnt with serious note and high proficiency level. In India, English is more foreign than second language because most of the Indians are introduced and exposed to more than two-three-four adjacent languages to their mother-tongue in their native upbringing. India is a country of multiple languages and dialects and thus English becomes tough for them to interpret and expand its usage. However, ICT tools can bring notable advantages to the English teaching-learning process.

India in particular is potentially at the best level in terms of human age index. Evidently, more than India's population is under 25 years old. Furthermore, India has many things to share with or expose to the outer world in every discipline of human understanding. Since English is a globally accepted language of communication, Indians have greater prospect to establish their merit, talent and creativity by learning English and using it for expression of all kinds. ICT tools can be used in wider range to develop skills related to English teaching and learning that can ultimately enhance the employability, acceptance and exposure of the Indians.

It has been established by several scholars of linguistics and technocrats of ICT that computer assisted techniques and interfaces can be of high effectiveness in English language teaching-learning process irrespective of methods like, Direct Method, Grammar Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, Communicative Approach or Community Language. ICT is flexible in terms of place and time, rich and interactive.

2. ENGLISH AS THE SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English for the non-native speakers is either the Second or Foreign Language where the speakers of other languages speak English in an environment of English. The environment may be because of colonial rule or globalized business and interactions as in India, Nigeria, Japan, China Russia etc. Since English is the Second or Foreign language in many countries of multiple native tongues, it requires specialized approaches to its teaching-learning process. Braj Kachru has broadly divided the English speaking countries of the world into three categories, which are placed in three concentric rings as mentioned below:

- i. The Inner Circle: The countries with traditional bases of English come under this category (Great Britain, the U.S., Canada, Australia)
- ii. The Outer Circle: In this circle, Kachru has categorized those countries which represent imperialism and extension of English in non-native contexts. In the commonwealth or colonially ruled countries, English as a language is an integral part of their academic or professional institutions, curriculum, businesses and communication. They are of multilingual society but English has acquired a place of prominence (India, Singapore, Malawi and nearly fifty other countries).
- iii. The Expanding Circle: The countries that fall under this category are those with no colonial history or administrative status of English but regard English because of its importance as an international or communicative language (China, Japan, Poland and a number of other countries). These countries are sensitive to the global and expanding status of English in academic, business, legal, scientific, political and technical communities.

India has constitutionally accepted English as an official language and in all the state records, verdicts, gazettes, notifications, declarations, or any documental transaction, English is being overwhelmingly used and earmarked as the language of final acceptance of any document. But, as still approximately 10% of Indian population is only proficient in English, it becomes pragmatically incompatible in mass communication with high order of effectiveness. English is spreading its impact day by day but there are yet many steps to be taken to enhance the teaching-learning process of English so that mass involvement in all spheres of life can be ensured and India can be taken to a remarkable height of academic, scientific, technical or intellectual excellence. ICT can play the most vital role in it as it can take Indian contributions to the outer world for global recognition and acclaim.

3. ICT AND ITS INTEGRATION INTO ENGLISH TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

ICT, that is, Information and Communication Technology, basically deals with and facilitates storage, manipulation, retrieval, receipt, and transmission of information electronically in digital form. This is concerned with digital data. Information is the processed data, communication is the process of conveying or sharing information to others and technology is the scientific knowledge of any art or skill. Thus, ICT can be defined as the utilization of technology for convenient and effective conveying of information.

