CHAPTER - I

Introduction: Language Mechanism

I. Voyage of ELT and Present Scenario
II. Need based Teaching and Learning
III. Traditional and Present ELT Methods
IV. Recent Teaching Techniques: Multimedia
V. Online Language Teaching and Learning
English language was introduced as the medium of instruction at all the levels of education in India under the British rule. Macaulay proposed:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with the terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature and to render them by degree fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the populations.¹

Lord Bentinck supported the proposal declaring that the funds “...administered on Public Instruction should be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language”.²

On 7 March 1835, the Minute received a Seal of Approval and English was established firmly as the medium of instruction and administration by the British Raj (1765-1947). The Senate of the University of Calcutta adopted a resolution in 1861 that all examinations should be conducted in English. This compelled all schools to introduce English as a subject at a

¹ J. C. Aggarwal, Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education (Delhi: Vikas, 1983) 11.
² J. C. Aggarwal, 11.
very early stage. The English language teaching followed a set model provided by the then University of London.

But factors like scarcity of well qualified trained teachers fluent in English language, unsuitability of the teaching methods (lecture and grammar translation) and lack of authentic systematic instructions in spoken English led to rapid decline in academic standards.

In 1917, the Calcutta University Commission took notice of this and recommended a progressive reduction in the use of English as a medium of instruction up to the Matriculation stage and its retention as the medium above that stage, the adoption of scientific methods of teaching English, the introduction of more highly trained teachers and a standard assessment (tests) of a practical knowledge of English. Subsequently, the commission found that the students displayed a disquieting preference for literary studies. Therefore, during 1930s regional languages were made the medium of instruction which resulted in an alarming deterioration in the standards of the teaching and learning of English.

English language teaching received a major set-back in post independent India, especially in colleges and universities. The prevailing-unmanageable overcrowded classrooms, non-availability of the well-trained teachers, psychological attitude, regionalization of the medium of instruction at the university level resulted in inadequate exposure to the English language. The unrealistic pattern of the examination, the outdated textbooks etc. could be few of the possible reasons. Some States abolished English from their curriculum for some time considering it a symbol of slavery to the British rule.
Now was felt the need for the rationalization of the English curricula, textbooks, teaching materials, examination, and English teaching methodologies. Commissions were formed to produce reports that suggested required modifications to uplift the standards of English language teaching.

The University Education Commission, also called the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) recommended the continuance of the study of English. “English should be studied in high schools and in the universities in order that we might keep ourselves in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge”.

The first official body, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) concerned with the methods and materials of teaching and the evaluation system insisted that:

The emphasis in teaching should shift from verbalism and memorization to learning through purposeful, concrete and realistic situations and for this purpose the principles of ‘Activity Method’ and ‘Project Method’ should be assimilated in school practice.

According to the recommendation of the Kunzru Committee (1955) the teaching of English literature should be related to the study of Indian

---

3 Q. Z. Alam, English Language Teaching in India (New Delhi: Atlantic, 1995) 2.

literature so that apart from its value for linguistic purposes it could be made an effective means of stimulating critical thinking and writing in the Indian languages.

The official Language Commission (1956) recommended that English should be taught as:

...a language of comprehension rather than a literary language so as to develop in the students learning it a faculty of comprehending writings in the English language, more specially those relating to the subject matter of their specialized fields of study.\(^5\)

Randolph Quirk (in his Report on English Teaching in India, 1963) also found the standards of English teaching deplorable and stressed the need for reform and experiment. Kothari Commission (1964) emphasized the role of English as library language. It recommended the continuation of English as the medium of instruction at all major universities. The Commission also mentioned that special units be set up for teaching English as language skill, as distinct from teaching it as literature.

Reports on the study of English in India continued to be written. The Reports of the two Study Groups appointed by the Ministry of Education on the Teaching of English (1967 and 1971) made a plea for teaching the skills of Communication. The thinking regarding the teaching of English at tertiary level, articulated in the abstracts and reports of the conferences at national level such as the ELT Conference and U.G.C sponsored National

Workshop on Syllabus Reform held at Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad February – March 1977, fully endorsed this view and emphasized the need to promote and consolidate communication skills in English at college level. The first Study Group (1967) recommended:

...the introduction of the compulsory English Course from “a liberal art literature course” to “a course in language skills”. It also added to introduce ‘lower level’ and ‘higher level’ courses in Compulsory English at the degree level. For the lower level teaching will be ‘skill-based’ with a distinct emphasize on Reading Comprehension and at the later, “there should be greater emphasize on written and spoken English”.

