I C T as a tool for English Language Learning and Study of Literature

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The introduction of Edu-sat, Naipunya Nidhi, e-governance and e-content is a giant leap of the Department of Higher Education in Karnataka; it is no less than a revolution in the field of higher education. The government of India launched National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) in the year 2009. This step gives a countrywide connectivity and the display of e-content on the country's web portal of the Ministry of Human Resource Development – "Sakshat". Various technical, technological, managerial and commercial subjects use the ICT as a part of their development, but the traditional subjects like humanities, literature and language the field of higher education needs to bring up a further/ farther change. The paper focuses on the use of Information and Communication Technology as the tool in the teaching of Language competencies, Literary awareness and learning of other skills be made easy, worthwhile and creative for teachers, students and research scholars. Also the awareness of ICT could be a point for the confluence of inter-disciplinary studies resulting in the better learning and teaching atmosphere.

Introduction

The diversity of Indian sub-continent is a proper platform for the development of English as an associate official language and language of interstate and International communication bearing the link language status, this provides English a venerable status not only in India but also worldwide. English is the language of International trade, commerce,scientific advancement and technological revolution due to the Globalization. Knowledge of English is a pre-condition in the present scenario. The 'University Grants Commission' stresses the need and importance of English thus; "English is a language which is literature, humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge." But English is seen as the traditional subject by those who feel their future is safe in the Engineering, Medicine,

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commerce, Management and administration. The advent of ICT has forced the academia to revolutionize the way English language is taught, studied, and thought of in various circles locally and globally.

The teacher has to work hard to drive away the boredom and monotony attached with the class room teaching without ICT, he shall depend upon physical resources and electrical appliances to drive away the same. The use of ICT enriches the learning experience, the students get ample opportunities to see, listen, conceptualize, imagine, ponder, discuss, and interact as ICT is learner centered technology.

What is Information and communication Technology?

Many people have the misconception that "ICT is Computer and Computing related activity." According to Amin, "computers and their application play a significant role in modern information management," these "technologies and/or systems also comprise of the phenomenon that is commonly regarded as ICTs." According to Pelgrum, W.J and Law, N.,-"near the end of the 1980s, the term 'computers' was replaced by 'IT' (information technology) signifying a shift of focus from computing technology to the capacity to store and retrieve information. This was followed by the introduction of the term 'ICT' (information and communication technology) around 1992, when e-mail started to become available to the general public."According to a United Nations report (1999) "ICTs cover Internet service provision, telecommunications equipment and services, information technology equipment and services, media and broadcasting, libraries and documentation centres, commercial information providers, network-based information servicesand other related information and communication activities".Thus Satellites, Internet, e-resources(like N-list and Shodhganga- Inflibnet), Wi-Fi, Computers, CDs, Multimedia, YouTube , Social media like blogs, twitter, Facebook, and live chat sites are covered under this broad Umbrella Term.

The Influence and Coverage of ICT in teaching-learning Process:

Traditional methods of English Language and literature teaching are still dominant in majority of Indian schools, colleges and Postgraduate departments. The heterogeneity in English language learningadds to theteaching of various genres of literatureas they require different kinds of abilities and skills in the modes of teaching, research and learning. Thus the use of ICT in teaching, learning and research goes a long way when mixed with traditional and new mode of teaching, teacher readiness

and motivation of the research scholar. ICT has brought a lot of changes especially in the case of higher education. The student and teacher both feel motivated as ICT brings a new experience in the classrooms; the classrooms shall become more lively and interactive. Teachers can make use of present day gadgets like Smartphones, Tabs, Laptops, Power Point presentations, e-journal articles, bloggers and Internet services like YouTube to show movies, dramas and certain documentaries for the firsthand experience of the learner. ICT equips the rural teacher with modern and more useful gadgets as the rural areas which are backward get a lot of exposure to the resources until then not experienced by the rural student. The teacher could make use of all the web resources, repositories, e-resources, movies, dictionaries, and thesaurus and movie clippings. Teacher can create a combination of images, videos, audio, text and recitations to keep the students motivated thereby generating learning atmosphere. ICT resources reduce the burden of memorization and unnecessary repetition over the teacher, thereby making the class stress free and keeping the teacher motivated for further classes. The creativity of the ICT classes keeps the student interested in the class because of its variety, the student feels motivated to discuss, which leads to learning.

Recently many universities have joined together to construct a repository of all the articles and Theses under "Shodhganga-INFLIBNET". Using such resources the scholars could plan their research activities to meet the research requirements. The resources like INFLIBNET, Shodhganga, and literature and language blogs could be used extensively by the research scholars to gather information on the research topic. Whereas in the traditional system of research the scholar had to travel long distances, write a lot of letters and wait till the reply is received. This made the work not only hectic but also there was a lot of possibility same work done twice. According to Manali Jain- "Effective integration of ICT tools into the educational system is a challenging task and the success of NME-ICT depends on this, apart from other things. Ensuring quality, equity and access at the same time is a daunting task which needs to be fulfilled."