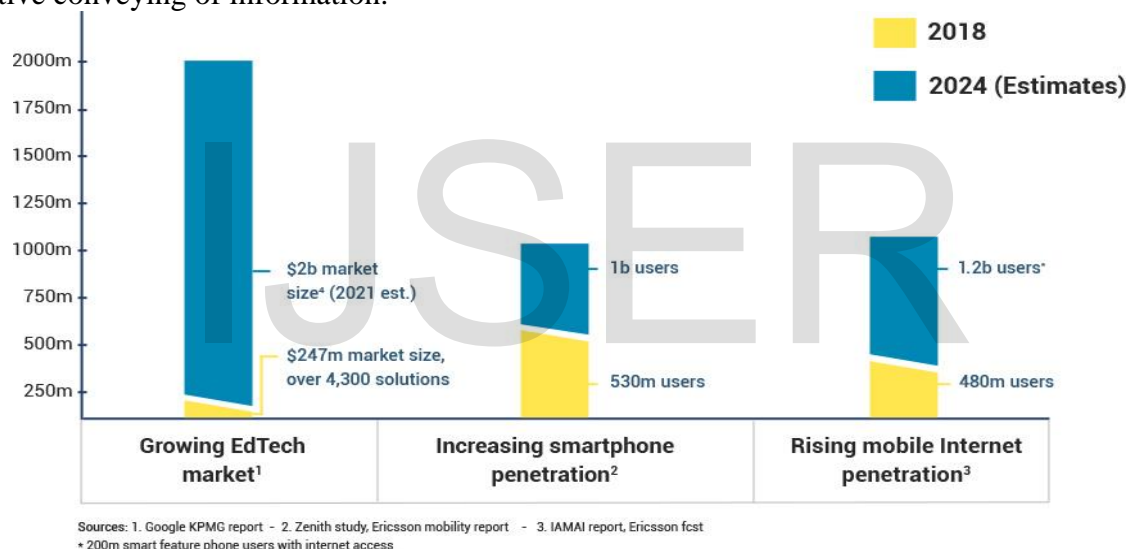


Fig. 1 EdTech Market Graph

As discussed earlier in this paper, the importance of English is well-established and the developing countries have to work at various levels along with taking responsible measures to promote better English Language Teaching (ELT) and develop English language skills. In the multilingual societies with wider expansion of digitalization and computer aided services and tools, the traditional methods and aides are no more effective and interesting as well. India is among the top countries of electronic gadgets and internet users. Internet access is being rapidly expanded to rural parts of the country and India has a vast scope to be the top most user soon. With the increase in internet access and computer aided services, the integration of ICT into English teaching-learning process would get a remarkable boost. It will be interesting, effective and motivating for both the ends of teaching and learning. The use of modern approaches and sophisticated, digital, electronic and internet connected ICT tools would develop the understanding level and acquisition skills. It would enhance the vocabulary, improve the language skills and provide platforms to explore in all spheres of intellect and wisdom.

ICT, in educational sector, has evolved as an important aspect and thus, most of the governments of several countries have put ICT in the national curriculum. Its utilization has

appealed for its expansion resulting in significant enhancement in linguistic proficiency. It is remarked that a computer is a tool and medium that facilitates people in learning a language, although the effectiveness of learning depends totally on the users. The technological advancements in computer assisted learning processes have established new benchmarks in English teaching-learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the latest method in facilitating English language proficiency. With the considerable increase in computer skills ICT tools to teach and learn English ought to be used in large scale. India is still a country with more than 65% rural region but internet access or connectivity has spread over most of the parts of the country at least through mobile phones. The emerging phone apps, software, and digital aides of English language teaching-learning can bring miraculously better result for all those who wish to learn English language to ensure heights of success.

The tools of ICT usable for English teaching-learning process are Computer Assisted Learning (CAL), Computer Assisted Language Assessment (CALA), Computer Assisted Language Instruction (CALI), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), Wiki, Blogs, e-mail, Digital Libraries, Multimedia, Free and Open Source Software and Social Media, MOOCs, Virtual classrooms, Digital Storytelling, Documentaries, i-Pads, Mobile Apps, Tablets, Digital Notebooks, Recorded Audio-video Materials, Smart Phones, Online Spoken Tutorials, Digital Pronunciation Dictionaries and others.

The surveys and studies made on ICT and its impact reveal that on its integration, English language skills have developed and positive responses have been recorded in terms of English language acquisition. It has made the way of individualized learning easier and open to great extents of flexibility.

4. ICT TOOLS IN CONTEXT TO ENGLISH TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

It is evident to say that ICT can widely be integrated, as it has manifested its capacity, into the English teaching-learning process to record considerable improvement in English language skills. It can be asserted that language education is such an area of acquisitional scopes that by increased use of virtual classrooms, online courses, open access resources and social networks, learners can be given wide range of access to information and interaction and communication can be promoted and further the digital literacy skills can also be enhanced with rapidity. ICT is a medium to enable exposure to authentic language, makes ways to access to various sources of information, gives opportunities to communicate with the outside world, it fosters learner-centric approach, it develops the sense of autonomy in the learners and it makes the learning process easier, familiar and attractive than the traditional methods.

In context to ICT tools classified for English teaching-learning process, the prominent ones are:

Computer: It is an electronic device enabled to receive information (data) and perform sequential logical operations. It can be utilized with multimedia devices formulated for language learning. It helps in developing listening and speaking skills.

Interactive Multimedia: This is integrated digital media that includes electronic text, moving images, graphics and sound into structured digital environment. It provides scopes of interaction with data of specified purposes. It includes telecom, internet, and interactive digital television.

Lingua Phone: this proves to be much useful in language teaching and learning. A good deal of learners can use it for practising speaking and hearing skills.

Audio Devices: These are independently not used but form a channel of interactive multimedia with other media. These include earphone, speaker, CD and associated devices.

Internet: this is a medium of World Wide Web, e-mail, audio, text and video conferencing.

Overhead Projector: For display of information and audio-visuals for mass, this is used as a tool of communication.

Television: This is an important medium of communication. It is helpful in enhancing listening skills and learning English based on situations. The programmes of television benefit a large number of learners. Many educational courses of distance and open universities are telecast on it.

Radio: Radio is and would be a great tool to be useful in English learning especially in rural areas. In audio conferencing and programmes of dialogues and dramas, radio is placed at higher level.

Telephone: Telephone as a medium of English teaching-learning process has not been widely used because of its poor quality of analogue transmission. But, if digital quality is invented, it can serve potentially well by conference calls.