The Acharya Ramamurti Commission, appointed to review the 1986 National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action, submitted its report in 1990. For the first time a frank analysis of the problems in the implementation of the three-language formula was pointed by this report. The Ramamurti Commission suggested that the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (KHS), the Centre of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL, now EFL) and the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)—the three national level institutions charged respectively with the development of Hindi, English and modern Indian languages should come together and in consultation with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and

---

the National Council Of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the State governments spell out modalities in the matter of acquisition of language competency by the students in the school system.

The report of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) (1989) that was set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) stated that the proposed curricula should shift the emphasis:

...from teaching to learning and that the curricula should be so designed as to make education more meaningful to the needs and aspirants of its beneficiaries as well as to make it socially relevant.7

The analysis put forth by these commissions and reports stirred a fresh thinking and created a growing awareness of the inadequacy of English language teaching among the educational authorities, language planners and pedagogues (teachers). This awareness consequently led to the mushroom growth of English medium schools even in the small Indian towns.

With regard to English language teaching, a noteworthy development during 1980s was the rejection of a method-oriented and teacher-driven approach. Second language pedagogy was now based on a new understanding of what language is, how it is learnt, what should be its objectives and what role the socio-cultural and other factors play both on language use and its learning. Communicative competence, realized as the

need of the hour, promoted the practice of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). But between 1970-1980 CLT was a dismal failure and it took around two decades to gain acceptance among learners and teachers. CLT recognized that consciousness-raising activities must form an integral part of second language teaching. Language-literature integration thus gained recognition and language laboratory became a part of the ELT paradigm around 1985.

English language teaching also witnessed the presence of Computer Assisted Language Instruction (CALI) and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in the Indian classroom in around 1985. But Both CALI and CALL had not been adopted widely due to the obvious constraints of finance. The other reason was the typical Indian mindset that learning cannot take place without the presence of a human teacher.

The context of English language teaching situation started changing around the year 2000. Socio-economic factors played a major role in this change that is dynamic even today. English teachers of the contemporary era use a teaching methodology that is mix of different elements drawn from traditional, training and indigenous approaches; but broadly comes under the generic category of Communicative Approach (CA).

To analyze the current ELT scenario in our country minutely we need to discuss NKC (National Knowledge Commission), the first annual report on higher education, submitted to the Prime Minister (Man Mohan Singh) on 29th November 2006. According to NKC the prevailing practices have failed to meet the specific needs of the English learners. The report evaluates certain factors that obstruct and result in the failure of learners to
acquire a mastery of English. These are lack of contextualization of the pedagogy of English, assessment of learner outcomes based on the mastery of single texts rather than proficiency in the use of the language, unequal access to English studies and mastery, faulty pedagogy that lays stress on grammar and rules and not on learning experience, poor quality of English language teaching and inadequate support systems (teachers and teaching materials).

NKC has proposed remedial recommendations to provide the country’s school-leavers with far more equal access to higher education in three to five years thereafter. (Recommendations have been discussed in the Additional Notes)

The voyage of English language teaching since independence is one of experimenting and trendy pedagogic ideas about learning English as a second language without proven and helpful results. Proficiency in written and spoken communication in English has remained beyond the reach of the learner. This creates a need of an assessment of the pedagogic approaches and methods necessary to meet the needs of bi-language learners in the context of linguistic pluralism; and an analysis of learner disabilities in the mastery of English language skills.

The current system of school education in Madhya Pradesh falls short of expectations to prepare school-leavers for direct entry into the first year of an undergraduate programme in Engineering, Technology, Management or any other professional course. These students need a specific set of
language skills for their success in higher education and career. Thus English teachers are expected to revamp their approach to teaching, to suit the requirements and to enhance the communication competence of these students. For effective teaching a good teacher necessitates to analyze the psyche of a learner. The awareness of language learning theories can be supportive for the competent teachers.

The Behaviourist theory of psychology that views the human mind as a clean slate and considers language learning as a mechanical process of habit formation was advocated by the American psychologist B.F Skinner. The theory lays emphasis on practice in which the learner is required to repeat the correct form. This repetition is crucial to make learning confirmed.

