

The Impact of Digital Technology on ELT & Learning

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ABSTRACT In the present scenario across the world, English is a language, which is treated as the most popular language. It has undisputedly become an international language. The language is widely used for trade, commerce, media, science and technology. The teaching of English in India is compulsory at all three levels of schooling, that is, primary, secondary and tertiary. Traditional teachings basically consist of four skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the 21st century, English Language Teaching (ELT) has changed, as it is no longer focused on grammar and memorisation, and learning from roots, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to communicate with others around the globe. English language teaching is changing at an ever-increasing rate. Traditional ways of teaching are giving way to newer, more innovative, technical, practical ones and so is how one learns and acquires knowledge. ITC (Information and Communication Technology) has now become a familiar part of daily classroom teaching, where Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) play an important role.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital language learning programmes and English teaching have been prevalent around the world. In India, the government also focuses on it. Some foreign countries are trying to collaborate with the education system through digital learning programmes. Recently, the University of Cambridge has started language development programmes with the government of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.) in higher education. They started training programmes for students, language labs and teaching on digital platforms.

The present paper is an attempt to explore the methods of teaching on digital platforms in which the researcher focused on recent trends in education, which provide the means of English language teaching and learning. In the 21st century, English language teaching is not only focused on grammar, memorisation and learning from rote, but also on using language as a medium of expression and development. In the present scenario, digital technology is very beneficial in teaching learning process, with CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and MALL (Mobile Assistant Language Learning). The first serious discussion and analysis of online interaction emerged in the 1990s with Moore's (1989) identification of three types of interaction, that is, learner-content, learner-learner and learner-instructor. Moreover, Hillman

(1994) added one more type, which was learners' interaction with the interface of online courses.

The field of language education and the processes of teaching and learning are changing at an ever-increasing rate. Traditional notions of education are giving way to newer, more innovative ways of thinking and it also gives a platform to old and new generations to work together. Now teachers understand current trends in English language teaching and learning. This includes but not limited to:

- ♦ Grammar, reading and writing
- ♦ English as a Second or Other Language (ESL/ESOL)
- ♦ Not only for English learners
- ♦ Traditional chalk duster method

Objectives

The objective of this study is to identify the role of e-learning at school and college level teaching, especially on-technical institutes where traditional ways of teaching are more popular than e-learning.

1. To examine the teachers' mode of teaching, which they use in their classrooms.
2. Teacher and student literacy with computers.
3. To find the ratio of schools and colleges of teaching based on technology of Narsingpur district.
4. Role of technology in classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to understand the nature of problems associated with education for the teachers and the learners who face difficulty in their learning of modern e-learning techniques. The methodological approach of the research is qualitative and the main sources and techniques are based on collection of data and analysis. Content analysis taken from literature review of the research papers on digital learning methodologies and tools are taken from different conference papers, research papers and foreign journals. For contents the researcher used secondary sources like use of “digital learning” methods in school and colleges. Some teachers who teach in government schools and colleges, their knowledge of computer and digital learning and different tools and techniques used by them in their classrooms are base of this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the completion of the paper and research, the researcher concluded that in most of the schools and non-technical colleges, teachers are not aware of e-learning or they never try to use digital technologies in their teaching methods because they do not have the professional knowledge of computers and e-learning programmes. Eighty percent of the teachers are very familiar with social media but in the educational platform they are not perfect in digital teaching. In Madhya Pradesh, the government started virtual classes in schools and colleges since last one decade but that classes are run under limited hands. Virtual classroom projectors or the computer systems are run by computer operators or under the department of computer science. As it is known that virtual classes are medium of learning. Students in remote areas have opportunities to get knowledge by subject

experts, and they can learn the new techniques of learning in English language and literature. Virtual classes improve interest of the students about subject matter and they can ask their queries in between the session. Some schools and colleges run this scheme under the government’s e-learning programme in a better way. This study contains the findings of a survey of ELT & L in colleges and schools in around Narsingpur District during January 2019 till June 2019, among 989 students including teachers and learners. This survey is based on the following aims:

- ♦ Current status of ELT& L in Narsingpur District
- ♦ Study the problem and challenges of ELT&L
- ♦ Use of technology in the classroom or in the institutions
- ♦ Knowledge of e-learning among teachers and students

This research mainly constituted students graduating in arts, science and commerce (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com.) and in their first year. The survey is based on ‘technology based learning’ and the ‘knowledge of English language’. The researcher used smart classrooms and virtual classes for their testing. A continuous five tests and discussion were carried out in this regard. These are the findings of their knowledge of English languages.

