Impact of Digital Media in English Language Teaching to the Engineering Students

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Abstract

Social media have become effective tools for imparting English Language skills to the Engineering students. Smart phones and i phones have become necessary gadgets in the hands of the pupils. They have become indispensable in the academic arena. Words like download and upload, upgrade and update, install and uninstall, save and delete, tweet and re-tweet, like and dislike, log in and log out, etc. have become obligatory usage with the surging netizens today. The teacher as well as the student community is no exemption to it. The research further probes into the impact of social media in teaching and learning all the four skills of English language. The objective of this research paper is to forefront the fact that how effectively social media plays vital role aiding teaching and learning process especially imparting English Language skills to engineering students. Social media are changing the way of using the language especially compressing it through the usage of acronyms, abbreviations and emoticons and facilitating the communication to be fast and precise. However efforts should be made to see that the adverse impacts of social media do not weaken the pedagogy of English language teaching. This paper delineates how social media have become effective tools for imparting English Language skills to the Engineering students.

Keywords: *Communication, You tube, Web-Blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Wiki-Books, Hash-tags*

1. Introduction

English language has more learners than any other languages in the world. When the going gets tough the tough gets going. Language is not a static thing; it evolves with the evolution of cultural and lifestyle of a region. Hence the learners and the trainers have to update themselves with the trending changes in the use of English language. English is not the same English once was used at the time of Chaucer or Milton. Its vocabulary has flourished with the coinage of new words and other words borrowed from other languages. Learning and teaching of English have to be innovative and entertaining. Given the situation that we are living in the digital era today; it becomes all the more necessary to make use of them in the process of learning and teaching English. Social media like Skype, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook not only make it viable to easily deliver, receive and share information, but also help to streamline communication, and collaborative interaction with other people using various language skills such as writing, links-haring, and voice or video files.

The globalisation has made everything very competitive. To get a job with decent pay or work in abroad or pursue higher studies, many students have to clear exams like TOFEL, ESOL, CELTA, BEC etc. These are the tests conducted for the students to clear either to immigrate or to work in English speaking countries. The traditional teaching of language using text books and rote memory will not get the desired result in language learning. All the reputed engineering institutes give more importance to imparting English language using various methodologies to make them competent, fluent and proficient in the language. Technical English, Communicative English, Soft Skills and Pre-placement Training are offered to make the students proficient and become successful in job interviews. Considering the nature of work, most of the companies conduct English proficiency test during the interviews for making the employees to work in MNC companies.

2. Literature Review

The following Arguments support the proposed idea and the information found in the literature related to this selected area of study. It describes, summarises, evaluates, clarifies and substantiates of this research. The following research supports this study.

"Influence of Social Media on English Language Learning," is a research article written by Dhanya. It stresses the relevance of using social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter for making learning and teaching English more effective and easy for the learners. This paper has brought out the advantages and the disadvantages of using social media to impart language skills to the students. If teachers want to remain teachers, to remain relevant and effective, they need to use 'learning technologies' to help students to reach the world outside the classroom. Teachers now have to adhere to the innovative practices in teaching- learning process and the role of teachers has changed from mere lecture into facilitators (Dhanya, 2016).

"Social Media in English Language Teaching and Learning," is an article by Voyce Li. It brings out the survey of students using social media. According to the writer, Forums and blogs have helped to improve English writing skills. The result of the research by the writer proves that YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp and Wiki have ranked as the top most influencing social media rendering help in learning English language in Hong Kong (Voyce, 2017).

"Social Media and Its Effects on Individuals and Social Systems," is also a research article which points out that the social media has an influence on human brain that in turn forms the quality of life and behaviour. The emoticons make human communication easy. However social media also has adverse effect on human behaviour and his learning. Sensible social media interaction is needed for the effective communication in the society

which is also vital for learning English language without major complications (Natascha, 2014).

"Explore the Ways of Using of Social Media Platforms in Teaching English Language," is explored by Norah Hussein, brings out the idea that technology has provided the platform for facilitating the process of learning and teaching English language. The writer has recommended web blogging and Wiki text as the major social tool for developing writing skills. Blogs can be made as the virtual writing sharing platform for the users to post themes of various subjects and get comments and participate in live discussion ((Natascha, 2014)).

Blogs and Writing Skills

Wikipedia defines blog as a discussion or informational website published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete, often informal diary-style text entries. Posts are typically displayed in reverse chronological order, so that the most recent post appears first, at the top of the web page. Oxford dictionary defines Blog as a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group that is written in an informal or conversational style. It is also known as weblog which is known as online journal or informative website displaying information in the reverse chronological order, with latest posts appearing first. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on specific subject.