Noam Chomsky in 1959 challenged the Behaviourist theory. He asserted the remarkable capacity of the child to generalize, hypothesize and process information in a variety of very special, apparently highly complex ways which may be largely innate, or may develop through some sort of learning or through maturation of the nervous system.

The Cognitive theory considered language learning a mental process. It states that a teacher must provide the correct answer to the learner’s incorrect utterance. It’s a natural part of the learning process that the learner does not output well-formed correct sentences in the first instance. At this stage, he is forming and testing hypothesis regarding a correct rule. Language learning is accomplished when the learner understands these rules through exposure to linguistic data for mother tongue or first language. For second language learning he starts discovering an alternate linguistic code to first language. These psychologies led to the shift from
the teacher and the teaching materials to the learner, his needs and his linguistic output. The teachers, who comprehend these theories and modify their approach to teaching, witness better teaching results.

The English teachers are often puzzled with the question like what sort of English is to be taught that can meet the requirements of the learners. Needs analysis provides a solution to this query. According to Nunan, “Needs analysis asks learners to identify their own priorities. This throws up their wants”. The survey conducted in the professional colleges of Indore city during the study reveal that communication skills are among the top priorities of the learners. These students aspire to grasp English used for specific purposes such as academic studies, vocational or professional milieu (Table 31: Purpose of studying English).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on teaching of language appropriate to particular subjects in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre, must be incorporated in the teaching process. Dudley-Evans and St. John claim that:

The teaching of ESP has generally been seen as a separate activity within ELT, partly because it has developed its own methodology, and partly because it rests on disciplines other than applied linguistics, particularly second language teaching.9

---


English for Specific Purposes is a kind of English teaching that builds upon what has been acquired earlier in English for General Purpose (EGP) with a more restricted focus, (EGP is further discussed in Additional Notes). That there is no fixed methodology of ESP that can be applicable in all situations, but rather each situation and particular needs of learners belonging to a particular domain impose a certain methodology of teaching. As Hutchinson also states, “ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning”.\(^{10}\)

English teachers in professional colleges nowadays need to more aware of the importance of needs analysis. Because the line between where General English courses stop and ESP courses start has become very vague. General English is not the requirement of the undergraduates; in fact, it is the ESP that these future professionals need. An ESP course can only satisfy the specific needs of particular learners.

During the survey it was observed that English teachers are of the view that if a learner is proficient in General English he will be able to communicate in his professional sphere. But English teachers who support this wide-spread view are simply afraid to go very deep into the problem of teaching specialized English.

In the majority of professional institutions, the *communicative approach* to English language teaching is currently recognized as the

dominant approach. Communicative approach it is geared to the needs of the learners. It focuses on the structure of communication rather than on that of language.

It implies teaching language as a skill and as a means of communication through contexts based on authentic materials and by modeling communicative situations from the real world in the classroom.

In the same context, the English teachers must also realize that communicatively oriented methodology needs dissemination via in-service training seminars and workshops. It has been widely observed that different learners have different styles of learning, same is true of teachers and their teaching styles. Robert O’ Neill says:

Any scientific evidence that proves that typical teaching technique works well under all conditions and with all learners is yet to be found. In such a case, it is far better to endorse pluralistic teaching strategies and techniques which allow for greater diversity and choice not just for individual learners but also for individual teachers as well. And this is what need analysis is all about.

Needs analysis gives a transparent view of the learners, their objectives of learning English, their target situation to use the language and their attitude towards that situation so forth. The data obtained from the questionnaire show that young professionals would like to use the English language in the following spheres of their work: being aware of cultural

differences, describing diagrams, maps, drawings, schemes, so forth expressing attitudes and opinions, filling in application forms and CVs, interpreting, making presentations, negotiating, participating in pre-planned discussions, participating in spontaneous discussions, predicting ideas of an audio text, reading commercial correspondence, reading for specific information, reading silently, reading for general information from original special texts, socializing, telephoning, understanding other people, understanding recordings, video and audio texts, lectures, reports etc., understanding the author’s attitude, using English in everyday communication, using English for professional purposes, writing contracts, writing faxes and e-mails, writing letters formal/informal and writing resume, summary so forth (Table 31: Purpose of Studying English and Table 32: Usefulness and Appropriateness of the Classroom Activities).