Practically one hundred percent respondents from all three streams seem to be more interested in learning and studying English language, because they want to have a command over the language but due to their uneducated background and poor family condition, students of Arts are not up to the mark, and do not even have Android smart phones. They have less confidence in the class especially in the smart classroom, as they only want to watch and listen to the matter. Confidence level and technology expertise of English medium students are

Table 1: Knowledge level of English language on different streams’ students

S. No.	Classroom listening/ understanding level	Reading level	Writing level	Speaking level	Technology friendly in smart classroom
B.A.	30%	45.5%	50%	10.5%	10%
B.S.C.	55%	60%	64%	25.5%	50.5%
B.COM	50%	55%	50%	20%	40%

better than the Hindi medium students. Performance of B.Sc. and B.Com. students are better than B.A. students.

In the field of teaching, the researcher has done a survey on school and college teachers, which indicates that in rural areas most of the English teachers used Hindi in teaching or used a bilingual method. In college only forty percent teachers use English language in undergraduate classroom teaching whereas in postgraduate classes, seventy percent teachers use English language and remaining thirty percent teachers use a bilingual method. In schools' education of rural and urban areas, percentages are different in Hindi and English medium schools, whereas percentages of usage of technology in the classrooms are also different.

Audio-visual teaching techniques have a negligible method in English language teaching learning in schools of both Hindi as well as English medium. Study of grammar is relatively more stressed upon in Hindi medium schools whereas 75.5 percent respondents from English medium schools submit that English is taught by reading and speaking in the classroom. Translation of text material is more emphasised in colleges and Hindi medium schools as compared to their English medium counterparts.

In the field of English language, for teaching it there are some schemes for the digital learning in schools and colleges like 'language labs' that come into existence in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when modern foreign language programs were starting to develop as a discipline in secondary schools, colleges and universities. The purpose of language labs was for students to gain auditory exposure to the language, which they were studying. This was considered a significant innovation in the mid-twentieth century, as it offered students the opportunity to hear the language, and they were studying in the voice of native speakers. Digital and multimedia

projects offer evidence of their oral and listening competences. The use of language labs build-up confidence levels among the students because they can hear the actual pronunciation of the words, and they can understand the sentence and can improve their communication skills. Madhya Pradesh's government started this scheme since the past one decade but it is also in limited hands or under the department of English where the teachers of English and students can learn freely from others stream and students of Hindi medium have fear of English and they are not interested in learning. At present, the government of Madhya Pradesh started English language learning programmes with the University of Cambridge, Oxford University Press (OUP), and has launched its e-learning program *Epigeum*, which was founded in 2005, and has organising programmes in India of e-learning. The *Epigeum* program in India is used by colleges and universities for providing online and offline education. It currently offers courses across multiple domains and topics including plagiarism management, leadership and research. *Epigeum* claims to have 92 online courses used by 280 universities in 29 countries. Bib.la by Oxford University Press acquired the Germany based language portal bab.la that provided online dictionaries in 25 languages, translations and language learning programmes. At present, the Oxford University Press is launching programmes of e-learning in different parts of the country.

