

# Learning Language Skills using Recent Technological Tools

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## ABSTRACT

Technology is a tool in learning process. Learning English is a prestigious process. Communicating in English gives social status. It is felt difficult by most of the learning community owing to their inveterate habit of speaking only in their respective mother tongue. Communication could be achieved by acquiring four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Learning English as second language to speak, read and write is very difficult for learners hailing from the rural areas.

**KEY WORDS:** Communication, tools, learning, gadgets, technology, computer.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has its unique importance in our country. It links people from different countries and states together and it facilitates international communication. Students belonging to umpteen communities, so far stifled of higher education due to geographical barriers and lack of infrastructural facilities, have started pursuing their studies with optimistic outlook. The English language is the only means for preventing our isolation from the world. It develops vastly and it is the premier prestige language because all higher education requires fluency in English only.

It is necessary to bridge the gap between the learner and the process of learning by using recent trends and technologies to improve language skills.

## DISCUSSIONS

**Importance of English in Present Globalised Situation:** English has its unique importance in our country. It links people from different countries together and it facilitates international communication.

**‘Language skills are more a matter of doing rather than knowing’:** Teachers should give individual attention in the class. Learners should be motivated to communicate in English. Teaching English should be made attracting, inspiring and interesting by using technological tools. Class must be student centered. Some of the oral activities such as JAM (Just a Minute), Role Play, Story narrating, Enacting, Sharing the problems, etc. should be conducted in the class very often using some gadgets to promote their listening and speaking skills. Individual participation in using gadgets must be provided to remove their phobia. Acquisition of more vocabulary helps good and fluent communication. Teachers help the students to develop vocabulary by different language games. More classroom activities in group can be created for effective learning.

**Teachers’ Responsibility:** The success of a teacher in the class depends on the success of the learners’ learning in the class and the learners’ success depends on the utilization of the language purposefully and properly. Teachers should take continuous training programs through some training centers such as ‘the Regional Institutes of English’, ‘English and Foreign Language University’, etc. access the language skills. Teachers; especially language teachers should read one paragraph in the classroom every day with proper stress, intonation, articulation. Teachers also should update their knowledge

English teaching is not only based on four skills but also on other skills such as personality, technical and technological, etc. The teacher should be aware of recent trends as well as techniques to teach the learners effectively because learners are using new technological gadgets such as I-pod, I-pad, net browsing, etc. Some of the classroom activities should be conducted to make the learners active and to develop learners’ skills in four languages.

**Learners’ Responsibility:** They should learn to push themselves without expecting others to do. They should convert their difficulties of learning into challenging opportunities. Students should attend language work shop, seminars, guest lectures and to take up competitive exams to develop their communicative skills with the help of English faculties by using gadgets as tools.

**Some of the recent trends which help to acquire knowledge in English:** According to the latest data, video for homework and mobile computing for classroom work are taken as recent trends in teaching process. High school students access internet, tablets and laptops in a classroom to acquire knowledge of their own. Students generally connect to the Internet when at home and sometime at educational institutions.

**Vocabulary Game:** Each group should be given two / three words of six syllables each. Students should find out new meaningful words as many as possible by using the letters in the given words. Then they should find out the meaning and phonetic symbol of those words using an e-dictionary in the classroom.

**Computer Game:** The successful conduct of the language games solely depend on the spontaneous interest of learners and enthusiastic involvement of the teacher, who has a command on his own language thoroughly. It is an interactive narrative multimodal text structure. However as products of new technologies, they are valuable studies in their own with traditional narrative techniques. Studying computer games enables the students to explore their knowledge in learning. The language laboratory must be equipped with good computer systems and software must

be installed. The laboratory must be taken care of well by software trained teachers. Before they are introduced to technical knowhow, it is necessary to train them in articulation using electronic device like lang. lab.

**Film, Video and Mobiles:** Using short length videos is a way to develop skills like vocabulary and comprehension. Videos help to learn about current events through news broadcasts. Films and film reviews can be adapted for any level of instruction. Students use video for doing Class work and homework. Video is one of the tools that has been on the rise in recent years. Teachers are using video in the classroom to present their lecture, to note the events and to explain the topic. Students are using mobile devices for anytime for educational games, for reminders and alerts related to their academic lives

**Apps:** Learning English can be frustrating. Apps like iPads and tablets are great way to practice English. For learning grammar, app like Grammar Up allows students to acquire their knowledge on specific topics such as verbs, prepositions, structure, etc. The app also helps students to skip questions by shaking the tablet. Some professional colleges offer a list of apps for students for basic letter instruction to pronounce properly. Students can absorb great information through experiential learning. Young children can learn vocabulary through fun virtual trips while professional students can learn about the government on sites. There are many options on the Internet to learn any topic virtually.