Munby’s approach which is still very popular among the teachers of English is governed by two underlying assumptions “...that identifying learners’ needs is an easy task, and that these needs can be satisfied easily by designing courses relevant to these needs”.12

Morrow suggested that needs be interpreted within a broader framework, rather than as short-term immediate needs. He also added that “…the interests of the learners must be taken into consideration instead of a detailed and minute analysis of needs as attempted by Munby”.13


There are many methods of teaching languages. Each of the method has its own strengths and weaknesses. The **Grammar Translation Method** “…is simply a combination of the activities of grammar and translation”.\(^{14}\) It has ruled the language teaching from 1840s to 1940s and is still popular in some form. This method emphasizes on translating from the source language to the target language and vice versa, learning of vocabulary with direct translations to memorize, and sentence as a basic unit. Accuracy, mistakes are not allowed in this method. It practices the deductive method. At school level, the teaching of grammar consists of a process of training in the rules of a language which must make it possible to all the students to correctly express their opinion, to interpret the remarks addressed to them and to analyze the texts they read. The objective is that by the time they leave for undergraduate courses, they are well equipped with the tools of the language such as vocabulary, grammar and the orthography, and are proficient in interpreting written and oral texts in various contexts. The teaching of grammar examines the texts, and develops awareness that language constitutes a system which can be analyzed. Its practice makes it possible to recognize a text as a coherent whole and conditions the training of a foreign language.

Grammatical terminology serves this objective. Grammar makes it possible for each one to understand how the mother tongue functions, in order to give him the capacity to communicate its thought.

The Grammar Translation Method has its weaknesses. As speaking and listening skills are not taken into consideration, students are hardly trained in the active and practical use of the language. It is considered to be responsible for the pathetic state of the Indian learners who get good grades in examinations but cannot speak English at all. The bond between thought and expression seems to be lacking. Due to these shortcomings, Reform Movement challenged this method. However, this has been one of the widely practiced methods of teaching English even in our colleges.

The Reform Movement rejected the Grammar Translation Method. It follows the naturalistic principles of learning a language. Francois Gouin developed teaching principles based on child’s acquisition of mother tongue. This method had oral based methodology – study of spoken language. It provided phonetics training for the correct pronunciation. It emphasized the use of dialogue in conversational text, and use of target language (inductive method of teaching grammar). These naturalistic principles were further developed in the Direct Method.

The Direct Method (also called natural method), is a method that refrains from using the learners’ native language and just uses the target language. It was established in Germany and France around 1900. The Direct Method operates on the idea that second language learning must be an imitation of first language learning, as this is the natural way humans learn any language - a child never relies on another language to learn its first language, and thus the mother tongue is not necessary to learn a foreign language. This method places great stress on correct pronunciation and the target language from outset. It advocates teaching of oral skills at the expense of every traditional aim of language teaching.
The Direct method is more useful for young learners in the beginning classes but does not work in higher classes. It is an incomplete method as it emphasizes on speech training and other skills that is reading and writing do not receive any attention.

Though by 1920s, the importance of this method declined, it enjoyed immense popularity in many countries including India and is still widely preached in almost all training colleges.

The version that Direct Method is a ‘cognitive’ or ‘rationalist’ method that emphasizes second language use without translation in the language classroom; does not avoid grammatical explanation and formal practice, rather it lays greater emphasis on language use in genuine acts of communication than on language drill as it occurs in the audio-lingual method.\textsuperscript{15}

"The \textbf{Reading Method} was a theory of language learning which deliberately restricted the goal of language instruction to one of practical attainable utility".\textsuperscript{16} Michael West was of the view that most Indians required only the receptive skills of English. As a result, in 1960, the Reading Method came into existence. Stern also supported that the initial stage of learning a foreign language should be to learn to read it. The appeal of this method did not last long.


\textsuperscript{16} H. H. Stern, 461.
During the Second World War, Army Specialized Training Programme (ASTP) was set up in 1942 by American authorities with the specific aim to train fluent speakers in as many languages as they needed in the shortest possible time. But this method which arose as a result of special requirement could not work in the average classroom with average teacher and average learning and teaching situations.

As a result, The Army Method proved a great success as highly motivated students were given long hours of drilling by active practices with specially prepared graded materials and only via small groups of the trainees.

The Audio-Lingual Method was used by the United States Army (in 1950s) for “crash” instruction in foreign languages during World War II. The growth of this method, the writings and teachings of Charles Fries and R. Lado, the development of Contrastive Linguistics, the new technology of language laboratory and the theories of conditioning of behaviourist psychology were factors contributing to the development of audiolingualism. The term “audio-lingual” was coined by Nelson Brooks in 1964.

