

The Use of ICT to Develop Language Skills in the Undergraduate Level of Education

Syed Firoz Ahmad¹ PhD Research Scholar, Department of English, Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar, India

Prof. Pratibha Gupta², Professor, Department of English, Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar, India

Abstract:

A significant quantity of learning and teaching resources is available in English. English is a lingua franca (ELF) that is vital to tertiary education. If students are to access the global pool of knowledge and technology in this information age, they must be able to communicate in a foreign language. Although Mithila, an ancient region of India, has one of the fastest growing literacy rates in India, this does not represent the country's information and communication technology (ICT) literacy. This research examines how information and communication technology (ICT) can be utilised effectively in tertiary education to improve the listening and speaking skills of Mithila undergraduates. Many academics and researchers have proposed many approaches for learning English utilising currently available technology, such as instructional software, CDs, DVDs, videos, e-mails, and the internet. However, the Mithila undergraduates still lack English proficiency, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening, because the local school system prioritises reading and writing. As a result, English proficiency remains a struggle for the majority of university students. As a result, the authors provide a remedial approach and strategy for overcoming speaking and listening incompetency. This study focuses on undergraduates at constituent colleges of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, who were taught both L1 and L2 languages. In this investigation, both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be employed. Questionnaires and interviews will be the major methodologies utilised to create a framework for improving speaking and listening abilities, therefore, significantly increasing learner autonomy.

Keywords: ICT, CALL, IELTS, ESL, Listening Skill, Speaking Skill

1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on many parts of our lives has been profound, and education is no exception. Computer technology and the internet have become more important in assisting language acquisition as society has progressed. Traditional teaching and learning approaches are regarded as outmoded since they ignore the practice of communication and application skills. According to the English Language

syllabus of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga undergraduate English curriculum, English language skills should be promoted, with listening and speaking skills.

The university strives to enable students to choose resources that are most suited to their particular requirements, compensates for the limits of traditional classroom listening and speaking instruction, and tracks, records, and monitors learning progress. The goal of this study is to look into, interpret, and evaluate the techniques used by students to improve their English skills, as well as make recommendations on how to make better use of ICT to improve their Speaking and Listening skills.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of the Medium of Instruction for the degree programmes, ample of colleges provide English Language competence courses for their undergraduates. This highlights the significance of the English language, which serves as the vehicular language and is essential in the global labour market and academics. The content, methodology, and learning results of these English proficiency courses offered by local colleges differ greatly. Despite the fact that considerable research has been done on teaching English at the university level, there is still a notable research vacuum to be filled, as the difficulties and consequences of teaching English language differ among the diverse student groups. When it comes to enhancing speaking and listening abilities, there is a greater need for further study.

In reality, only 10% of the population is believed to be able to communicate effectively in the language. This indicates that there is a fundamental obstacle in either the instructional method or the ESL learners' learning patterns. The authors discovered that the majority of the students in the selected colleges lack proficiency in English speaking abilities and have poor listening skills. The notion of language learning has been changed with the advent of the ICT era, according to ESL theorist Stephen Krashen:

"Language acquisition does not need significant application of conscious grammatical rules or painstaking practice."
"Acquisition necessitates meaningful interactions in the target language – natural communication – in which

speakers are more concerned with the messages they are expressing and comprehending than with the form of their utterances." "Conversations with friendly native speakers who are ready to assist the acquirer comprehend are extremely beneficial in the actual world."

Despite the fact that computer-assisted language learning (CALL) improves ESL students' speaking and listening abilities, it has been received with criticism. The authors' goal was to look into the techniques utilised by students to study English and whether or not ICT was used effectively. This research should reveal the flaws in our undergraduates' strategies for improving their English speaking and listening abilities, as well as provide some ideas for incorporating computers into the learning process.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at the constituent colleges of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, with a sample size of 50 first-year undergraduates. The authors performed a preliminary interview to get a sense of how students felt about studying the four skills of English. When compared to writing and reading, the majority of people considered speaking challenging. Listening, on the other hand, was ranked as the least significant of the four skills. Following that, a questionnaire was administered to acquire further data on students' computer competence, understanding of online learning techniques, and attitudes about technology-assisted language learning, with a particular focus on speaking and listening.

To interpret and evaluate the data acquired from the pre and post listening test, a questionnaire survey was conducted on Communication Skills (CS) students from the aforementioned colleges. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The experiment took place in the classrooms of the selected colleges. The English

Learning System (ELS), a new autonomous learning system, was used with the goal of assisting students in meeting the standards set out in the system. A variety of teaching and learning materials was created specifically for the undergraduates. Listening and speaking skills were divided into two portions in the instructional system. ELS's listening and speaking sections consisted mostly of two types of exercises: listening and oral. There's an ELS course companion, a listening CD/DVD, and a textbook, all of which are cohesive, interconnected entities that allow students to make the most of multimedia resources while professors serve as facilitators.