**Podcasts:** Students can improve their comprehension skill by listening podcasts. They can also create English speaking abilities. A free download of iTunes gives teachers access to hundreds of free podcasts on a range of topics. There are multiple podcasts tailored for English language learners to practice their speaking skills. With the help of microphone and computer, students can create their reports and presentations. Video podcasts are an attractive option for students to learn English easily. Students can have email to write on a discussion board. This is a great way for them to practice their writing and reading comprehension skills.

**Web Quests:** Web quests are a fun way for learners to build English proficiency using net. Students are given a task and rely on their content to complete it. This type of practice helps them to develop their thinking and writing skills. Teachers can create their own Web Quests to access databases.

**Online Games:** Students can master pronunciation, grammar and other English skills by playing games on the computer or mobile devices. Fun brain has educational games and Star Fall has multiple games for younger students to increase English skills. These games can be put up on white boards to get full class participation in interaction.

**Blogging:** Blogs provide great forums for learners to practice their writing skills. It is more of an authentic writing experience to access to read posted entries. Teachers may ask students to write about specific topics that they find interest in or can provide commentary on current events and social issues. The more they practice writing skills, the more proficient they become.

So blogging (weekly or daily) is recommended. Blogs can also help family members to see what their children are learning in the classroom.

**Skype:** Skype is a great way to practice speaking and listening skills for learners. It helps students to have question-and-answer sessions, attend video-conferences, virtual field trips and interview, and also connect with other students from different cultures and countries. Skype can also use to conduct parent-teacher conferences. Dave's ESL Cafe provides easy explanations of different grammar concepts like tenses and verb forms. Audio books can supplement reading instruction and improve comprehension. Educational technology defines that any digital devices that enhance student's learning power in the classroom. It is necessary to understand the current trends in education in order to incorporate technology effectively into the classroom learning.

#### **Important Recent Trends in Education Technology:**

- Increasing Collaboration between Institutions
- Develop Cultures of Innovation
- Possibilities of Assessment and Measurement
- Proliferation of Open Educational Resources
- Increase in Blended Learning
- Redesigning Learning Spaces
- Teacher education program in-service training program

#### **Suggestions to improve language**

- Language class must be an interactive class. 'Chalk and Talk' methodology should be avoided.
- A bridge course for at least a fortnight on communication skill should be made compulsory to the students
- The learners should be given opportunities to use language laboratory equipped with technological tools at least twice a week.
- Conducting self-assessment programs such as learning programs, power point presentation, presenting paper in seminar, submission of project report, lingua phone recording, etc. may help the learners learn English effectively.

- The engineering syllabus should include group discussion, role play, debate, report writing, etc using some technological gadgets to expose themselves.

## 2. CONCLUSION

The teacher should act as a co-participant in the process of learning. The teacher should always go with an open mind and ready to learn. They are the pillars of the education system. Teacher should be a co-learner because “a burning lamp alone can light another lamp”. They should be a cook and not to be a cooker. Learners must be like automatic machines rather than operative machines. The jobs of tomorrow will require high level communication skill. Hence the language skills should be improved to communicate properly using some tools such as computers, note pads, internet, etc. Employability depends not only on technical knowledge of a student but on his ability to converse with others to express his views lucidly and effectively in the globalised scenario. Internet plays a tremendous and stupendous role in the improvement of learners’ skills. It provides enthusiastic and autonomous learning environment to develop their interactive skills. Not only the problem lies on speaking but also lies in writing. Writing could be a tool for the learners to find out their mistakes of their own and could possibly to correct it themselves by understanding the language rules. Hence, the learners should concentrate on writing skills to acquire full knowledge. If they practise writing skill, they would feel comfortable at the examination. Writing leads to successful speaking also. If one attains the first skill i.e. listening skill, then the other three skills will follow one by one. It is the sole responsibility of a teacher to make the learners acquire knowledge in all the four aspects. Learners should learn in what way they want to learn and what they want to learn rather than what they have to learn.

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