In Audio-Lingual Method students listen to or view tapes of language models acting in situations. Students practice with a variety of drills. Separation of the four basic language skills and the primacy of the audio-lingual over graphic skills; the use of dialogues as the chief means of presenting language; emphasis on certain practice techniques, mimicry, memorization and pattern drills; the use of language lab; use of contrastive analysis to judge the interference of mother tongue; establishing a linguist
and psychology theory as a basis for the teaching are few of the characteristics of this method.

The audio-lingual teaching materials are more scientifically and systematically designed; structural patterns are more systematically introduced and practiced; and student motivation is very high as they enjoy leaning to use the target language.

But the method was criticized for its excessive emphasize on oral drilling. The techniques of memorization and drilling proved to be tedious and boring.

The **Structural Approach** believes that language consists of ‘structures’ and that the mastery of these structures is more essential than the acquisition of vocabulary. It was assumed, Sentences-Clauses-Phrases-Words-Morphemes-Phonemes, was the appropriate sequence for learning and teaching.

The method was effective for teaching English in the hands of well qualified teachers trained in the techniques of drilling. But it was converted into a drilling method which made teaching an uninteresting mechanical process by the untrained teachers.

The **Bilingual Method** embodies the four principles of all language teaching; *Selection, Gradation, Presentation* and *Repetition*. The method practices a controlled, systematic use of the mother tongue by the teacher and the introduction of Writing and Reading early in the course of language learning.
In India three experiments carried out at the CIE, Hyderabad (first by H.N.L. Sastri, second by R.V.S. Murty and third by Nalini Nagarajan) show that the Bilingual Method is eminently suited to the conditions of classroom teaching and learning in our country, but the pedagogic viability of the method at the college level remains to be tested.

The Silent Way is a discovery learning approach, invented by Caleb Gattegno in the 1950s. It is often considered to be one of the humanistic approaches. It is called The Silent Way because the teacher is usually silent, leaving room for the students to talk and explore the language.

The oral approach/Situational language teaching was developed from the 1930s to the 1960s by British applied linguists such as Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornsby. The method attempted to develop a scientifically-founded approach to teaching English.

Since the last decade, there have been numerous approaches and methods used for teaching English to teach college students. New insights into the language acquisition process have given rise to new approaches and methods. Experts in the field of ELT recommended that the traditional methods must be replaced by the notional-functional approach or the Communicative Approach.

The Communicative Approach concentrates on use and appropriateness other than simply on language form (i.e. meaning and grammar), favours fluency-focused activities rather than accuracy-focused ones, practices communication tasks (that ensures maximum learners’ participation) rather than simple exercises on the language and inductive way of teaching. It has learner-centered approach than teacher-centered
direction. Individual work, pair work, group work, role-play, discussions are the classroom techniques.

The **Notional-Functional Approach** was a project started by The Council of Europe in 1971. A group of experts developed language courses based on unit credit system. Learning tasks were broken down into portions or units, each of which corresponded to a component of learners' needs and was systematically related to all other portions. D.A. Wilkins (1972), who developed this approach to teach language emphasized on the purpose for which language is used. Language need depends on the situation (formal, semiformal or informal).

One does not address his teacher or boss the way to his friend or colleague. Thus emphasis is on the communicative purposes of language, such as – introducing, greeting, inviting, accepting, refusing, asking for information, instructing, apologizing, etc. These functions include the notions related to duration, location, frequency, quantity etc. The functional notional approach gradually developed into communicative approach.\(^{17}\)

In the 1980s, the methods discussed above were overshadowed by more interactive views of language teaching, which collectively came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). “By 2004, CA -

(the Communicative Approach) began to receive wider implementation in both academic and non-academic institutes.¹⁸

Communicative Language Teaching advocates that:

...learners learn a language through using it to communicate, authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities, fluency is an important dimension of communication, communication involves the integration of different language skills and that learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.¹⁹

Communicative Language Teaching has initiated a number of offshoots that share the same basic set of principles. These approaches are, Task-based language learning (TBLL), also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI) which has grown steadily in popularity. The Natural Approach, Cooperative-Language Learning and Content-Based Teaching are also included. These approaches emphasize the successful completion of tasks as both the organizing feature and the basis for assessment of language instruction.


