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Impact of Technical advancements in acquiring English language in current scenario

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Abstract

Language is procedural end of communication to attain the socio-cultural means. In this cut-throat competitive world the acquisition of foreign languages, English language in particular has become mandatory. The acquisition of English language is continuous process which actually facilitates the learners to have the prowess of grasping the etiquettes and tenets of language. This paper deals with the methods by which English language can be learnt and acquired using technology to meet the growing demands of the competitive world. Such learning methods enhance the English Language learners to use vocabulary and frame sentences in an exact manner to that of a native speaker and enable them to manifest their thought process in the most effective fashion. We are living in the arena where the technology is growing by leaps and bounds therefore, grabbing the methods of technology, one can implement umpteen number of innovative methodologies in a class room and also in a language laboratory to escalate the English language learning skills. The attempt of gaining language skills are mastery over the English Language becomes higher only when the stress free or conducive atmosphere is created in a class room or Laboratory. This methodology ensures the learners to learn English Language in a more interesting manner. In a school or college speaking skills are required for all students regard less of their courses and aspirations. The role of technology helps in learning supra-segmental skills such as Stress, Rhythm and Intonation. Some of the resources like speaking practice activities, voice recording, Pronunciation Practice, online presentations, video chats and mobile apps including Voki, Vocaroo, Audiopal and others play instrumental role in learning English Language thoroughly. This paper explains how technology can be effectively used in the class room and Laboratory in schools and colleges to promote higher level Language learning skills in students.

Key words: Technology, English language learning, audio-visual aids, multi-media apps

Introduction

In the present tech-paced world, computers and Internet plays a pivotal role in the education sector as the advancements really gives different ways of learning to educators in the field. Computers are used in the classroom teaching, administration and assessment. Adopting good communications skills are the need of the hour for the students to compete in the professional career. English language learning must be given preference to the students in the classroom, focusing on four skills reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Teachers are to be professionally trained to use the tool of computer-Internet based technical applications in teaching to provide more competent practice to young learners. Classroom methods should prioritize students to learn English language proficiently to make them effective speakers of language. Speaking is considered the most common aspect of communication and good communicator should speak language fluently using correct grammar and vocabulary relevant to the context. The goal of teaching speaking English is to make learners speak effectively. Carol (2003) mentioned that the “technology is a force worthy of consideration, whether one wishes to focus on the technological potential, to examine pragmatic technology use, or to criticize both”. Teacher should design the activities to teach speaking skills in the classroom taking the concern between language input and how students can use the activities to improve their language structure. Listening is the core skill of learning language effectively, to impart listening in the learners, teachers could use activities from various sources as Internet provide an ocean of such material, which is used readily in the classroom.

Teaching pronunciation is not given importance in the conventional English classroom, which is the most important aspect of language learning. Teachers initially monitor the student’s fluency and understanding ability of language to stress on the structure of their speech. Speaking activities increase learner’s interest in language and make them understand the etiquettes of public speaking. Teachers should make work students in small groups as it arouses interest and make them discuss among the fellow mates to use the situation rightly for better understanding. The focus on vocabulary must be preferable after the speaking activity and is more beneficial to

increase their word power with more practical examples. Teachers should plan the activities structurally with proper beginning, extending dialogue and ending a conversation. Teachers employ both formal and Informal situations to make learners ready to face the situations in their practical life.

Good pronunciations of words during speaking activities is also key element of language learning, as it makes them learn stress, Intonation and rhythm to be effective speaker. Wrongly pronounced words may also kills the very essence of the conversation and intended meaning of the activity. Teaching pronunciation always neglected in second language class room, as there are several factors lies in the path such as lack of facilities to provide listening and speaking practice like Language Labs in a large country like India. The success of teaching pronunciation lies in employing various methods to raise student's interest in learning. Classroom activities like, listening to teacher pronouncing a sound and repeating after the teacher is a common drill to teach sounds. Using Minimal pair of words with one vowel or consonant differs, taught to make learners to identify sounds in a better way. This activity makes learners to expand their vocabulary and also compare their pronunciation with native speaker and correct themselves.

Teachers should make students aware of Phonetic symbols by showing them to identify symbols with sounds and articulate them with right stress in their speech. Apart from these activities singing and tongue twisters also improve their pronunciation in a better way. Teachers teaching in traditional methods would end up making them identify sounds but lack of practice will not make them effective speakers.

