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USE OF ICT IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
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Abstract:

Language is the source of knowledge. Every culture is known by its language. The richness of a language is considered as the richness of that particular culture. Without language, it is difficult to imagine the present world. Since the beginning of human civilization, language is the only source of exchanging knowledge and ideas. After the invention of the wheel and transportation system, people happen to meet people of different cultures and different languages. They respected each other's culture and shown a keen interest in their literature. Language is the only source for gaining knowledge. Culture, beliefs, values and social structure of a particular group of people can be studied through the study of language. If we study the English Language we can see a great influence of Greek and Latin languages in it. Intellectual people of every age were attracted in second language learning. Scholars themselves accepted a task of studying the literature of a new language and translate it in local language for common people in order to bring new thoughts in the society. Common people didn't have the need to learn a second language.

Keywords: exchanging knowledge, Greek and Latin languages& literature

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At the time of Renaissance, numbers of books were translated into English. French, Latin and Greek scholars were highly respected for their knowledge. At that time second language learning might have started. The background of the dictionary is the burning desire of learning a new language. The first glossary came into existence and later on it took the shape of the dictionary. In the beginning, the task was herculean even for scholars. Without any basic knowledge of any language, how can we refer the books of the second language? After industrial revolution trade and transportation multiplied and in the 21st-century world became a global village. The development of Information and Communication Technology gave birth to multiculturalism. Usage of the internet and mobile phones is increasing day by day. There is no nation which has no facility of radio, television, telephone, computer or internet. People want to get connected with each other crossing the boundaries of countries and languages. For that, they use emails and messages. There is a large group of people using social networks like Facebook, Twitter and many more. People become more mobile physically and electronically. In this case, second language learning became the key to success. In the late 20th century, English emerged as an official language in a number of countries. There are few reasons for it. In the middle of the 19th century many international bodies have come into being, such as The UN, The World Bank (1945), UNESCO (1946), UNICEF(1946), WHO (1948), they strongly needed a common language for smoother functionality of work. Following quotation shows why English become the common language of the world.

Half of the budget of an international organization can easily get swallowed up in translation costs… A common situation is one where all participants at an international meeting automatically use a single language, as a utilitarian measure, because it is one which they have all come to learn for a separate reason. This situation seems to be slowly becoming a reality in meetings around the world, as a general competence in English grows." (Crystal 12)

Every man has to learn English as a second language for their bread and butter. For a common man, it is too difficult to learn a new language as it is not their core area of concern. In short, now all professionals have to learn the English language as a part of their successful career. Slowly and gradually second language learning immersed as a problem. Till the middle of the twentieth century, learners were learning the English language with their interest and for the sake of literature and culture only. So they were enjoying their learning. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a big mass got attracted to English for their tread and commerce. They thought that if they could learn English as a communicative language or a business language, they could have a chance to develop their business across the world. As English is becoming the language of class it must be in an organized form. Some scholars started designing courses for second language learners so that it can be taught professionally. British Broadcasting Corporation BBC started broadcasting English lessons for beginners. They used to post the learning material to interested and registered learners in advance and

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then they used to broadcast the lesson on given time. That was for the first time technology is used for English teaching in a limited area.

In addition to this, the experience of parents with the English Language made English learning compulsory for 21st-century students. Experienced parents insisted that their children must learn the English language. A number of school boards of India made the English Language a compulsory subject for students. This time it was not a communicative one but English as a second language. Some parents selected the English language as the language of instruction for teaching their children. Now English became medium of instruction a second language but the teaching techniques adopted to teach English was the same old one. It is a fact that still in many schools English teachers are not even aware of methodology to teach a second language.

