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## **The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Achieving Standards in English Language Teaching**

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### **Abstract:**

First of all, the definition of ICT and its connection with language teaching in present days are to be mentioned in this paper and it highlights the role of ICT in achieving standards in teaching and learning of English language. It outlines the ways in which ICT can assist in achieving standards. Use of ICT as an essential subject matter is presented all through this paper. We come across more discussions about role of ICT in teaching English and its significance. Some advantages in the use ICT based teaching and learning environments in English language to teach the skills such as LSRW are to be examined. This paper will also explore how ICT based language teaching successful and effective one with necessary training for an effective adaptation of ICT in English teaching for achieving necessary standards. Finally the conclusions are drawn by means of the review of literature indicated.

**Keywords: ICT, English language Teaching, Standards, Language Skills, achievement.**

ICT Stands for "Information and Communication Technologies." ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It is similar to Information Technology, but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephony and other communication mediums. ICTs stand for information and communication technologies and are defined, for the purposes of this primer, as a "diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information." Information and communication technology, or ICT, is defined as the combination of informatics technology with other related technologies, specifically communication technology.

### **ICT's connection with language teaching in present days**

At present almost all facets of modern life, in teaching of various professional and educational, entertainment subjects such as engineering, medicine, law, management, arts along language studies essentially connected with modern and innovative technologies. Students in language and science classes are already not only computer literate, but also they are becoming the pioneers of change for the future of modern education. Many ICT services and courses connected with education are on offer in most of the world universities and other

educational institutions in an attempt to cater the needs of higher standards both in learning and in teaching of modern languages, especially English.

### **ICT based teaching and learning features:**

One of Information Communication Technology based learning and teaching's basic characteristics are the possibility for students to access the contents and materials all the time from everywhere. In order to participate an online training course for learning of English language, it just is necessary to have only a computer connected to the Internet. Various students who live in secluded and far places may participate in a course avoiding the possibility of being excluded by training offers available to the very few ones. There is another key advantage of ICT based learning is flexibility in the personalization of the training process according to the students' learning styles, competencies and the definite objectives each is to achieve. With the use of particular software, instructors have the opportunity to supervise the results of the students' work, the level achieved by each and the possibility to update their online documents such as notes, images, videos. The most prevalent instruments that assure learners' interactivity and as a result the motivation to learn are:

Student can exchange useful information on particular topics with the help of online facilities like forums. Usually the forum moderator makes certain that the exchange of various viewpoints and beliefs don't go outside the set objectives and topics. Online chat rooms and various mailing lists stand for important socialization moments. Usually the chat room and mailing list administrators should provide detailed information such as their next meetings and they should act like a filter for the informal requests of feedback during the communication process. These chat rooms and mailing lists connect the virtual community members with common interests and individuals charged with working on projects in a group setting.

ICT based language learning develops both synchronously and asynchronously. In the former case, learners may ask questions of the teacher during a videoconference in real time and through the Internet live classrooms either by text or by audio when the internet computer connection is equipped with a microphone and speaker. In the later context, communication is asynchronous when learners communicate with teachers via email, through discussion forums or when reading various course materials which is available online according to their own needs and schedules. So, the key-concept is "interactivity between students and teacher", which is perceived as the opportunity for students to motivate the teaching process and to be motivated by it.

The mixture of multiple approaches to learning is very prevalent now a day. This mixed model of learning approach is called 'blended learning' which combines technology based learning with other traditional resources in order to combine the flexibility of the new tools and the functionality of the traditional ones such as the classroom setting and paper material for retaining the best features of each. This 'blended learning' has great significance today with its useful objectives. The main objective of this 'blended' model is to use various resources, like alternating face-to-face sessions to increase motivation and to share what has been learned, individual moments to test and strengthen what has been learned according to the needs of the individual, peer interaction and tutoring. In this mixed kind of approach, the learners as well as the teacher have to know the use of traditional ways and modern or

technological aspects like computer, LCD monitors, speakers, along with Overhead Projectors.

### **ICT can assist in achieving standards in English Language Teaching and Learning:**

At present days, English teachers and learners require effective new methods for lifelong learning based on access at any time and from any place. Particularly Internet-based language learning increasingly will gain importance in the future for lifelong and adult continuing education (Hutten et al, 2005). The combination of the need for continuous learning and unprecedented technological innovation in communications has supported online distance education approaches to the forefront of educational practices (Garrison, 2000). Higher education faces an era of mass graduation at a time of rapid ICT development and deals with five important issues:

- (a) All time access with ICT, higher education can widen access to include students at a distance.
- (b) ICT promotes all time engagement of learning and enquiry about concerned subjects of education.
- (c) ICT based learning and teaching promotes community through online educational, social network programmes and applications.
- (d) ICT plays a prominent role in designing appropriate curriculum and syllabus for all kinds of learners.
- (e) ICT can also help in reducing *cost* of various infrastructural tools for teaching and learning of English language.

Eventually, ICT as an indispensable tool to enable language education to face its challenges for effective learning is a skill for life along with good listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Based on the idea that ICT can give power to language learners' autonomy and self-directed learning, Lim (2004) defines five stages of the inquiry-based learning process:

- (1) Learners articulate their own problems or questions.
- (2) Learners plan and design their problem-solving strategies within a certain time frame.
- (3) Learners explore resources for solving problems using their background knowledge.
- (4) Learners synthesize resources and provide solutions.
- (5) Learners discuss the implications for further refinement.

An important principle of life-long learning is the ability for self-direction (Flores & Flores, 2003).