Use of ICT in teaching as a tool of change:

As an interactive and collaborative medium, ICT allows responding, composing, and publication to be easily shared and offers

students the opportunity to explore the language of texts more creatively and develop as speakers, writers and readers for an ever widening range of purposes and audiences. ICT can enable students to:

- Access information and respond to a widening range of texts
- Organizeand present information in a variety of forms
- Broaden the range of audiences for their work
- Compose a widening range of texts for a broad range of purposes
- Compose for real audiences. ICT can support them in their choice of genre for audience and purpose.
- Identify key characteristics and features of text
- Develop understanding of language and critical literacy (Becta, 2006, ICT in the Curriculum)

The use of ICT makes the class more lively and attractive by the use of multimedia and internet as the students could easily learn and understand the lessons. "Learning approaches using contemporary ICTs provide many opportunities for constructivist learning through their provision and support for resource-based, student centered settings and by enabling learning to be related to context and to practice (Berge, 1998; Barron, 1998)" quotes Amin.

The teacher could use the recitations and lectures available onYouTube to make the concept more easily accessible and understandable while teaching poetry and grammar, the students get a different and motivating atmosphere for learning. Certain EFL and TOEFL blogs and webs (for example-www.edufind.com) provide rules and directions on grammar aspects also some sites provide Cloze tests which would help teacher to make class more effective.

In the teaching of Prose and Short stories the teacher can show the clips of available stories, then using power point he can display points which are important, Figures of speech could be easily shown via comparison with other things.

For literary theory and Literary Criticism the teacher can make use of recordings of Interviews of philosophers and theorists available at BBC and YouTube, the students would involve themselves with the class easily. They might also be given assignments to search for further information through internet. The complex concepts could be made easy through access to various academic sites of other universities, one might

also arrange for e-interaction through various forums if necessity arises.

As done by some universities the colleges might also join hands in the endeavor to develop digital repositories and e-content with the help of academicians and scholars for authentic sources, so that the colleges can make use of them to enrich the knowledge of their students. The students and research scholars must be taught to make use of these resources and scholarly material in a proper way. Also they shall be given access to scholarly articles from the N-LIST and INFLIBNET. Psychological aspects concerning the use of ICT:

While encouraging the teachers to use the ICT and motivating the students to go through the experience of ICT learning, it is necessary to keep in mind the psychological perspectives of learning. The heterogeneity of the students shall be kept in mind, syllabus and ICT grading shall be planned according to the needs of individual learner more than content or the teacher. According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1998) "...there are two kinds of learner-related characteristics: "1) prerequisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and 2) other learner-related characteristics". Few "other" characteristics, as outlined by Rothwell and Kazanas, may include "the students' demographic characteristics, physiological qualities, aptitudes, experience, learning styles, attitudes, and value systems". The teacher shall bear in mind "Who he is teaching"? and "what is his learning style"? Hence it is advisable to know the types of intelligence the learner possesses.In 1983, Gardner described seven aspects of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal (the ability to understand other people), and intrapersonal (the ability tounderstand oneself) (Gardner, 1993). In this context of multiple intelligence and its application to ICT classroom, it is suitable to quote Heinich, "Teachers, curriculum planners, and media specialists should work together to design a curriculum in which students have the chance to develop these different aspects of intelligence. It also implies that students vary widely in terms of their strengths and weaknesses in each of these areas. A school adopting this approach would have students engaged in a much wider variety of methods and media than is typical now. The type of individualized instructional plan and records of progress implied in this approach lend themselves well to active learning methods, interactive technologies, and information management systems".(Heinich et al., 1996, p. 37)

There is digital divide existing between developed countries and developing countries as well as rural and urban areas of our country that needs to be bridged first through careful planning. ICT shall be made equally accessible to both rural and urban students. The teacher shall be equipped and trained in an appropriate manner and need. The ICT shall be equipped with teacher friendly local language packages so that the teacher feels motivated to use ICT in teaching as indicated in many cases there is teachers' inhibition to the use of ICT in regional languages and regional medium of instruction. There is government intervention in the access of ICT especially in rural areas; the NME-ICT launched and monitored by the government of India for urban and rural areas seems to be a positive factor in the development and connectivity. It focuses on access, skill development, better training, quality management, strengthening of infrastructure and equity across the nation.

To conclude, ICT has the caliber of bringing change in the current strategies of teaching social sciences, languages and literature. The above suggestions are mere a direction towards achievement of further goals in ICT, lot more changes and improvements can be brought in the use of ICT in the field of Education in India. The use of ICT in media, sports, business and news channels is a ready path for improvements in the trends of educational reforms. Thus ICT serves as the confluence of research and studies in multidisciplinary topics. We have a lot of scope for research and development in this field when compared to western institutions who have been using ICT since a long time.

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