



Impact Of Internet And Social Media On English Language Teaching/ Learning (ELT)

Khushbu Kumari¹, Prof. (Dr.) Suman Sinha², Prof. (Dr.) Ravi Kumar Sinha³

Research Scholar¹, B.R.A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur; Professor² of English, R. N. College, Hajipur; Professor³ of English, R. N. College, Hajipur

Abstract

In the twenty-first century the advancement and rapid development in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought change in use and pedagogy of English language. It has also enabled new forms of discourse as well as knowledge and new ways to create and participate in communities. Freeman and Anderson have pointed out in their book 'Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching' -

“Rapid evolution of communication technologies has changed language pedagogy and language use, enabling new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship and new ways to create and participate in communities (Kern 2006:183, cited in Freeman and Anderson 2019: 200)”.

Internet and Social Media are the part of ICT that have tremendous effect on daily activities of human life. People spend much of their time on internet and social media for various purposes like entertainment, acquiring knowledge, sharing and collecting data and information, and so on. It provides lots of opportunities and creates attractive environment to learn English language easily. At the same time it also provides the liberty to distort the standard format of language use. Internet enables the users share information, ideas, data and services through various platforms of ICT. It connects billions of users across the globe.

Social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and so on provide a space to create an interesting and entertaining environment to learn English language efficiently, as English is used frequently on these platforms. Internet and social media facilitate and motivate the learners to learn English language in an unconscious way. English language plays a crucial role in modern life and is also influencing each and every field of human activities like education, trade and commerce, art and culture, research and development, science and technology, administration and jurisdiction and many more. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the role of various internet services like online music, email, webpages as well as some educational websites and social media platforms in gaining competence in the use of English language, in both spoken and written forms. ICT encourages the learners to develop the four language skills, like listening, speaking, reading, and writing and components (pronunciation, vocabulary, phrase, sentence formation and its use in proper context) of English language. It can be practised by language learners through constant use of audio- visual aids, emails, chats, messages, reading a novel in English, visiting e-library, the meaning of emoji or icon and logo. It helps in interacting and communicating with English language experts on internet.

Keywords: - Communication Skills, ELT, ICT, Internet, Social Media, Technology.

Introduction

Globally, internet, social media and English language are connected as they contribute and actively participate for reshaping the scenario of the world. In the digital world today, information and communication technology (ICT) and English language are influencing all the aspects of human life and changing the picture of the world. Technology enhances the experiences of language teaching/ learning and contributes in reshaping our knowledge to understand the structure and application of English language. In the era of globalization, English has secured the status of an international or link language among all existing languages. In India, English plays a vital role as second language and official language. It is a window to the world where its users experience the aesthetic beauties of the world and understand the different norms of culture and tradition of the other countries. It also provides the opportunities to the speakers of English language in gaining knowledge in various disciplines like in legal, technical, scientific education, research and others all across the globe. It also enables its speakers to link or set up themselves intellectually, culturally, economically, commercially and socially with all countries. In present days technology has become part and parcel of human life and allows the users especially the speakers of English language to share and to exchange their memories, opinions, emotions and the daily experiences of life.

Internet

To access the web pages, blogs, messages, information, platforms of social media like twitter, Instagram, YouTube and others, the connectivity of the internet is required. Internet is known as network of networks because it connects millions of computers and servers at the same time by using the standard Transmission Control Protocol (TCP)/ Internet Protocol (IP) for multipurpose work. Protocols allow computers to connect and exchange information over the internet. The term Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) are different in nature to each other. The millions of web pages containing text, pictures, and graphics are available in World Wide Web but internet is a means to access them by using a software browser. World Wide Web (WWW) is a hub of information from where users can access any type of information over the internet by hyperlinks and Uniform Resource locator (URL). The collection of web pages is known as websites. Internet serves many services like e-mail, news groups, instant messaging file sharing and file transfer protocol (FTP). To get the tremendous experience over internet and to access or execute the task and understand the instructions of the technology, competence in English language is essential.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

In this digital world, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provides ample facilities such as social media, internet, authentic websites, apps, search-engines etc. to grasp the knowledge in every field of life and in every subject. Internet is a part of ICT. It plays a vital role in many sectors and development of human deeds like net-banking, information sharing, research work, entertainment, news broadcasting, pharmaceuticals, weather forecasting, education, travelling, business etc. In the world of technology no one can survive without using the technology because it effects all facets of life. People use internet for different purposes according to their interest like online news services, listening music, cultural information, educational research, publication and journals, distance education, libraries, student related higher education information, reading books and novels. It also provides platforms for question – answer session, participating in discussion and teaching etc. Therefore, internet is the most significant part of modern life as it helps one to take advantage of the information and communication technology, English language is necessary. Technology provides some characteristic features for English language learners to improve their communication skills.

