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Research Paper

# Improving English Language Skills Through Web-Based Teaching

Education

**KEYWORDS :** ICT – Information and Communication Technology, IT – Information Technology, WWW – World Wide Web, WBT – Web-based Teaching.

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## ABSTRACT

*The National Policy on Information and Communication Technology in School Education (2012) states that, "The State shall endeavour to provide universal, equitable, open and free access to ICT and ICT enabled tools and resources to all students and teachers. All digital learning resources and software resources will conform to the National Policy on Open Standards of the Government of India". This policy highlights that future vision of mankind demands innovation. The motto of this article is to explore on the effectiveness of the technologically innovated Web-Based instructional material to improve English Language skills at the Higher Secondary level. Web-Based teaching addresses major domains of the teaching-learning process like – to create dynamic learning premise, to improve intellectual relationship between the teacher and the student, to build learning friendly environment, to nourish contextualised learning, collaborative learning, co-operative learning , interactive learning and individualizes learning process.*

**Introduction**

India has witnessed various phases of development in English education, from the British period to the contemporary technological period. Indian soil has respectfully accommodated English language a niche in its history. Indian Educational System has accepted English language as a second language in many States while it is optional in some States. The impact of economic globalization has made English as a neutral language globally and as a link language among various States of the country. Teaching English as a second language is a challenging task for the 21st century English teachers community. Contemporary society is recognized as the information society due to the impact of ICT in all aspects of human life. So, the current challenge is to evolve innovative English language teaching techniques which are dialogic in nature and promotes social transformation.

India stands as a classical example with rapid progress in socio-political structures. This has necessitated to educate our students with an international and multicultural perspectives in mind. This generates a heavy demand for better quality English education at the primary, secondary and higher education. Educational institutions have to be prepared for the digital revolution. There is a need to set goals for the post-millennium development. Holistic Web-based education is the 'mantra' to which all the academicians subscribe.

**Past Scenario of English Education at the Higher Secondary Level**

Twentieth century English language teaching professionals are evidential to the vast knowledge of various teaching methodologies, learning theories, Manual Aids and Mechanical Aids to be applied to accomplish desired learning objectives. Relating the content with the objectives and the objectives with the learning experiences enables teachers to structure the lesson plan effectively.

English teachers followed few fundamental principles of language learning as Motivation, Habit formation, Practice and Drill, Oral Approach, Situational Approach, Gradation and Selection, Multiple Line of Approach and Balanced Approach. Over the past few years, teachers have a common assumption on English language teaching - whether the teachers and students should use the second language rather than the first language in the classroom. Grammar Translation Method believes in using the mother tongue, to start from the level of students understanding. In later classes, the teacher would find it ideal to gradually shift to the Direct method. Teachers adhere to the natural order of skills presentation: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Vocabulary and Pronunciation is taught from the beginning. Conveying the meaning of new words is vital to language teaching. Practicing, repetition and memorizing words, organizing words in the mind and linking new information to the old are few strategies followed to acquire words. Imitation and repetition of words and phrases are prime to pronunciation teaching.

Students' interaction and everyday speech is emphasized in the Audio-Lingual Method. The Silent way method establishes cognitive approach, allowing students to become independent by relying on themselves, to think and discover the rules of the language they are acquiring. James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR), is a natural approach, it emphasizes developing communication skills and vocabulary through meaningful language learning. Communicative Language Teaching method facilitates to teach low level students to develop communication skills and judiciously using native language. Task-Based methodology gives abundant opportunity to interact. Vivian Cook (2011) makes it clear that grammar knowledge that is in the students conscious mind enables them to unconsciously use it, and suggests that, "the conversion of conscious rules to non-conscious processes does take place for some academic students; every teaching method works for someone somewhere".

The proof of teacher's knowledge on these teaching models, learning theories and teaching aids will reflect in the teaching-learning process. Today, English language teaching professionals quest to redefine their teaching techniques by integrating Information and communication technology in the teaching-learning process. The present article intends to study, how best the teachers can utilize various ICT tools for designing Web-based effective pedagogy – to catalyse the quality of teaching English language skills.

Recommendations of various commissions appointed by Government of India, have emphasized intervention of ICT in teaching. Research studies conducted on the integration of ICT in teaching English language have substantiated the importance of IT revolution in teaching-learning process.