### **Using Internet as a transfer and collaborative tool:**

It is fundamental to believe the Internet as a medium through which it is possible to access useful study material, essays, and articles that concern the main course topic. It is not possible to consider ICT without accounting for the use of the Internet as a collaborative means through which it is possible to set up virtual communities for English language teaching and learning. For this reason, it is possible to make use of forums, chat rooms, discussion groups,

and audio and videoconferences etc. Another way of put together resources is to publish the results of group plans so that they can be downloaded.

### **Use of synchronous and asynchronous models:**

The potential of ICT and the Internet is well exploited by language education especially when educational training is delivered in both synchronous and asynchronous forms that are well integrated with the various applications of the ICT and the various forms of learning. If it is true that the structure of individual learning appears to be connected mainly to asynchronous interaction, the latter can also be used as a collaborative method. In particular, even if online forums and online discussion groups do not imply the live presence of the participants, they are nonetheless connected to the idea of training as a social process. These mechanisms are well exploited only through synchronous interaction in which a traditional classroom setting is created, where every learner can take part and be heard by everyone else in real time, asking questions to the instructor and addressing each other. The teaching activity and tutorship are facilitated by the spontaneity of synchronous interaction. 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.

### **Some future trends in ICT based language classrooms:**

One challenge in language education is that of adapting various “student-centred approaches” to ICT based classrooms, and the following future trends can be highlighted:

- (a) **ICT provides all time learning opportunities:** ICT supports ‘anytime and anywhere’ learning frontier created by ICT based online learning communities. Educational institutions can help all kinds of learner to become lifelong learners, recognizing that educational / learning opportunities are available throughout their lives. Online ICT based learning provides answers to the problems of availability such as accessibility and cost; and the demand for flexibility in the aspects like time, place, and pace of language learning; technology-mediated learning and online learning will become major vehicles for fulfilling the needs of life-long learning (Beller, 1998).
- (b) **ICT supports constructive language learning:** The theory of constructivism “views the central problem in explaining cognitive development as one of understanding how the mind succeeds in constructing relationships among objects and events” (Lefrancois, 1999, p. 48). Constructivism also views that human beings *are* active learners who construct their knowledge on experience and on their efforts to give meaning to that experience (Frank, Lavy, & Elata, 2003). Therefore, constructive learning might be an appropriate and relevant theory for practice in the ICT based modern age particularly.
- (c) **Paperless virtual learning environment:** In the future, most of the educational courses will increasingly become paperless and all course materials including with syllabus and assignment will be included on a course Web page, so that students can visit the Website that will become an “open door” to the classroom. At present, teachers try to create a sense of community in the classroom; in the near future, the Website will create a sense of community among class members, and it will become a

great way to inform and engage students across the curriculum in what this class is doing.

### **Various benefits of ICT based language learning:**

ICT provided many benefits to both teachers and learners. Cheong (2002) and Scanlon, Jones, Butcher, Greenberg, Ross, Murphy, and Tosunoglou (1996) refer to the most important ICT based language learning benefits that are listed below:

- (a) Educational expenses can be reduced and the minimization of the personnel commuting and travelling can be achieved.
- (b) ICT provides an opportunity to establish a dynamic educational context.
- (c) There is a great possibility of adjusting the parameters of the educational material to the idiosyncrasy of the educating groups with the help of ICT in language classrooms.
- (d) ICT based content is fully up-to-date and reliable.
- (e) Nowadays language learning is continuously available on all times basis, i.e. availability from anywhere at any time.
- (f) ICT helps in prompt commencement of language courses and no unnecessary delays will take place in the courses.
- (g) ICT helps in creation of virtual communities and communities of language learning are supported.
- (h) ICT based evaluation is most accurate, reliable and speedy in nature.
- (i) ICT brings dynamic role changes in stakeholders (i.e., lecturers, students, parents, etc.).

### **Role of ICT in teaching English and its characteristics:**

According to Rosenberg (2001), an ICT based e-learning system has the following characteristics:

- ✓ It is based on a network,
- ✓ It focuses on the broadest view of learning
- ✓ The participants use computers to get information and knowledge

ICT based E-learning is not the end to language classroom training. In fact, language classroom training will be redefined to focus on those aspects of skill learning that are best accomplished when:

- ✓ Person-to-person interactions are required
- ✓ Opportunities for learning improvements need to be identified
- ✓ Team efforts are a priority
- ✓ Evaluating tasks
- ✓ Participation of experts with the group is needed

### **Conclusion:**

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) as an integrated language teaching and learning model implies that all the possibilities offered by the third generation correspondence language education are combined with the traditional training model. With the use of ICT both in learning and teaching become synchronous interaction which is

fundamental in setting new mechanisms similar to those offered by the face-to-face model. An important mode, cooperative learning, typical in virtual communities, using certain techniques such as collaboration, cooperation, peer tutoring, and so forth, emphasizes the ICT based language learning value both in training processes and in educational ones. Everything considered the possibility of realizing standards in ELT is mainly due to the introduction of ICTs to the teaching / learning processes. In contrast, the traditional classroom setting is still valuable thanks to the advantages offered by instant feedback. ICT based language learning allows for widespread classrooms that provide qualitative, quantitative, and economical advantages. Traditional language teaching is a one-way process which follows a well-defined time frame and which models the contents on the basis of the users' results. Moreover, instructors follow a logical path and "force" the users to follow it. In the last generation of traditional language education, it is the student who constructs his / her own logical path: listening is on-demand and it is necessary to take advantage of multimedia tools. Organizing educational training courses by using a single learning format means to exploit all the advantages given by the integration of both formats. Several ICT based e-learning processes have developed based on a previously-existing traditional learning format. However, if the course materials are simply an online version of those used in traditional training courses, an obstacle both to interaction and ICT based learning may be created because the situation is not taking advantage of the new method of learning. It is necessary to practice the traditional learning models in order to create new ones that can exploit the new educational possibilities offered by the utilization of information and communication technologies.

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