The communicative syllabus differs from a structural syllabus. A typical structuralist syllabus focuses on the grammatical structure language rather than on the communicative or pragmatic uses of that language. Communicative goals can be specified. It can be accurately described what learners should have learned and be able to do with language at the end of the lesson. Good communicative teaching is learner-centered, not teacher-centered.

Professor John Trim, one of the founders of CLT, said that children learning in school must be taught that language learning is about communicating, not getting things right. Trim believes in:

...emphasizing the importance of repair strategies and of the acceptance of errors. He asks “if certain learner errors are so predictable, how much effort is justified in the attempt to put them right, instead of developing different ways of enlarging that person’s communicative range? Instead of correcting mistakes, efforts should be doing things that will extend the communicative range of learners.”

Although communicative approach to ELT is gaining momentum, many problems remain such as- while practicing structure elements and content components (work on ideas, information, and subject matter), problem-solving activities and activities communicative in nature are avoided; a common approach to classroom interaction and error correction lacks. A predominance of grammar-translation and lecture methodology is

---

still popular in ELT classes, which contradicts the communicative methodology declared in the syllabuses themselves.

The **Process Approach** promotes learn systematic thinking and writing skills of the learners so that they can use their own composing strategies effectively to explore ideas. In discovery-oriented process approach, increased attention is given to the notion of genre and its application in language teaching in English for academic purposes (EAP) classes.

There are some **other methods** which are practiced in various countries of the world. **Language immersion** puts students in a situation where they must use a foreign language, whether or not they know it. This creates fluency, but not accuracy of usage. French-language immersion programs are common in Canada in the state school system as part of the drive towards bilingualism.

The methods change, and evolve and develop in response to the changing demands on language education resulting from social aspirations of a developing society. Some of the factors like needs and expectation of the society (socio-political, socioeconomic, educational factors etc.), learner factors (theories of learning in general and language learning in particular, aptitude, motivation), teachers' experience with the materials and methods in use at a given time, physical factors like—time and facilities available; available choices of media/infrastructure/communication (language) labs and other facilities for the presentation of texts etc. influence the development of a method.
The recent technological methods used for English language teaching such as use multimedia, Computer Assisted Language Learning and use of internet are discussed in the following part of the chapter.

Rajiv Gandhi Technical University has made the use of language laboratory mandatory for engineering and technology students. Professional colleges therefore in Indore city are promoting the use of multimedia for English language teaching. It has been reported by the English teachers during the survey that English lessons that incorporate multimedia applications can exert powerful motivation and provide bored learners with exciting new ways to learn.

The supporters of the view that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools can enhance English language teaching believe that these tools have removed the limitation of time and space found in traditional teaching. "Integrating ICT tools in teaching can lead to increased students' learning competencies and increase opportunities for communication".  

It was also discovered during the survey that the students of professional colleges with language laboratory achieved higher mean gain

---

scores in comparison to the students of colleges devoid of language laboratory. This fact supports the view that besides motivating the learners and raising their self esteem and confidence, Information and Communication Technology can enhance their interaction, verbalization and involvement in collaborative learning.

Indian educational institutions introduced language laboratories in 1960s. The laboratories with cassette players and headphones were later replaced by digital language laboratories which incorporated new technologies such as audio/visual aids. The use of multimedia for language teaching integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also provides the learners with immediate feedback, which facilitates their learning process.

It was disappointing to discover during the survey that maximum number of professional colleges in Indore city do not have language laboratory. When asked for the reason, the teachers and management responded that managing a language laboratory requires knowledge of a wide range of equipments and high cost of investment as well. Therefore, due to financial constraint, these colleges have kept the proposal of language laboratory aside.

But the professional colleges in Indore where English teachers are giving lessons through multimedia appreciated its use. They added that the use of text, images, sound/audio aids, visual aids, interactive activities, recording so forth enhances learners’ interest in language classes. These teachers also reported that mere existence of computers in language laboratory does not automatically lead to learning. The teachers must lay
emphasis on guidance rather than learner-control. A learning atmosphere is
to be created. Like any other tools or instruments, the language laboratory
is most useful in the hands of a craftsman who knows how to use it
skillfully. This notion recommends that the English teachers thus need a
professional training either at personal expense or through college
management.