Communicative tools for enhancing learner's speaking skills

The technical advancement helped teachers in a great way by providing unlimited sources to teach students pronunciation using Internet, web sources and practically ready teaching materials. There are numerous sources from which teachers can derive meaningful content based on learner's level of learning. These activities are well designed to improve the fluency of the learners and cater the needs of the language class with wider materials.

Vacaroo (<http://vacaroo.com>): is one such important source for teachers and learners, which allows students and

teachers to record their voice at any length and provides the feature to share them with their fellow mates to identify their errors and learn pronunciation in a better way. Vacaroo is a free web based application; its unique quality is it doesn't need any registration and charge for their service. Students while practicing pronunciation can record their voice clips, imitating the Native speakers, which allows them to listen, understand and record their voice. Teachers can design tasks such a way that students should actively participate and interact with other people to learn speaking with right stress and Intonation.

Whatsapp and **Google Hangouts** are widely popular for sharing information in no time with others in the present world. These applications are used on Mobile devices to send pictures, videos, voice messages and it allows learners to chat with others. These social networking websites served variously during the pandemic and made learners to unite and share information to the group. Students and teachers can share their information on a group and learn from the mistakes or providing better examples for others to improve their ability.

Introducing **Video-blogging** in the class rooms shows tremendous effect on young learners, enhancing their speaking skills with learner satisfaction. This video assisted language learning has many positive sides such as freely accessible, more interesting than audio lessons and students can learn language at their pace.

Youtube.com has made its impact in the tech world that every mobile user has it in the device. It not only improves the speaking skills of the learners but also provide them with opportunities of self-learning in the context. Students are also encouraged to publish their videos concerning security issues.

Public speaking skills are considered one of important aspects to learn in order to succeed in the present generation. It not only gives self-confidence to learners but also improve their oral skills to overcome fear of language. Teachers can use varied sources to cater the needs of students to improve their public speaking skills.

TED talks are one of richest sources of expert talk videos in various languages across the world. Students in this

context are encouraged to watch expert talks in TED talks to observe the presenter's body language, learn new vocabulary, able to understand native accent and other effective presentation techniques.

Speaker (www.speaker.com) is an application which provides facility to create their personal radio show and it allows students to broadcast it online. According to Thamarana (2015), "the relationship between the instructor and the student is more real in a synchronous online context rather than in wide university classrooms where the instructor is not able to "reach" every individual (p. 230). Learners will listen to different types of podcasts of native speakers to improve their speaking skills. Students can share their recordings on social networking sites and other platforms.

Concerning Issues in teaching speaking skills

Improving speaking skills using strategies need to be approached appropriately with right knowledge. The tasks can be categorized into three; they are pre-speaking strategies, while-speaking strategies and post-speaking strategies. Pre-speaking strategies focus on understanding learner's motive, knowledge, cultural factors and plan the activities to fulfill the needs of learners. While-speaking activities involve keen observation on learner's body language like facial expressions, gestures and focusing on main topics in discussion using their prior knowledge on grammar, vocabulary to make message more clearly to the audience. Post-teaching involves analysis of how learners communicated successfully and their limits in communication process.

Teaching oral skills includes teaching grammar, vocabulary, communication basics, cultural information and also focus on sub-skills like listening. Speaking skills will help learners to use language in day-to-day communication for its effective use. Teaching speaking makes teacher to discover strategies in direct teaching and teacher will have freedom to use the effective technique according to learner's level. Activities like Role plays on different situation of life make learner to expose himself to spoken communication and feel confident to converse with others in daily life.

Difficulties teaching speaking skills in the current scenario

It is challenging for teachers to teach speaking skills with various speaking activities as they might face many problems during the course of teaching in traditional classrooms. The challenges can be from external sources like teacher and learner confidence levels. If one of them lacks confidence, it causes hurdle in the learning language. Large classroom affects the efficiency of teaching speaking in the classroom with noise and disturbance of other classes. The next important issue is seating arrangement of the learners as in India we find large number of students in classrooms and is always suggested to shift to open area and student monitors for each group for student's progress.

Native language effect can be clearly visible in the classrooms, which is another important hurdle in teaching speaking. It can be overcome by encouraging students to speak target language and give rewards who speak more target language in the classroom. According to David Graddol (1997, 2000), "It is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economics and management, new literatures and entertainment genre." Time is another main issue to address in the speaking activities as syllabi completion is the important factor in classrooms. Making passive students to drive towards learning speaking is time consuming issue and it can be solved with student pairs providing them definite role with well-designed activities.

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