
ICT AND TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN UG AND PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES OF A P STATE - A SCENARIO

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Abstract: The present study aims at studying the impact of Technology on teaching-learning at UG and Professional colleges. The study is confined to a normative survey method and analytical approach. We propose to follow multistage stratified random sampling technique for the selection of various subjects of study namely colleges and students/teachers. The research is to examine the problems and the impact of technology on the second language learners and to determine the facts, requirements, advantages and disadvantages and suggest the possible measures to overcome the lapses, for optimum use of Technology in the teaching-learning process. This research will also help to bridge the gap between the potential of technology and current classroom practice.

Key words: ELL, ICT, Internet, Mana TV, Rubric,

Introduction: The teaching and learning of a language is intimately connected with its use in real life. English is not an indigenous language of India, but historical factors have played a role in entrenching this language as a second language in the country. Though the quantum of speakers of this language occupies a small portion, most work of significance in education, science and technology, law and administration is still carried out in English. Above all, the global role of English in today's world connected by the internet has also accentuated the need for proficiency in the language as a matter of economic survival. While soon after independence, most educationists thought that it is enough for English to serve as the library language in the country, today we have moved towards empowering learners with functional competence in the language. Many lacunae appear at the college-learning stage and lack of competence in English is attributed to unsatisfactory methods and tools used to teach the language. Teacher training workshops are regularly organized to equip teachers with necessary methods, techniques and skills and also the research is geared up towards a better understating of the processes at work in second language learning in environments where the language is not used in personal and social domains. I. Background a. Who are the learners? The Government of Andhra Pradesh has established more than 250 Government Degree Colleges and about 700 professional colleges in the state. Most of the students in these Colleges are a heterogeneous group of first generation learners. Communication competence of these students in English is abysmally poor. By the time the students come to the UG or Engineering level, most of the students might have studied English as one of the course subjects for seven to eight years, yet their communicative competence is not upto the desirable level. They can reproduce essays and short answers which they learn by heart for the sake of examinations. Usually

English is considered one of the other subjects but not as a language. Hence, the English language is also studied for the sake of securing marks in their examinations instead of communication. b. What is the setting? With the recent initiatives of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the English Curriculum is being revised and reformed frequently. With the result of the revisions, the communicative components are incorporated in the curriculum. Actually, the English faculties, who teach English Language at this level, do not have any say in designing the syllabus or evaluation system. These are decided by the affiliating university. c. What are the course goals? In these conditions the task before the English faculty is that they should design web-based and student-centred lessons and activities through which they can teach fluency, accuracy and appropriacy to the students by using the prescribed text book and also various activities in the Language laboratory. The teachers while trying to complete the prescribed syllabus for the year end examinations, they also various communicative activities in the class the language laboratories for achieving the goals of speaking competence among the students. The students have a deep desire to communicate in English. But the system, the curriculum, the system of evaluation and the circumstances in which they live do not encourage their speaking abilities. In these circumstances the teachers try to create the required ambience by conducting group and pair activities in the class for encouraging oral communication with each other in English. Besides conducting the class room activities, the teacher makes use of multimedia content. The reason is that the students who are born and brought up in an environment where English is hardly used for communicative purposes and so they do not have any exposure to situational use of language except listening to it through lectures in the class room. The multimedia content which is incorporated in the

curriculum gives them an exposure to situational English A Perspective of Language Teaching and Learning The students who have been studying English for many years failing to speak are write on their own is the main concern of the teachers. For years together the student remained a passive listener in the English class. Most of the time it is the teacher who speaks and the student never gets an opportunity to speak. The disproportionate student - teacher ratio makes it an up-hill task for the teacher to conduct the class room activities. In these circumstances the Government of Andhra Pradesh has established English Language Labs in almost all the government colleges in the state. The government also gave a special importance to in-service training to English faculty in students centered teaching through the English Language Fellow Programme of the US State Department and also technical training in operating English Language Laboratories. The trainings imparted to the teachers have brought in a paradigm shift in the class room.