Mobile and other Gadgets: Evidently, cell phones, smart phones are well equipped with computerized programmes enabling it to enhance its performance as minicomputer. These are the media to chat, browse, discuss, and enrich selves by English acquisition in quick span of time.

Online Courses and Facilities: There are a number of free or nominally charged online courses to learn English. Facilities like e-guidance, e-teaching, e-tutoring, e-mags, e-journals, e-books, e-library, virtual classes, online training are of great advantage in English teaching and learning. Some of the agencies to provide online courses are: Future Learn, NPTEL, MOOC, Institutional Video Lectures and Creative Writing Portals.

Social Media: The social sites that come under it are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. It has become useful platform for social interaction in mass level and learners can add themselves to English teaching-learning groups and they can advantages of social media in English acquisition.

Films: Documentaries, feature films, short-films, can be beneficial for English teaching-learning process. These arouse motivation to listen to English and enhance speaking-writing skills.

The overall role of teachers has changed in the current era of digitalization and computer assisted teaching-learning environment. Teachers are considered not to provide knowledge only but to guide the learners with proper updates. Here, ICT plays a vital role. It helps the teachers in their professional development, equips with technological teaching proficiencies, learns innovative ways to facilitate and helps in framing of curriculum.

ICT as a defined technology functions to support the conveying process in terms of English teaching and learning process. It has made the communication process easy and effective. Satellites have also been commissioned for the interest of English learning. The traditional teaching-learning process confined to classrooms or four-walls does not remain such and now that teaching-learning process can be made possible without direct contacts through ICT. It bridges and enables the acquisition process. There remain wider scopes to develop more tools and platforms to enhance

English language teaching-learning skills but some current sites, portals and platforms or inventory of ICT tools and open educational tools are as follows:

1. Read Write Think (Educational Platform), 2. Tiki-Toki (Timeline Creator), 3. Youglish (Pronunciation Tool), 4. Quick Key (Question Answer Management), 5. Future Learn (Online Course Portal), 6. Genially (Create many kinds of digital content), 7. Biteable (Create, edit, and share videos), 8. Nearpod (Learning enhancement tool), 9. Pixton (Comic Creator), 10. Wordwall (Collection of shared online learning resources), 11. InsertLearning (Interactive toolbar: Chrome extension), 12. Charades! (Guess the word Game), 13. TedEd (Online Learning Platform), 14. Lyricstraining (Musical portal for language learning), 15. Make Beliefs Comix (Comic creator), 16. EducaPlay (Learning Activities), 17. Toony Tool (Cartoon Creator), 18. AnswerGarden (Word Cloud Creator), 19. StoryboardThat (Create Your Story Board), 20. Edpuzzle (Learning Enhancement Tool), 21. Flipgrid (Educational video sharing platform), 22. Duolingo (Language learning), 23. Google Classroom (Online Platform for Classroom Management), 24. Storymaker (Create Narratives), 25. Mentimeter (Students' Assessment).

5. USEFULNESS OF ICT

ICT proves to be remarkably useful in instruction, guidance, information, explanation and analysis. Computer can help in storage of lessons, proving medium of interaction and indirect interfacing agent to instructors and learners. It can further be used in:

- i. Presentation (text-based materials, audio-video)
- ii. Authoring (ready-made materials)
- iii. Practice (exercises in text, audio or video format)
- iv. Computer Aided Assessment (testing and assessing the understanding level)
- v. Communications (e-mail, Web Pals, Tandem Learning, Discussion, Web based learning)
- vi. Publishing (Word-processors & DTP software, PPT, Web page)
- vii. Simulations (Web Quest, Action Mazes, Sunpower, Adventure games, Expodisc, "Real Life" simulation, video conferences)
- viii. Feedback/Comment (On Social sites, Blogs, Web pages)

6. OBSERVATIONS

In the current era of technological advancements language learning is no more away from technical support and thus, it is observed that ICT appears to be highly advantageous. It breaks the distance and bridges with survival of language learning, especially, English in countries where it is either second language or foreign language. There is implicitly dire shortage of teachers to make the learners learn English and with the growth and increase in digital and internet connectivity ICT can prove to enable efficient English teaching-learning process. The learners can be beneficent of correct, proficient and contextual English learning through ICT tools and inventories. Quick and easy information or lessons can be accessible, innovative learning processes can be attained and the teacher oriented learning process can be transformed into learner centric process.

7. CONCLUSION

The discussion made in this paper makes it evidently clear that ICT and its tools have brought a paradigm shift in English teaching-learning process and it has a vast and wide scope to make the English teaching-learning process easier and accessible among the non-native learners. ICT and its tools have to be made familiar in mass to bring the talents and merits out before the native English speaking world. ICT as an advanced form of technology with future prospects of advancements can provide global opportunities to the subaltern, commonwealth and non-native English speaking population. ICT promotes device-based teaching-learning process and this is the trend of the age that can't be left aside. In general, there are four language skills—Listening, Speaking, Reading,

and Writing. English can be acquired with proficiency through these skills and ICT can miraculously help the learners to be proficient in English language and contribute to all academic, professional or business pursuits.

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