Language laboratory provides a platform where teachers can try
experiments on themselves and the learners as well. By observing and
reflecting on their own problems and failures as learners, the English
teachers can seek to establish principles which will help them to improve
their teaching.

In the context of language teaching through computer, other than
language laboratory, the function of Computer Assisted Language Learning
(CALL) is also accountable. CALL which carries two important features:
bidirectional learning and individualized learning, is a tool for learning. It
is a learner-centered learning material, which promotes self-paced
accelerated learning. If the educational institution has access to it, teacher
can buy the language software available in the market. Computer can be
used to teach vocabulary, structures and can integrate the language skills
Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing. CALL has traditionally been
associated with self-contained, programmed applications such as tutorials,
drills, simulations, instructional games, tests, and so on.

In Computer Assisted Language Learning teachers act as guides, they
construct the activities learners have to perform and help them to complete
the assigned tasks. Instead of being directly involved in learners’
construction of the language, the teacher interacts with them primarily to facilitate difficulties in using the target language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) that arise when interacting with the computer and/or other people.

In order to promote CALL, it is crucial for English teachers to teach their learners “...how to learn by themselves and develop the capacity to practice self-evaluation and enhance intrinsic motivation. Teachers using CALL must be computer literate and trained frequently”.

Computers can adapt to the learners. In other words learners can control the pace of their learning; they can make choices, can skip unnecessary items or perform remedial work on difficult concepts. This control makes them feel more competent in learning English language.

Computer technology that is often used in classrooms is generally reported to improve the self concept and to master basic skills. But has limitations too. Availability of technological resources such as internet is one of them. Literature available on CALL is also not up to teachers’ expectations. Some language teachers find themselves more comfortable with textbooks and for some CALL activities are more complicated to evaluate in comparison to traditional exercises. Majority of the English teachers often find it complex to deal with the resources being used.

The English teachers consider creating CALL based assignments as a tedious job. It is time consuming and at the time requires special training as well. In addition, there is a lack of unified theoretical framework for

designing and evaluating CALL systems. As Lee also says in his research “... instructors may resist using internet-based activities or projects that require substantially more preparation time”.

Consequently the crucial factor that leads to the failure of CALL or any other technology in language education is not the failure of the technology it is the failure to invest adequately in the growth of a person as a teacher and teacher training. The ignorance of the administrators, management and the human component necessary to make a language laboratory useful also add to this failure. (Table 21: Availability of Language Laboratory).

The use of Internet in English language teaching and learning cannot be overlooked. Internet is a gigantic library containing an unbelievable source of information. To build the language and employability skills of their learners an English teacher should update himself with various websites (related to English language teaching) and must incorporate the use of internet in language teaching to harness its potential to better serve the needs of the English learners. Exploiting the websites by the learners in turn, assures improvement in their performance as well.

As mentioned in the prescribed syllabus, the use of language laboratory is mandatory for the students pursuing professional courses, still there are only a few institutions which implement them into the English language teaching process in a systematic and consistent way. The practical sessions conducted in the language laboratory carry an overall weight age of 20% for the final assessment. During the study it was found that hardly 30% of professional colleges in Indore city have established language laboratories. Out of which countable have the software for ELT. An English teacher can make use of internet lesson (e-mail, discussion group or videoconferencing) in place of conventional course book lessons only if language lab is available. Internet lessons have some advantages over course book lessons.

The internet websites are more current therefore they appeal to the learners. These lessons do not follow the same texts. They have wide variety of texts and foster independent learning. These materials do have novelty which is in contrast to course books which are highly predictable and repetitive. The internet provides easy, medium and difficult audio conversations with pre, during and post listening exercises that can be answered and self-checked online.24

The web-based English Language Teaching has a bright prospect because of potential benefits of the internet but it is equally challenging and

has obstacles as well. While interacting with the English teachers of professional colleges in Indore it was found that though they are aspired to use web based teaching materials, they avoid doing so. The only excuse was that to design, to edit and to modify the digital materials is time consuming. As Lee also quotes, “Therefore, instructors may resist internet based activities or projects that require substantially more preparation time”.25

Some technical issues may also upset English teachers to incorporate on-line language teaching. As Singhal states:

> When the network traffic stalls due to many users or some other network glitches, it may take time to access information or browse the internet. Most students may feel discouraged if they have to wait long for web site to appear. English teachers may also feel frustrated if they are not computer literate to debug computer–or internet-related problems in web-enhanced language classes.26

Technophobia due to lack of experience with computers is yet another reason prevailing in the English Language teachers. In the similar context, Peterson highlighted a number of negative impacts of computers on education.