Digital teaching and the learning process in English language or literature is not a difficult task because most of the teachers of English in higher education or in schools are familiar with e-learning and digital teaching method. University Grants Commission (U.G.C.) and the government of Madhya Pradesh recommended computer literacy programmes in higher education and schools. Now multimedia plays an impor-

Table 2: Teachers using English language to teach English with use of e-learning

S. No.	College in UG classes		College in P.G level		Hindi medium school		English medium schools	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
English language	40%	70%	60%	90%	10%	40%	50.5%	88%
E-Learning	35%	75%	70%	90%	0.5%	20%	25%	45%

tant role in the growth of students and teachers, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), MALL (Multimedia Assisted Language Learning) or e-learning is a very common trend in the education system, and communication classes and internet is often used for the English language teaching. However, it should not be ignored that the use of the computer itself cannot enhance the quality of English language education or replace human teachers.

Technology also has become a part of literature in today's world. Audio and video methods for fiction and drama are very effective because many Hollywood and Bollywood movies, dramas and television shows are based on English fiction and drama. With the help of audio video materials students can easily understand the theme, plot and characterisation of the drama and fiction. Science has proved that visual images affect more than the written material in the mind.

E-learning is another digital medium in the teaching learning process. In many schools, colleges and universities libraries are out-dated or lacking in a selection of titles, and hence students might find it difficult to complete the necessary material for study. As long as the school and college have computer labs, students are able to use the Internet and digital encyclopaedia to obtain the research or study material they need. While students should be wary of the legitimacy of some of the content when they read online materials, many college and universities uses software like the encyclopaedia Britannica, NewGenlib, PMB, online list of the books, name of journals and many more, for the help of the students and teachers for teaching and learning.

Web based learning is another tool for digital learners. A variety of language learning is available on web learning, and students can read the blogs of other writers and they can understand the way of correct writing, and then they can also write the blogs for the users. It will build the confidence and quality of the reading and writing of the students. There are some web learning tools such as e-learning, e-mail and blogs chat. These types of practices give a positive atmosphere for the students. Literature students and teachers can read the blogs of famous literary personalities and they can share

their views with them and can start their own blogs. Pinkman in 2005 states that: "*Blogging becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as writers who write and post, as readers or viewers who respond to other writer's post, and such as writer-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own post, Readers in turn can comment on what they read, although blogs can be placed in secured environment as well*" (p. 185). Digital technology also help to removes the barriers in communication because in language teaching and learning has many barriers. There are some barriers in digital language teaching like lack of knowledge in computers, English language, communication, understanding, perception and many other barriers in digital language teaching and learning. Technology can help remove these barriers. There are some apps, online classes and websites, which help the students with language improvement. There are some online coaching classes, which can help the learners to improve their English language learning skills. They provide intercultural training courses, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), and on-to-one tuition programmes.

In today's world, digital technologies are very useful for the students and teachers, and students can take and complete courses with the Internet for their convenience. Internet and social media also plays an important role. With the help of the Internet and e-learning programmes students and teachers can develop their vision of e-learning. Traditional classroom teaching has been changed in smart classroom teaching, which helps the students with their learning process. In this change and developing mode of teaching, students can complete different types of diploma and degree courses through the Internet. NASA for instance offers a programme that allows students to talk to astronauts, and students can talk to astronauts in space. Some sites such as *Glovico* are used to help students learn foreign languages online by pairing a group of students with teachers from another country. Some other sites are info@flyingclasses.co.in, [www. languagecoachingcertificate. com](http://www.languagecoachingcertificate.com), [www. edx.org](http://www.edx.org), [step the hindu.com](http://step.thehindu.com), [English live.eg. comand](http://Englishlive.eg.comand) www.izito.co.in. There are many apps for basic English language improvement, like En-

English Grammar Ultimate, Speaking Pal, Duo Lingo, BBC Teaching English, IELTS practice and IELTS TEXT (BRAND 9), and these apps and websites are available for teaching and learning processes, especially for English language teaching and learning. Web 2.0 voice Thread is a popular website that allows users to create, share and learn from each other, and here the voice thread is a web-based digital storytelling tool that allows user to create digital slides shows with captive images. Websites like www.oovoo.com, www.qq.com, www.freeclassicaudiobook.com, www.librivox.org, www.classicpoetrya.com and apps like Duo Lingo - *Learn language for free*, *Memorise*, *Learn Languages Busuu*, *Babble- Learning*, and many other digital programs are running in the education system. Sites such as <http://blog-assistive-language-learning.blogspot.com/> are for vocabulary development and language growth.