**Transition in English Education: Bridging Agrarian Revolution with ICT Revolution**

'Change in life is the corner stone of prosperity' – teaching perspectives and approaches have to be changed over time. Contemporary Digital World has heralded a new era into students' life, to get an opportunity to learn through Web-based technology. Technology is becoming more central to the infrastructure of all types of educational institutions. Recent researches high-

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light the potential of the web service in rendering high quality teaching and learning. Hari K Rajagopalan, in his article titled 'Online Power' anticipates that online learning will revolutionise the education industry. Teaching professionals need to understand the educational needs of the challenged learners and to fulfil the national goal of 'Education for All'. Hemalata Talesra emphasises, 'technological innovation, the adoption of new teaching/learning theories and social change all call on teachers to modify their role, to introduce new contents, tools and methods, and to deal with a heterogeneous student population'.

The World Wide Web is the subset of Internet, which is the most significant development in ICT. Teaching through web has improved the quality of instructional software. Advancement of technology in teaching-learning, coupled with current pedagogical, psychological and philosophical principles – have made it possible to develop new software for teaching at all levels. Problems relating to large classes, heterogeneous students, lack of provision of teaching aids – can be tackled effectively and efficiently by programmed web- based teaching at the Higher Secondary Level.

**Secondary Education**

Secondary Education Commission's one of the objectives is, 'to prepare students to make proper use of developments in science and technology'. English education at the Higher Secondary Level nurtures to organize the teaching-learning process, so that the result of it be application of knowledge and skills to build the prospects of the society, nation and the world. In this light to build a knowledge-based learning society, it is high time for the teaching professionals to change the educational scenario by innovatively installing teaching through wireless networks, streaming media, internet service, web service, white boards, e-books, blogs, podcasts and moodle. In the history of technologically based education, web has emerged as a powerful tool to efficiently deliver teaching process.

Today Secondary Education National planning and its effective growth demands efficient and resourceful teaching professionals. Higher Secondary Education Board is paying more attention to 'universalization of education' and 'education for all'.

National policy on education 1986, as modified in 1992, stressed the need to employ Educational Technology to improve the quality of education. For the first time in Karnataka, Mahesh PU College in Hubballi-Dharwad has launched the unique 'Robomate-flip classroom', an innovative instructional material to empower the students.

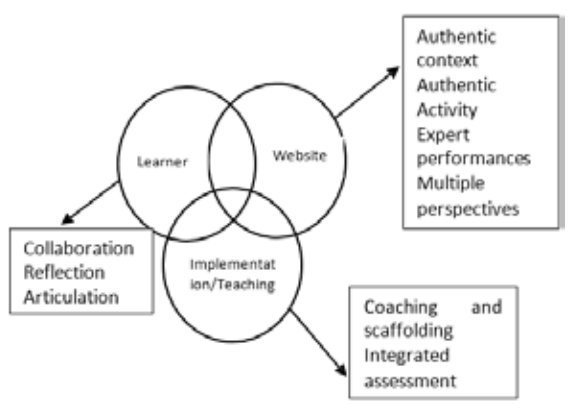
National Curriculum Framework 2005 highlights significant role of ICT in School education. Government of India's Flagship programme on education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, figures the use of ICT for quality improvement. Central Advisory Board of Education, in its report on Universal Secondary Education in 2005 recommends ICT in schooling. Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government Of India, 2012, in National Policy on Information and Communication Technology in School Education, initiates ICT policy in School Education – "ICT enabled teaching-learning encompasses a variety of techniques, tools, content and resources aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of the teaching-learning process. There are variety of options available to the teacher to utilise various ICT tools for effective pedagogy – involves changes in the classroom environment and its bearing on effectiveness. Availability of a wide range of such teaching-learning materials will catalyse transformation of classrooms into ICT enabled classrooms".

**Globalization Demands Innovation**

This article aims to analyse the effectiveness of the Web-based package, a teaching-learning tool curated exclusively for improving English Language Skills. The underlying pedagogical principle of the designed Web-based package is to promote high level thinking and creativity, to build-up the confidential level, to motivate collaborative work and to optimistically face the challenges of the society. This instructional material provides quality content by bridging the rich web resources available on the internet with the Higher Secondary English Work Book. The package orbits around the four language skills – Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. It motivates students to learn practically with respect to their past knowledge, it meets individual differences in a diverse classroom, it is possible to individualize teaching, students can do it at a pace appropriate to their own level of mastery and rate of progress, promotes critical thinking skills, inspires collaborative learning. There is no standardized mode of integrating technology into teaching, it ultimately depends on teachers' meticulous planning of lessons, to achieve meaningful learning atmosphere.