Some of the doubts are: information overload can lead to techno-stress; Computer-mediated synchronous communications has generated more text with minimal interactions; learners’ disappointment due to lack of immediate feedback; without enough CALL training for English teachers, teaching simply results in learner apathy, disorientation and abuse.  

A practical problem discussed by English teachers during survey is the incredibility of websites. For example, as narrated by Singhal:

I typed “English learning” as key word in Google to look for Web sites; it responded 55,600.00 matched items found in 0.08 second. Does it make any sense to English learners? Who will browse all these matched web sites? Are students well trained to judge what features a good web site should have? Are articles of the web site genuine and credible? Are they unbiased and updated? In addition, the internet like a reservoir of knowledge offers access to all type of issues and topics, some of which are unsuitable for younger language learners.

---


In spite of above discussed formidable challenges; internet can add value to a learners’ learning. The only need is to harness the new technology effectively. Teacher training programs, relevant computer courses and seminars given by professional institutes can help to confront the situation.

Internet has many freely available sites which provide information and practical resources related to English Language teaching and learning. An English teacher needs to sort out the top websites on the basis of their utility, authenticity and relevancy to the syllabus topics. Some of these sites are:

**www.nonstopenglish.com** is a free learning database with on-line and email grammar and vocabulary exercises. It has its personal page with exercises and interactive tests. It is an ESL and EFL practice website. There is a workshop approach where vocabulary and grammar is practiced and new tests are added almost every week.

The exercises here are categorized as Crosswords / Multiple choice exercises / Fill in the gaps exercises / Put in the word / Exercises for beginners / Elementary exercises / Pre-intermediate tests / Lower intermediate test / Upper intermediate test / advanced level exercise / Professional level / Grammar exercises / Vocabulary building / Business English tests / Printable exercises / Vocabulary building games / Articles and Quizzes.

**www.englishclub.com** has pages like forums, games, quizzes, chat, help and friends. It answers all the queries of the learners through emails and gives the support needed in teaching English. It also has ‘The Learning
English Video Project’, a unique 7-part series of documentary films about people learning English in different countries around the world. Made by independent UK filmmaker Daniel Emmerson, the series features students from across the world who have different methods and reasons for learning English. It not only provides an entertaining and educational glimpse into the global ESL community but classroom materials and self-study exercises as well.

www.freeenglish.com is a site that enhances English vocabulary by sending 'Word of the day' regularly on learner’s email. Free English Lessons on Grammar, Conversation, Vocabulary and many more chapters are also available. It provides Free Tests/Material to improve reading speed.

www.rong-chang.com deals with strong and persuasive writing, high-quality grammar exercises, writing exercises, a pronouncing dictionary of the most common proper nouns, ESL online talk community and proverbs.

www.english-at-home.com gives exercises to practice grammar and tenses, speaking, vocabulary, idioms, English reading, real life English, and games. For example, if the learner enters real life English, it gives exercise on banking vocabulary.

www.vocabulary.co.il is yet another educational website dedicated to help learners’ reading, phonics, or English language skills. It offers vocabulary learning fun’s vocabulary word games with dozens of categories of vocabulary lists by making connections between words and ideas, and between words and pictures.
www.roseofyork.co.uk provides a course in General English, English for Business or academic purposes. It also prepares for English examinations.


One of the advantages of language teaching imparted through the Internet in professional institutions is to meet the growing need for mastery of communication skills to secure challenging jobs in leading multinational companies and the increasing number of students aspiring to go abroad to pursue their higher education. On the other hand to prepare and practice English teachers to efficiently apply all techniques in the Information age.

The use of Internet can open new avenues for language teaching. It can also change the reliance on maximum retention (and rote) to one of exploration and research, ultimately English teaching can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience by incorporating on-line language teaching.

Even though web-based EFL teaching seems to have enjoyed a bright prospect because of potential benefits of the internet, it is in fact full of
challenges and obstacles. As Towndrow and Vallance also highlight in their study:

...information overload can lead to techno-stress. Computer-mediated synchronous communications has generated more text with minimal interactions. Learners' are disappointed due to lack of immediate feedback and without enough CALL training for English teachers, online teaching simply results in learner apathy, disorientation and abuse.²⁹