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English Language Teaching- Challenges and Approaches

Abstract

English Language is the dress of thoughts. The use of language is very imperative for expressing the concepts and ideas. The English language teaching pay ways to develop multiple skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, analytical skills, collaborative cum written communication which in turn would develop the learning experiences of the learners. The English teacher has to adopt many innovative approaches and methods for better enhancement.

Key words: English language teaching, problem solving skills, collaborative learning, innovative approaches

Introduction

Teaching is an art, which constantly changes due to the epoch we live in. Accordingly, language teachers are accustomed to modify them towards frequent transformations regarding innovations in English language teaching. Nowadays, English teachers around the universe would prefer some new technologies in teaching language with

the emerging trends of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). As Hartoyo (2008) stated in his book, “a computer is a tool and medium that facilitates people in learning a language, although the effectiveness of learning depends totally on the users.” Teachers of English invariably wish to teach with the help of Information and Communication Technology tools (ICT) rather than the traditional methods of ELT which dominate the teacher-centred approach. ICT provides easy access to information for the learners, promotes interaction and communication and enhance digital literacy skills. The exploitation of ICT has taken place to meet the possible and considerable progress in language learning and which facilitates learners and teachers in learning and teaching process respectively. ICT has been exposed as potentially dominant allowing tools for educational change and reform. Hence, the advent of technology strengthens the language learning wider and affordable.

In this present scenario, the Information and Communication tools enhance the power of using the modern tools in the English language teachers teaching milieu. Tools enrich the sharing of knowledge plays a specialised role among the user choices. It paves a very strong platform to an interactive and learner centric ambience. As Ching Yang et al. and Hismanoglou observe, “Internet technology provides teachers and learners with ample resources where learning can be generated interactively through real world situations, student learning possibilities have been found to be increased along with student computer skills and student views that their learning can be promoted and enhanced through communication tools towards autonomy.” The strategies offer authentication through which the learner can have a wide network all over the globe. Information and Communication Tools play a prominent role Technology Enabled Learning. In which, the tools are categorized as Content Creation, Reference Tools, Resource Sharing, Communication and Other Online Platforms.

Innovative Practices

Content Creation tools such as www.blendspace.com, Lingt Classroom, ESL Video, Voxopop.com facilitate teachers to create language content for the class teaching as well as for the exercises. www.blendspace.com, a kind of site that provides simple way to create courses of multimedia and it permits the teachers to generate a lecture in collaborating immense resources. By using the online spoken assignments of *Lingt* editor to strengthen the spoken proficiency of the learners. Moreover, it makes the learner to develop their way of reading and writing with the provided assignments. *ESLvideo.com* provides a lot of educational resources to perk up the second language learners listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary skills. More space would be provided to the teachers to create content and they are allowed to use it freely in the class, lab and even at home. In addition to that quiz can be conducted in the respective subject and assessment to be done easily. *Lesson writer.com* is a web tool to create and read lessons. The teachers could paste a passage which they decided to make use of it in the classroom. In addition to that examples and exercises associated to the given passage could be included. *Moodle*, is a very popular free management system adapted to online courses at many universities, colleges and schools.

Reference Tools assist for improving the authenticity of exploiting the language in an appropriate context which includes Dictionary.com, Merriam-Webster Online, YourDictionary.com, and OneLook Dictionary Search.

Resource sharing tools are indicating an attempt to inflate the accessibility of specialized and expensive resources beyond the boundaries. Some of the document based and multi disciplinary sharing tools such as Google Docs, Zoho Writer, Dropbox, Slideshare and Teacher Tube. Vimeo, WatchKnow and YouTube are the video based sharing tools.

Social Networks take a major responsibility in developing communication in the modern competitive environment. Some of the social networks which are used for social

communication are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram. Other communication tools include Gmail, Skype, Yahoo! Messenger and Voxopop help to have a formal discussion. A good example of the communication tools is Skype, which is widely used for voice chatting and video conferencing.

Primary benefits of the ICT tools are used in language learning to develop student teachers' digital competence in the aspects of Collaborative and Blended learning.

Lev Vygotsky (1962), a Russian teacher and psychologist, first stated that we learn through our interactions and communications with others. Vygotsky (1962) examined how our social environments influence the learning process and he also insisted learning anything cannot be separated from a social context. Social Learning Theories (SLT) help the teachers to create active learning environment especially with the assist of Information and Communication Tools (ICT) in language learning. This language learning environment that brings out the interactive ability of the learners with each other through a discussion and which leads to a collaborative learning environment. Gava (2012) studied the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of forums and blogs in English Language II, at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. The results led to the development of taxonomy of collaboration in forum debates and a classification of critical thinking skills and collaboration in blogs. The author concludes that these tools facilitate collaboration and the application of higher order skills that are relevant for EFL learning.

Blended learning is a student-centered approach that integrates learning experiences in online and face-to-face environments. Communication and collaboration are the required functions of a blended approach. All the ICT tools which we have chosen to discuss in this paper is based on the student – centered approach because modern generation learners are ease with using the electronic gadgets. So, it's comfortable for the teacher to teach lesson over the gadgets like, smart phones and computer if it has internet facility as well. Even

though, it has slight difficulties because firstly the teacher should fully endow with thorough knowledge about the tools which he/she is planned to use in the classes. Moreover, Blended learning is creating a learning experience where the learner can interact with other students as well as with the instructor and also it provides multiple ways to access content and to exhibit mastery in language expertise progress. In addition, it gives more opportunities to the learners to enhance the English proficiency skills with the advent of technology. These approaches can go further in research domain on the development of student teachers' digital competence in language learning. ICT's constructive tools assist to excel learner's level of various comprehending features consciously and unconsciously as pointed in Jean Piaget's cognitive approach.

Conclusion

Modern technology is developing at a faster pace, the learners and teachers have to upgrade themselves from time to time of these latest developments. Close observations by the researchers have mirrored the fact that ICT improved teachers' presentation skills for the benefit of pupils. The successful implementation of ICT integration needs the concerted effort of all the stakeholders. Thus, a teacher can teach innovatively and informatively by using different technological devices as mentioned. If we incorporate these tools effectively the teaching of English Language will become attention-grabbing and will increase student's motivation and commitment. In order to prepare students to excel in the digital age, we must ensure that language curriculum incorporates the necessary technological literacy skills along with traditional language teaching methods.

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