REVIEW ARTICLE

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: AN INNOVATION THROUGH E-LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. A very important reason for regarding English as a world language is that the world's knowledge is enshrined in English. It is a progressive language. Over and above English is universally renowned for its power of expression and its varied literature. Language learning is a natural process for the natives. But for the students of other languages, deliberate efforts are required to learn a foreign language. The students in India face such problems because English is not their mother-tongue. It is neither instinctive nor intuitive. To solve these problems, a systematic approach should be followed. The teachers should aim at teaching primarily, not knowledge but skill, the different skills required for good Listening-Speaking-Reading-Writing. Teachers should find some way of helping pupils to enjoy their language activities, and of building their confidence. A teacher who tries to help his pupils in this way has rightly rejected the image of the teacher who acts as the arbitrary dispenser of all knowledge. This paper does a comparatives study between traditional teaching methods and contemporary teaching techniques. The emerging contribution of online resources and tools to classroom learning and teaching is discussed here. We also try to share some innovative and effective tools that could be used for language teaching in class room.

Past Trends in English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching (ELT) has enormously changed over the decades. When English was entered in the curriculum, it was a challenge for the English language teachers to teach English to the foreign learners. The teachers taught English as a 'Know-ledge' subject not as a 'Skill' subject because their main aim was to equip them to pass the examinations. 'Grammar-Translation Method' was adopted by the teacher. So they taught English as a 'Know-ledge' subject. In this method the teacher shall translate each and every single word to their native language to make the students learn English. By doing so the development of oral proficiency of the learners becomes nil. Other than lecture method many other methods were also used to teach English in an effective manner. They are audio-lingual method, direct method, bilingual method, communicative language teaching, the situational teaching, the structural approach etc. Even though there were many methods none were said to be a perfect method. Since then language teachers have been in search

of better and more effective method of teaching. Moreover, the ELT trends that were very popular in the past have vanished today and have been substituted by innovative ELT methods.

Present Trends in English Language Teaching

In the 21st century, people are occupied with new opportunities, challenges and choices. Technology has spread into all spheres of life. In this period, the educational institutions cannot remain mere venues for the transmission of a prescribed set of information from teacher to student over a fixed period of time rather the educational institutions must promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over the lifetime. So the responsibility falls upon the teachers to shape up the curriculum accordingly to meet the demands of the day. Now a day's people should be equipped with proficiency in the English language for being placed in a respectable job. This can be acquired only with a proper blend of e-learning tools and edification. When educational practices were integrated with e-learning tools the traditional teaching and learning paradigms have been shaken. Efficient and capable teachers can use the diverse range of technology that E-learning provides to enhance teaching and learning situations. By the use of e-learning the process of learning could be made more motivating, meaningful, interesting and stimulating to the students. These tools have been touted as potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform as they are making marked inroads into the combination of digital technologies and English language learning.

E-learning tools used for Teaching English Language

Skype

Skype provides unlimited possibilities for the students and teachers to interact with each other anywhere in the whole world. It provides opportunities for the students in a foreign language class to connect with classes in other countries to practice their language skills. Through Skype the teachers can provide mentoring or homework help to the language learners face to face. The Students can read, present or perform for other students and collaborate with them on writing assignments or research projects. They can also participate in professional development activities within or outside their country.

Using YouTube

YouTube videos can be used for learning English language as to enhance pronunciation, accent, voice modulation, vocabulary and many more. The real advantage of using YouTube in teaching English is that it offers authentic examples of everyday English used by native speakers. The teacher can use it as a tool for improving Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing skills of students. The teacher can select clipping from movie which are appropriate to the level of the students and can show those movie clippings to them. While showing the video the teacher could assign a couple of activities to the students.

- To enhance their speaking skills, the teacher can show a selected part of the movie to the students and further ask them to narrate the rest of the story of the movie through their imagination. This activity shall help them to improve their creativity as well as their speech.
- Teacher can mute the volume and ask the students to watch the movie attentively. Later on s/he can ask the students to frame the dialogues of the movie clippings and present it before the class. This will improve their speaking skills.
- The teacher can ask the students to write a paragraph related to the movie as: "If I were the hero of the movie……………." Or "What, if the story had a different climax?"
- The teacher can prepare worksheets on the movie clippings in advance and ask the students to complete those worksheets while watching movies. This can prove a good activity to enhance their concentration, listening and writing skills.

Internet

Internet is not merely a source of authentic material in English, but is a huge source of information in the form of conferences, notes, research papers, articles, courses and many more. Students shall never miss their chapters as now they can view a web cam version online and get worksheets and notes from electronic online whiteboards. The students can send their assignments to the teachers via e-mails and the teacher can take online exams through the same. Parents can monitor their child's work online at any time. Colleges are linked in a network and work on projects together and prepare materials online. Each and every college has

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got its own website. Many programmes such as spelling bee available on internet which helps the students to spell English words correct with and it could be used by the students free of cost. The students can also choose the level of difficulty that they want.

Podcasting

Nowadays students are listening to news clips, video clips, and music through internet. They are no longer watching movies by going to the theatre or on the TV, they are watching by downloading it into their desktop. The teacher can reach to these students through podcasting. A podcast is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the Internet for playback on portable media players and computers. Utilizing podcasts in the classroom is very easy.