Social media

The Welsh journalist Jon Ronson observes about social media in his work, ‘So you have been Publicly Shamed’ that “The great thing about social media was how it gave a voice to voiceless people” (<https://www.theguardian.com>). Social media is the collection of online communication platforms which are dedicated to community-based information, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. People are using many platforms as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram,

Facebook, Snapchat, Telegram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn etc. to share and to express their thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings, knowledge, skills and experiences according to their need and interest. In this digital world everyone uses internet and social media to put some views and interact to each other on issues related to social, political, historical, philosophical, psychological, educational, cultural and traditional and many more activities. Technology keeps one updated. It also contributes a lot in nation building, preventing corruption, rescuing anyone's life and establishing good governance. If people want to exchange their views, ideas and information all across the world, especially, in English language, effective communication skills and competence in language use are required. No one can access the social media platforms without language. While sharing the content and information people use many signs, logos, symbols, emojis, hashtags and words to communicate. Signs, symbols, emojis and hashtags are very important for effective and successful communication. Nowadays, the speakers of English language are accessing these platforms of internet and social media very easily to share the information, to enjoy, to entertain and to make some memories by capturing the significant moments of life. Many educational applications and websites enable the language learners learn English language very easily. Technology is changing the way of English language teaching/learning rapidly. It allows the users to access the learning resources through various multimedia platforms at their own convenience and to explore beyond the boundaries of traditional classroom. It also provides the facilities of text as well as audio forms of communication. Twitter fiction and flash fiction promotes the short form contents and help users to interact with literature.

Status of English Language

According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle – “man is by nature a social animal” because all human beings have some messages to convey or to execute their task or work. Therefore, they cannot live in isolation or without communication and for it language is necessary. Language is dynamic in nature because the life style of human beings goes on changing from time to time so language also changes along with it. In “Lives of the English Poets”, Dr. Samuel Johnson has observed that “Language is the dress of thought”, (Johnson 1858: 42). English Language provides an opportunity to see the world through different perspectives because it opens the door to get job at national or international level. It also helps to understand the norms of culture, society and tradition. English language is essential for all sectors like military, bank, travel, education, business, film industry etc. and influences all aspects of life. It helps learners enhance their cognitive, imaginative, and creative skills. It facilitates and motivates its learners to understand the different types of culture and tradition of the other countries. English language enhances the rapid growth and development of any country. In the era of globalization English language helps in acquiring space in international market. Every communicator needs to know the significance of language because it is essential for effective and meaningful communication.

“Language is a patterned system of arbitrary sound signals, characterized by structure dependence, creativity, displacement, duality and cultural transmission”. – (Aitchison 1978, cited in Das 2011: 20)

Structure of English Language

English language in nature is creative, extendable and modifiable. It is complex structurally and culturally transmitted. It is a means of self-expression and communication. Language is arbitrary, symbolic, non-instinctive, conventional, systematic, verbal and vocal. It is a form of social behavior, and is open-ended.

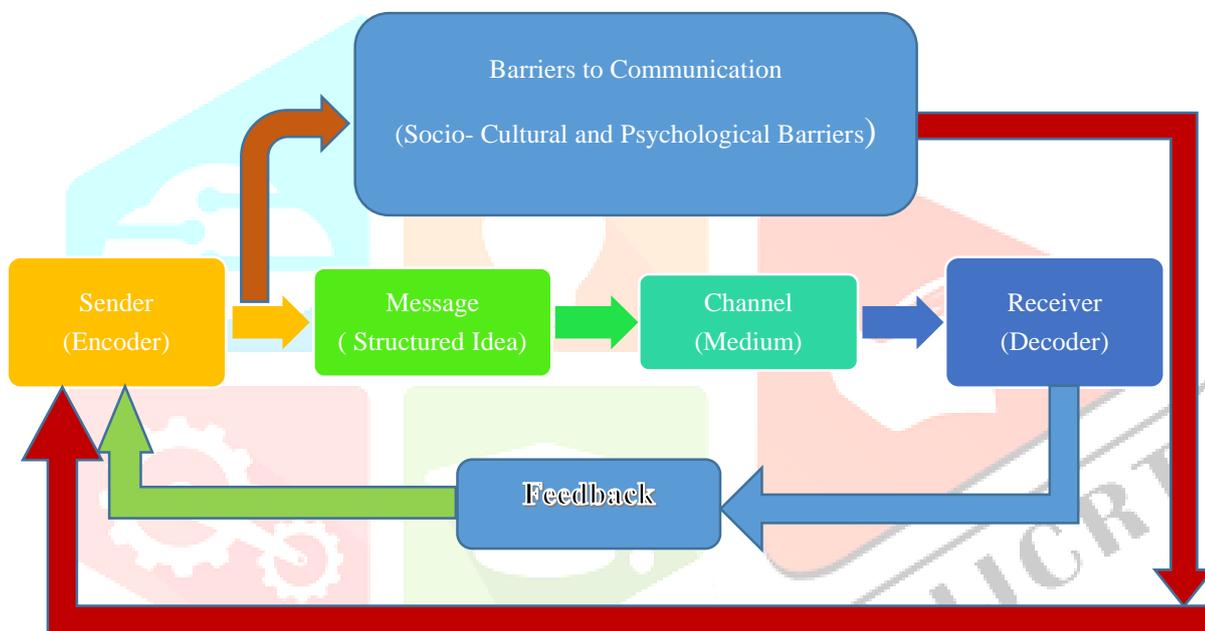
“A true picture of language can only be had by seeing languages more objectively. Such a view will emphasize the immense complexity, the arbitrariness, and the high degree of adequacy for their purposes...” (Gleason 1955: 3).