Two courses were held. Both the controlled and experimental classes were picked on random basis from the colleges and were taught by the same teacher. The learners were divided into two groups, one for conventional and the other for experimental and ICT based. The first group followed the conventional classroom's routine learning mode, whereas the experimental classes had four English classes per week, two in the conventional classroom for listening and speaking and the other two in the ELS. Since students were chosen to learn in these two courses, they underwent a listening exam using the most recent IELTS listening material as the test paper, and both classes had equal listening levels. Their listening scores are nearly identical. The experimental group began their college based English studies in the ELS whereas the control group began their English studies in a traditional classroom.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

BBC programmes, movies, CDs, satellite TV programmes, ELS materials on the computer, and materials online for practicing listening, speaking, conversing, and information seeking, as well as relaxing, was used in the experimental lessons. The Moodle course web, experience exchange, learning guide, and score inquiry all provide links to a material shop where you may acquire courseware.

Internet	80
TV sets	56
Other facilities	25
E-mail, Newspapers and magazines	40
CD/ DVD, VCD	65

4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. TEST ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The listening exam was given to both the experimental and control classes at the conclusion of the semester. The IELTS listening exam was given in both classrooms on the same day to assess students' listening abilities. To make the data analysis more understandable, the authors changed the listening score from 142 out of 710 points (total listening score) to a percentage (20%). The experimental class had a higher mean score (19.284) than the controlled class, according to the test results (17.632). However, it is too early to conclude that the experimental class outperformed the control group. The independent sample T-test between on-line time and on-line score in the tests offered by the system concerning the experimental class was also carried out and evaluated to find out additional objective proof showing the experimental class made greater progress in their learning practice in the ELS.

Table 2: Shows the percentage difference in students' evaluations of CS in the ELS

In the CS, I enjoy ELS.	26.47% vs. 40.56%
I enjoy practicing language skills in a variety of settings, including ELS.	55.15% vs. 50.44%
The new style of learning irritates me.	18.38% vs. 9.09%
Traditional learning methods are less successful than ELS.	78.68% vs. 92.30%
I'm not used to learning in an ELS environment.	25.74% vs. 9.79%
I'm not sure what the ELS learning system is all about.	25.74% vs. 9.79%

The students who participated in the questionnaire survey came up with at least two ideas, taking into account all of the aspects that impact learning in the ELS: a) More instructor assistance and instructions in terms of the learning system and technical issues; b) Students should set aside more time to become acquainted with the ELS's resources and to practice their language abilities on a regular basis.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are some suggestions based on the results of the open-ended surveys and the students' perspectives.

- Listening and speaking tasks require more monitoring.
- Learning objectives that are consistent
- Facilitators will get training.

Finally, the ELS played an important role in helping students improve their listening and speaking skills. Learners are willing to accept and adjust to a new learning environment, even if they have difficulty doing so. They are also more

The correlation between on-line time and on-line listening score is substantial, indicating that they have a positive association (0.51837). As a consequence, it can be inferred that the more time students spent practicing in the centre, the greater improvement they achieved in listening and speaking.

4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE

The closed-ended questions elicited responses from 162 students about how they used the institute's present facilities to develop their listening and speaking skills. Table 1 illustrates that the most essential criteria for language learners are the facilities; clearly, the internet plays a vital role within the institute. Individual students' thoughts on the key challenges they experience in their Speaking and Listening learning practice, as well as their ideas, were gathered in the open-ended part. The findings and percentage contrast are provided in the tables below, with a response rate of 95%.

likely to take advantage of the ELS' abundant information and learning resources, which can be used to compensate for inadequacies in their traditional listening and speaking training. As the data show, students are not making full use of ICT and so are not attaining their full potential in speaking and listening. This unique learning setting provides ESL learners with an online platform where they may practice their spoken discourse or listening activities at their own speed and free time. This activity promotes learner autonomy, resulting in students becoming more confident and skilled English users, demonstrating the value of incorporating ICT into the classroom.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Ministry of Education-Statistics
http://www.moe.gov.lk/web/images/stories/statistic/sri_lanka_education_information_2010.pdf.
- [2] Ministry of Education-Statistics

http://www.moe.gov.lk/web/images/stories/statistic/sri_lanka_education_information_2011.pdf.

- [3] Krashen Stephen. D, "*The role of first language in second language acquisition*", Second language acquisition and second language learning. English, 1988.
- [4] Bley-Broman, Robert, "*what is the logical problem of foreign language learning?*" Gass, Susan M, Jacquelyn Schachter (eds.), Linguistic perspective on second language acquisition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- [5] H. Dulay, M. Burt, S. Krashen, "*Language Two*" New York: Oxford University Press Ellis, Rod, 1972, Second language acquisition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.