III. ICT Initiatives, Needs Assessment The Higher Education Council of Andhra Pradesh State (APSCHE) felt importance of introducing the ICT based teaching of English Language. The text books are redesigned with lot of audio content, and for the first time listening and speaking activities are formally made part of the curriculum. English Language Laboratories are established by the government in Government Degree Colleges and the managements in the Engineering colleges. All the English Teachers in the state are trained under "Train the Trainer" programme. The government also felt that it can provide job opportunities to the students in Multinational Companies if their skills are upgraded. The MNCs started their hunt for candidates in Under Graduate and Engineering Colleges. But existing skill set of the students for conducted a survey for assessing the needs for redesigning English curriculum with ICT Initiatives in the State of AP English Language Laboratories (ELLS) The state-of-the-art English Language Laboratories have been established in government degree colleges in the year 2008. The English class has shifted from shabby and fixed lecture halls to air-conditioned English Language Labs. The labs are installed with Globarena Software with interactive modules in three platforms: English Lab, Career Lab and Aptitude Lab. In the English Lab module the student has the greater advantage of leaning at his own pace. The student can ask for any particular topic from the given list and learn on his own. First of all, the language lab motivates the student to spend time on his personal learning. The student can enjoy the thrill of recording his own voice and listening to it again in pronunciation practice module. The English teacher

has the wider opportunity to change his monotonous lecture into a colourful multimedia presentation. With the advent of the ELLs the role of the teacher has changed from teacher to a facilitator. He facilitates the learners do activities in the lab. He also has the full control over the students by allotting and withdrawing the topics. The teacher has the wider scope for creating his own materials. The rapport between the teacher and the students develops into a healthy learning atmosphere. It leads to cooperative learning. The student who was shy and full of inhibitions is motivated by the free access he is given the multimedia content. The initial inhibitions are gradually overcome and the confidence levels of the students grow day by day. In no time they get into the practice and slowly involve themselves in the activity. The students of art stream are relatively hesitant because computer is something unfamiliar to them. Once the exercises created on hotpotatoes (hotpot.uvic.ca) and anvil are demonstrated on the screen, the students find it fun to work on a system for learning the language. Jawahar Knowledge Centres (JKCs) Jawahar Knowledge Centres are the modern finishing schools which prepare students for campus recruitment drives. It is a training and placement centre with computer lab and internet facility. The students are imparted training in employability skills. The English Lecturers mentor the students in communication skills, interview skills and personality development aspects. This is the platform when students are videos downloaded from youtube.com on various linguistic and cultural concepts. Mana-tv (sapnet) mana-tv is the educational channel of Society for Andhra Pradesh Network (www.sapnet.gov.in). The Government of Andhra Pradesh invited the most competent teachers to teach topics with help of most appropriate teaching aids on the Mana-TV. Changes made The students who have been shy and hesitant so far, have come forward and actively participated in the activity. In addition to the films that we showed e.g. "Mind Your Language" and other audio clippings on situational conversations from <http://www.eslpod.com> and the Voice of America, give students understanding of conversational English. For testing their communicative performance we have prepared rubrics. As per the rubrics the students vary between those who quickly pick up speaking skills to those who slowly show up some change.

Conclusion:

The gaps in curriculum and the class room environment can be bridge with the use of technology in the class room. The use of technology promotes learner autonomy while ensuring the teacher control to see that the learners do not lose

track of their course objectives. The course will continue for another four weeks. By the time the course comes to an end I hope the students will definitely their communicative competence. The course has given me and my students an opportunity to use technology for teaching and learning English. Though some of my students are reluctant to do all these activities, my colleagues support me a lot in this attempt and joined in encouraging the students. In days to come I shall make use of the techniques and strategies to a full extent in using technology for teaching English.

Resources

- www.eslpod.com/
- www.youtube.com
- www.hotpotatoes.net
- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/improving-speaking-skills-with-poetry-podcasting?fd=0>
- <http://www.esl-galaxy.com/speaking.html>
- www.edfac.inimelb.edu.au/research/resources/student_res/postscriptfiles/vol3/vol3_1_gong1.pdf
- <http://www.talkenglish.com/>
- <http://www.real-english.com/new-lessons.asp>
- http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/speaking_hub.htm

- <http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/speaking/teaching-ideas/>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/VOALearningEnglish?feature=mhum#g/p>

<http://www.youtube.com> has become an oxygen chamber for most of the ICT practicing teachers of English. Though it is basically a non-educational website lately it has become a potential tool in class room teaching with global content. It provides linguistic, motivational and cultural information. This rich resourcefulness of this site has made it an inevitable tool in ICT based Language Teaching and Learning activity. The 21st century learner expects a lot from the English teacher but the reality is that most of the teachers fail to provide what the learners of the present generation require. The potential of the tool is still to be fully explored. What all the teachers can access on the site they are completely westernized and alien to the Indian student. There is dire need for customizing the available videos for the Indian class room or the teacher must try to create local videos on the local issues. Once the content is familiar, learning becomes fun and the learner learns the target language without being conscious of it. Though using videos for teaching language is not at all new, what it offers makes the English Language Teaching fresh and novel all the time.

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