- The teacher can assign a music podcast that introduces students to the culture as well as how the language is often used creatively.
- The teacher can download many free ESL podcasts on the Internet to use in class and can assign a podcast assignment as homework for the students which could be discussed in detail on the next class.
- The students can learn the use of intonation and stress by viewing news clipping of BBC or NDTV.

Twitter

Twitter is a social networking application that could be used in improving students' English to a greater extent. The impact of twitter on engaging students in learning concepts is unlimited. The teacher can use this to engage students in classroom activities and to develop a better understanding of various concepts.

- The teacher can select a word and tweet it requesting synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms of the word. Once all the students respond to the teachers tweet, the teacher can check them for accuracy and develop a link of the difficult words for strengthening the vocabulary of the students.
- A story opener could be tweeted by the teacher to the students and they could contribute to the story line. Once all twitter network participants have contributed to the development of the story line, the teacher can analyze their work based on story structure, editing, spelling, proper use of grammar and creative writing.
- Online Debates can be done through Twitter. It can be done with the students of the same classroom or the students in different colleges on network. Examples include "An apple a day keeps the doctor away- is it true?", Impact of technology on health issue, and many more.

Blog

Blogs are becoming popular nowadays because they are simple and easy to manipulate. Becoming a blog reader will help you to improve your reading skills and your spelling at the same time. They are a great way to generate healthy discussions, express thoughts and share information. Instead of text books and traditional methods, many educators prefer using these new techniques to help teach students. Setting up a course blog is an innovative step from the part of teachers. The student could be able to pursue a course from staying anywhere in the whole world. Educators can use a free platform such as Blogspot, Wordpress, or Tumblr to host the blog. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important contribution to the popularity of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art (art blogs), photographs (photoblogs), videos (video blogs or "vlogs"), music (MP3 blogs), and audio (podcasts). Microblogging is another type of blogging, featuring very short posts. The teacher should persuade the students to visit their blog frequently, put up articles and read other blogs. The teacher should respond to student posts quickly by writing a short comment related to the content posted by students. Blog writing should be made as a part of the class assessment. Students should be encouraged to post their assignments on the blog instead of only giving it to the teacher. By doing so everybody shall be able to read and know about the work done by the student.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones have become an indispensable part of our life. Even though its major use is for communication it can also be used as a learning tool since it has a wide range of applications. Using the camera feature in the mobile, students can make a photo documentary and the teacher can assign a theme for the

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documentary to the students. After taking a sufficient number of photos, the students can upload the documentaries prepared by them to websites such as Flicker and type narrative descriptions for each picture to share with their teachers, classmates, family and friends. Online dictionary applications could be downloaded in our mobile and it could be used to find meaning of words instantly. There are hundreds of mobile phone apps available and it's possible to find free options suited to economically minded students. Here are some free apps that students can use for extra practice:

- **British Council apps**: The *British Council* creates top English learning *apps* for learners of all ages. *Apps could be downloaded to our mobile* to practise grammar, vocabulary and listening. 'Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge' - is a fun way to improve grammar.
- **Duolingo:** It is a wonderful app that has just won the 'Best education start-up award'. It's designed like a game with no advertisement and is completely free.
- **Real English:** It offers a variety of apps at different levels: Business and conversation apps at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The apps are free, but they do contain advertisement. Each app contains 20 lessons that focus on specific grammar/vocabulary areas. Each lesson is made up of five parts.

SMART-Boards

Interactive whiteboards are good replacements for traditional blackboards. They show students everything which can be presented on a computer's desktop including videos, web sites, educational software etc. SMART Boards help teachers use a student-centered approach to teach language. Language teachers can use SMART Boards to improve reading comprehension skills of students and teach grammar in an effective manner. With a SMART Board, teachers can combine web browsing, video, word processing and audio to teach students interactively. The teacher can use smart board to enhance students' language skills via playing games. For e.g. By using 'Pictogram' the teacher could draw a picture and the student can try to guess the word. To revise vocabulary and to learn new vocabulary word games are an excellent way. Students could be asked to rearrange jumbled sentences for testing their logical skills. The teacher can also ask the synonyms, antonyms, lexis or collocation words of a particular word. Different colours could be used on the SMART Board to make a distinction between topics. Students could be asked to edit the paragraphs or proofread them. To teach writing skills the teacher can give a story starter and ask the students to write a chain story or peer story. The teacher can ask the students to write sentences based on photographs as it will teach them the usage and functions of the language.

Conclusion

English is a universal language and it has contributed significantly in narrowing the gap between the geographical boundaries. The benefits of learning English can be seen in the economic, social and political life of the people of the country. Learning English language has become a necessity for communication. But if language teachers teach as they taught earlier, then the required goals of learning English Language may not be achieved in the current global scenario. In the past, no productive, creative and constructive activity was given to the learners to develop the four language skills. With the changing needs of the time, technology is developing day-by-day. We are living in the 21st century and it is the age of technological advancement. Thus the recent trend in teaching English is the use of modern technological tools as English language teaching has been affected a lot with the availability of these tools.

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