Scholars from various disciplines have interpreted language, its nature, structure and complexities. Linguistics, a scientific study of language, studies language at various level like phonology studies the system of speech sounds of language. Morphology is the study of the formation of words; syntax is the study of the arrangement of words and phrases to create sentences. Sociology is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society; Psychology is the scientific study of the human brain or mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context; Philology is the branch of

knowledge that deals with the structure, historical development, and relationships of a language or languages; Etymology is the study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history and others.

“There is no one approach which can comprehend the whole and so serve as a starting point for comparison of the different structures which can be composed upon it” (Gleason 1955 : 3).

Communication as an inborn quality and continuous process makes the progress of society, culture and civilization. It is both art and science. As art it is the ability or skill that requires more practice than learning. It guides the communicator to achieve the objective and goal. For accuracy as well as effective communication, the principles of science is necessary because science studies the law of probability and explains phenomena. It establishes relationship between cause and effects and its principles are universally applicable. It concerns with behavioral aspects of social and human relationships. It is symbolic because it involves not only words but also signs, symbols and gestures accompany the spoken words. In fact, our ability to use symbol makes communication possible. It is only successful when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information desired.



Process of Communication

According to Ordway Tead:

“Communicating is a composite of information given and received, of a learning experience in which certain attitudes, knowledge, and skills change, carving with them alterations of behaviors, of listening effort by all involved, of sympathetic fresh examination of issues by the communicator himself, of a sensitive interacting point of view, leading to a higher level of shared understanding and common intention” (Rayudu 2016: 2).

Teaching and Learning aids for English as a Second language

The process of English Language Teaching/ Learning is very complex because in India it is treated as second/ third language. For the learners of second language its significance at national/ international level has created many challenges. To reduce the hurdles of learning English language as the second or third language, internet and social media can be used as a tool or weapon for fulfilling the objective of ELT. Internet and social media provide various options like audio book, podcast for stories and speeches in English, webinar, English movies and songs, E-books, E-libraries, E-content, online classes and applications for ELT, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), English educational websites, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), E-mailing, chatting and comments and so on. All four communication skills

(listening, speaking, reading and writing) can be practised or trained by using the internet and social media platforms regularly. In the virtual world of technology there are many platforms and tools available for understanding the complex format of ELT very conveniently.

Listening skill

Listening skill is a requisite for language learning. The electronic media like film clips, music, podcast of a lecture, newspaper articles, motivational speech, listening a song etc. facilitate and instruct the learners to develop and improve their listening skill. While using audio tools learners need to listen and imitate the words, phrases, idioms, sentence structures, synonyms and antonyms very attentively so that English language learners can imbibe and remember those things for the accurate use of language. It also helps in improving their pronunciation. If a learner is unable to use accurate English language and to communicate meaningfully then he/she cannot send messages successfully and it may be a cause of barriers of communication. Audio tools can be accessed very easily over the internet and social media.

Speaking skill

Speaking skill can be improved by sending a message orally. Speakers can enhance this skill by practicing and speaking. They can also join the online groups for group discussion, debate, talk and chat. Some national and international educational institutes provide many English language teaching/learning apps like Coursera, Open Yale courses, International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC); websites like Duolingo, BBC and many more e-contents. The learners of English Language may record their voice or speech and they can also analyze, interpret, revamp and improve the error of articulating the words and sentences.