Another technology of the teaching learning process is Skype, with this, students can learn and speak English with an English-speaking tutor wherein the student and the tutor both have live interaction. Learning spoken English on Skype is a fantastic way to improve one's fluency and accent. All the tutor and students need an Internet connection, a computer (or tablet/smartphone, iPod) and a headset. One of the great advantages of Skype is that the students can practice English with an English tutor no matter where either the student or the tutors both live.

As Bhaduria says "A website named Coursera, provides such on line courses through collaboration with various well recognized and National level Universities and institute all across. One such very popular open online course in India is MOOCs which collaborates with national level Institutes as IITs and brings in these online courses" (2016). These online courses are free of cost and provide certificate also.

CONCLUSION

Digital technology in education is a demand of the present scenario. Governments continuously provides the platform for the growth and development of e-learning teaching in schools and colleges. Institutes and their departments are giving training programmes on digital teaching but the number of teachers are not sufficient

for these e-learning programmes in schools and colleges. If teacher is well trained and familiar with digital technology and they have a smart classroom in colleges or in schools they can improve the quality education. It is very important that the students are given ample opportunities to practice digital technology for language learning in the class as well as outside the classrooms, even it is important for them to spend extra classes in smart classroom and digital platform which, reflect and analyse what has been exposed to them. Institute should be strict for digital language learning programmes, and then the goal can be achieved. Modern day's students not only have a computer but also have a positive approach towards multimedia. Student's use the Internet and computer not only in college and universities but in home also. With the help of digital tools students can use technology to achieve some objective. Digital technologies also help to fill the gap between teachers and students. Students can share their views and thoughts with their teachers through multimedia resources. The young must be technically educated. Youth of the 21st century are very familiar with digital technology. It also fills the generation gap and students can save their time and energy because their fingers move on digital tools. In the field of education in urban areas computer literacy is not a difficult task because they have facilities in institutes and at home also, but in rural areas where there are no facilities of digital learning in schools and colleges and homes, it is very difficult to develop e-learning teaching interest and scope. Educators should create the atmosphere in rural areas also to develop their skills in computer language learning programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology in the classroom offers new learning and experiences to develop new information management skills. Internet based collaborative activities, during which students may work either with classmates or others beyond the classroom, receive particular attention. The technology itself, especially the Internet, may offer new opportunities for the teaching learning process in the classroom. The online environment develops confidence and technical

skills of the students. Use of the Internet and digital technology particularly is allowing students and teachers to access more information and resources than was previously available.

This study would recommend following measure is taken in order to improve the educational inclusion of e-learning in higher education and schools in Narsingpur District. In order to remove the physiological fear among the learners for English, this study advises institutions to recruit more computer literate teachers and have a language lab, with e-learning technologies in classrooms, as this would help to build better interaction in classroom and remove the language barriers. In rural areas, the local governance members can play a significant role in creating awareness of e-learning education among learners. They are supposed to act as a bridge between the school and college authority reckoning various aspects of e-learning and digital language teaching programmes. Students' interest should develop in English language through regular practice and regular communication skills. Barriers of education should be tried to remove from the students' mind and from the institution. Teachers should be familiar with the students especially with those who have a fear of English. Regular language classes and practice can improve the quality of the students. Teachers must be technically educated. If they do not have diploma or certificate in computers or in e-learning, institutions can organise seminars or workshops for e-learning. Faculty development programmes on e-learning can also improve the quality of teaching. Institutes should focus on government schemes and local help. Continuous virtual classes and remedial classes from experts can improve the quality. Teachers should train the students in batches, and not as the whole class. Students should be concen-

trating in the classroom and hence teaching should be attractive and impressive. Focus on pronunciation is must, and appropriate teaching environment can develop their skill and confidence.

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