Use of ICT in education has revolutionized the English language teaching:

In the time of ICT, education is not untouched by revolution. Computer, internet, and other facilities are taking their places in schools. Students were learning computer as a subject. Use of technology is not a new thing now. Teachers and technocrats were planning to use the computer for language learning. Use of computer technology got a green signal from educational institutes. But the question is how to use technology for language learning. Adding to this Carol A Chapelle a professor of TESL / Applied linguistic at Low a State University writes in her book,

During the 1990s the question gradually changed from 'should the computer be used in language teaching? As we enter the 21st century, everyday language through use so tides to technology that learning language through technology has become a fact of life with important implication

This lead to the introduction of language labs to enable students to acquire communication skills. In the beginning, it was on trial bases. But today it has a developed and a matured, purpose-based form. So from the beginning, the question, how to learn or teach the second language effectively exists. Here technology tries to fill the gap.

History of Language Lab Research:

In the early modern period, foreign language programmes were rising as a discipline in secondary schools and universities. Before this, classical languages like Latin and Greek were very popular languages. With the beginning of ICT in the language classroom, the idea of the language lab was born. The purpose of language labs was to avail students listening exposure to the language they were studying. In today's world, everything is up to date and digital. Audio exposure to any foreign languages is readily accessible at a very little to no cost.

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From designing syllabus to taking exams and solving issues, scholars have played a great role in this new venture. Various acronyms relating to technology and language teaching and learning show the research and development of language laboratories. In the beginning, it was general like CALI stands for Computer-Aided Language Instruction and CAL suggest Computer-Assisted Learning. This was the initial stage of the Language lab. Finally, the focus came on language teaching and learning and some research were done on how to relate language learning with a computer. CALL – Computer-assisted Language Learning became popular I 1980s. In 1990 TELL Technology Enhanced Language Learning provided more accuracy for language teaching but it was not so popular. Slowly and gradually it became the topic of general interest. Some software companies started taking interest in designing software for education. For example, ESP - Educational Software Products is a renowned company which designs and produces educational software. Their motive is to produce novel and mostly interactive software for learners of English as a Foreign Language.

For the development of any field, research is necessary. Brave people are those who selflessly work to turn the tide. Research has played an important role in the development of computer-assisted language learning and removing antediluvian techniques and methods. A number of researchers have worked hard to show a new and more promising direction to the language lab. Not only the domains of computer but applied linguistics and education faculties have also contributed to it. In the early phase of Language Lab, research mainly concentrated with expressing the advantage of using technology over traditional language teaching. Like other areas of second language learning different types of approaches are being used by language lab researchers. In the beginning majority of researchers were quantitative studies. At present qualitative and mixed-method studies also can be seen frequently we are living under the umbrella of computer-mediated communication (CMC). As we know that there are no authorized standards for Language Lab, it is very hard to come up with sound findings. It covers a huge range of areas. So many different theories and disciplines made it hard to decide such norms for this type of research. Following are such researchers who pave the new way. They are torch bearers of this field.

Dr. J H Hulstijn of the University of Amsterdam is a researcher of this field who finds remarkable facts related to second language acquisition and use of laboratories. In a special issue of Studies in Second Language Acquisition featuring such research, he made a notable distinction between two types of studies (1) Laboratory studies pertinent to theories of SLA and (2) Applied studies such as investigations into computer-assisted language learning. Both types are among a growing body of research which investigates theory-based prediction of the effects of specific psycholinguistic conditions on learning outcomes. He also warns that, without supplementary investigation in real L2 learning environments, a researcher should be extremely vigilant in designing immediate conclusion from laboratory oriented studies to language pedagogy.

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Professor Peter Skehan was a Professor of Applied Linguistics at Thames Valley University from 1991-1999 and later at King's College, London from 1999-2003. He moved to Hong Kong in 2004 where he was Professor in the Department of English, CUHK until his retirement in 2009. His vast experience in second language acquisition field is useful to upskill young researchers. He has lion's share in investigating learners' oral language in face to face communication during tasks in which meaning is the primary focus. There remains much scope for applying the principles of task condition research to computer-assisted research tasks requiring either or both oral and written language.

Conclusion: Training a learner in the second language acquisition demands a lot of research by the trainer. Moreover, enthusiasm for teaching and immense patience is required by both the trainer and the learner. If this is fulfilled, acquiring a second language does not become a Herculean task. Instead, it turns out to be a delightful process where the learner rejoices and gains proficiency.

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