Blogs create communicative environment to share information and experience of the teachers that in turn will motivate the learners to share what they know (Norah). English teachers can create an account in any blogging service and publish a class blog where the students should be provided access to read and make comments. The students can also post any content related to class and clarify doubts. The teachers also use the blog to get feedback and evaluate students' academic writing assignments. Learning is a continuous process for which regular practice is mandatory. "The language learning is a systematic process, where the learning has to be practised continuously without crack"(Balamurugan K, 2019)

Wikipedia defines Wiki-books as a wiki-based Wikimedia project introduced by the Wikimedia Foundation for the creation of free content e-book textbooks and glossed texts that anyone can read and edit. Teachers can use wiki as a guide document for the students to refer and update. Teachers and students can enter into discussion in the wiki forum. Both of them can write article to be published in Wiki regularly and get feedback about them. The students can be encouraged to post stories in wiki to improve creative writing skills.

Facebook and Twitter

Social Media benefits writing skills. When someone writes with spelling or grammar mistakes, the readers can easily point out the mistakes and the writer becomes aware of his own spelling or grammar errors at once. It is estimated that 750 million people on earth are using

Facebook and 190 million tweet every day. Facebook has the potentiality to facilitate interaction, collaboration, communication and discussion among students and teachers. Writing in Facebook and Twitter is more malleable than writing. It provides social space for the individualised experience through online (Griffith & Liyenage, 2008). The blend of informal, personal communication and the mass audience supported by social media is a process for rapid change. An important element of Twitter composition is the hash-tag – a clickable keyword used to categorize tweets. Hash-tags have also spread to other social media platforms – and they've even reached everyday speech, Hash-tags have become popular culture, from greetings cards and t-shirts to the dialogue of sitcom characters. Motivation for learning is an important ingredient. "Value- the word which tells us how important you are in this world and must have a faith on you, which would give you an optimistic thought to make yourself like others" (Manigandan K, 2018).

The 140 character limit not only the effectiveness of the force, but it also lends itself to real fun wordplay. Twitter handle users also make use of it to display jibs on political opponents in the form of #hash-tag humour. Most tweets today include links, facilitating the audiences to longer passages improving the language - by making available great contents that people wouldn't have noticed at all. The best example for Twitter hash-tag making history was the Arab Spring. Hash-tags were all over Twitter, and continued to dominate tweets that discussed the uprisings throughout the Middle East. The individual thinking ability and his contact with society should also decide how he is communicating with society. "Communication skills and intrapersonal skills will have a serious effect on attitude and interpersonal relations". (Jaisankar & Justin, 2019).

YouTube and Skype

YouTube is a video sharing website that allows users to upload, download, and watch video clips. It provides effective and non-traditional learning. It provides platform for making use of video blogs, clips and video lectures live as well as recorded ones to listen and understand. YouTube has enormous potential to assist enhancing listening skills of the learners. It provides cultural dimensions by way of providing a tool to listen to various slangs and tones of speakers belonging to different regions and understand how the speakers are influenced by their culture. The learners can know various styles and genres of English language through the use of You Tube. Listening and watching the utterances and the words spoken simultaneously becomes a great stimulus to learn rich vocabulary comprehension which is very vital for learning English language skills. YouTube gives access to a large source of online videos of teaching and learning (Almurashi, 2016).

Skype provides students and teachers with the opportunity to connect with the outside world without leaving the classroom, and allows them to meet face-to-face and discuss with the subjects of their learning or with students or experts from other cultures. Skype can be used as supporting tools for course delivery and oral practice. Faculty members not having enough time can very well make use of Skype to improve the academic writing. Skype helps academic research especially for the exchange of ideas and information from the native speakers and learners (Yates, 1996). It provides platform for improving listening and speaking skills. Faculty members get more benefit out of it as they can easily explain to the students directly from anywhere at any time. It makes the learning easy and comfortable.

3. Conclusion

Web- blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Wiki-Books, Skype and YouTube are some of the popular handles of social media networking used by most of the people particularly students and teachers. They have exerted drastic change as far as English learning and teaching is concerned. Considering the findings of the studies done, the positive effect of the social networking surpasses negative impacts. Positive effects are mainly shown in the students' vocabulary expansion, pronunciation enhancement, scanning and skimming skills while reading the text on the net, etc. Writing skill is most negatively affected. To minimize the negative effect of Social Network on the students' English language proficiency, it is vitally important to educate our students on the use of information and communication technology, and decrease the usage of abbreviations, acronyms, other short forms in their academic writings. Computer mediated communication will make the learners autonomous. Hence Self learning will bear desired results in the future with the support of social media.

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