Reading skill

Reading skill can be developed by using some social networking sites like WhatsApp and Facebook messenger, LinkedIn, BBC News, WordPress, Google blogger, Twitter, Wikipedia, Online dictionary etc. English Language learners can read online novels, short-stories, poems, mythological books, comics, daily news, motivational quotations etc. according to their interest. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs focus on specific elements of language such as vocabulary or grammar practice. Many programs have a reading comprehensions focus or provide guidance and practice for improving pronunciation.

Writing skill

Writing skill can be developed by exercises or activities like texting or writing a message, e-mail, article, journal, news etc. English language learners can check spelling errors, appropriate words and sentence structures by using educational websites and apps. For written communication people also use sign language including symbols, signs, icon, logo, graph, emoji, picture and many more for an effective and a successful communication. Now in the world of information and communication technology sign language leaves the deep impact on human mind and communicator. Technology users use it to send a direct and an accurate message to one another because each and every logos, icons, emojis, signs etc. have the meaning of sign language delves deep, for instance Twitter has a symbol of a bird which means it has same quality – a series of short, high-pitched calls or sound; emoji like drop of tears denotes sad mood; logo of pen or book denotes education and many more. Many internet and social media users use it rapidly because it is more convenient, quick, easy and attractive way of expression. Technology users also learn and use many words without knowing the meanings of words and sentences including comments, subscribe, notification, history etc. and some abbreviations like NVW- Never mind; OMW- On My Way etc. because it saves time and easy to convey a message candidly. English language learners can enrich their vocabulary, sentence structure, idiom and phrase by using internet and social media.

Instances of technology in ELT

Various online platforms that contribute in English language teaching/ learning (ELT) are as follows: -

- Online Learning Platforms like –
 1. Coursera: - Coursera is a massive open online course (MOOC) platform that offers online courses and degree programmes in many disciplines like AI, business, data science, computer science, health, information technology, art and science, humanities, language learning and so on from top international/ foreign universities. Several English language courses are offered by this app like ‘English Language Specialization’ by University of Pennsylvania that covers language skills, vocabulary and grammar; ‘English Language Teaching’ by University of Michigan focuses on methodologies and practices of English language; ‘Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages’ by University of California, Berkeley is specially for non – native speakers; ‘English Grammar and Style’ by University of California, Berkeley covers English grammar, syntax and style; ‘Academic English’ by University of California, Irvine is important for communication in English and academic writing and so on.
 2. Duolingo: - Duolingo is an online English language learning app that forms a habit of language learning with the feature of games like fun, entertainment challenges and reminders through Owl, Duo and so on.
 3. edX’: - edX offers English language courses and certifications. It is non profitable online learning course from foreign universities and colleges. It has 429 courses in English language, 40 in Spanish, 15 in French and 2 in Turkish.
 4. Swayam is a free online education programme initiated by Government of India. Various courses are available for ELT and for other disciplines too. It is operated in collaboration with National Coordinators like AICTE, NPTEL, CEC, NCERT, NIOS, IGNOU, INI, IIMB, and NITTTR. It provides certificates after the completion of course. It has also time flexibility because video lecture, printed materials, and assessment are used for teaching/ conducting online classes. An online discussion session is organized for clearing the doubts.
 5. BBC learning English: - This platform offers free audio, video, and written materials according to learners’ needs. It is used in many countries like India, China, Latin America and Bangladesh etc.
- English Language Learning Apps like Babble Rosetta Stone, Hello Talk, SpeakX, and Preply provide the facilities of free conversation with AI and language partners by using text and audio – visual aids.
- Virtual Classrooms and Video Conferencing are also possible through Google Meet, Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft team. These platforms provides the opportunities of ELT virtually and privileges of live conversation and discussion with diverse language speakers.
- English Language Learning Games like English Central, Mondly, Words of Wonders, English Skills, English Grammar Star, ELSA Speak: English Learning, and so on are also available for English language learning.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chatbots like English Language Learning bots, Speech Recognition Technology and Chatbots enhance learners’ language skill and help in chatting with AI.
- Online Resources and Websites like TOFEL, EFLU, English Central, and English as a Second Language (ESL) Library are helpful in learning English language.

Conclusion

The English language learners can learn English by using technology, Internet and social media as these motivate and facilitate them to learn language in attractive, innovative and creative way. They also entertain and create an enjoyable environment for English language teaching/ learning. English is used as a second language in India but in many countries it is used as native language; internet and social networking sites including YouTube, MX Player, Snapchat, Slide Share and many more provide some audio-video lectures, stories and speech encouraging the language learners to choose these platforms according to their need as well as interest and improve communication skills.

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