One of the objectives of the web based package is to augment students learning opportunities in dynamic context. It subscribes to the complexity of the triangular relationship between the teacher, the learner and the implementation strategy adopted by teachers as modelled by Herrington and Oliver (1995).

**Figure 1: The tri-partite interaction between learner, website and implementation strategy (Herrington and Oliver, 1995**




Teaching, a social process - the proof of it lies in learning. It demands knowledge on the respective subject matter, understanding of students' needs and interests, professional experience, awareness of various teaching methodologies and meticulous planning and execution of software into teaching- learning process.

Learning is active and social in its character. It demands flexible atmosphere during the teaching- learning process.

Ultimately the ICT enabled dynamic teaching- learning process will be directly proportional to the role of computers, the role of teachers meticulously integrating rich Internet resources into teaching and the role of learners to meaningfully learn English Language Skills.

The World Wide Web empowers teachers' with rich volumes of teaching resource, which can be innovatively constructed and presented to accomplish meaningful learning and achieve desired objectives. The designed Web-Based package, is sub-set to the prescribed Karnataka PU Board English Work Book. It

incorporates Constructivists theory, Behaviourism learning theory, Brain-based learning theory and Engagement learning theory.

Constructivism software offers holistic approach to instructional strategy and learning philosophy. Web-Based teaching material is constructed by integrating web resources in Constructivist teaching, by following 5 E'S model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate) developed by Roger Bybee, to facilitate the students to construct their own understanding and knowledge from experience. Learning becomes active process, helps in collaborative learning and errors are used to inform students of progress to understanding and changes in ideas. Academicians and practitioners have acknowledged the efficacy of Web-based learning in terms of Constructivism, the most widely accepted model of learning in education today. Evidence to this is the Experimental research work titled, "Effect of CT and TBCT on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students", conducted by Parasurama. D in 2015, has proved that TBCT approach is more effective in enhancing the academic achievement of students, and the blend of technology and constructivist teaching provided greater opportunities for students learning.

Behaviourism focuses on studying objectively observable and measurable behaviour and systematic reinforcing acquisition of new desired behaviour. Brain-based instructional software creates brain-friendly environments and learning around real problems.

Engagement Learning Theory synthesised in Web- Based Teaching facilitates students' to meaningfully engage in learning activities through interaction with others.

**Limitations**

As the Web-Based teaching is confined to student- oriented and teacher-facilitated approach, the classroom will be noisy, few students may not actively participate in learning activities, or few may not be able to understand the working activities. To overcome this, the learning activities should encourage students thinking, reasoning and independent learning. Absentees be given due concern so that they get adopted to the current activities.

Web-Based learning environment creates flexibility to students to shape their own progress. Teacher's crucial role is to assess students learning, inspire them to individually handle practical tasks, guide to work in groups and to use errors to inform their progress to understand the content material. Ultimately, rich, flexible and interactive Web- Based teaching material may not enhance learning environment, if the teacher does not effectively lead the process.

Students Learning task also demands their considerable mental effort according to their ability to perceive the new knowledge. Despite these limitations, teachers should tackle such situations by capturing and sustaining students' interest, by facilitating supportive environment and by building confidence. Adolescent needs, potential difficulties and problems are to be addressed by teachers.

**Conclusion**

A brief survey on technological entry into contemporary educational field, advocates teachers and students about the advantages of technological potentiality. Editors Ramesh C Sharma, Sanjaya Mishra and S K Pulist emphasizes, "The advances in ICT have enabled new forms of access to information. It is becoming more central to the infrastructure of all types of educational institutions. The potential of the web should be leveraged to offer high quality teaching and learning to the students".

Digital society demands efficient professional resources. Teaching professionals should utilize the rich teaching resource content available on the web sites free of charge. The role of technology in education, the role of teacher integrating technology into teaching process and the role of students to meaningfully learn – are very important to shape the future of education. Currently, the educationists vote in favour of the holistic web- based educational pedagogies.

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