

Leveraging Technology for Autonomous English Language Learning: A Study on Formal and Informal Platforms in Higher Education

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Abstract: *This study aims to address the formal and informal online English language learning. Technological developments and new patterns have a strong influence on English Language learning before and after COVID-19. The 21st century teachers should realize that students are enter the classroom with advance knowledge of technology and expecting technological changes in language learning process. Language teaching professionals are in need numerous changes and innovations in technology to teach language. In this scenario educational technologies, especially computers and computer-related possessions, have grown tremendously and have occupied all areas of learning. The findings suggest that learners have opportunities to learn English language with formal and informal platforms such as software and Social Network Sites (SNS).*

Keywords: Formal and informal platforms, social network, computer-related possessions, software/website platforms.

1. Introduction

With the broad and improvement of English around the world, English is utilized as a moment dialect for Indian students and it is the primary dialect in most of the western students. English language received a high prestige in Asian countries. At present the role and status of English language in India is than ever as evidenced by its position as a key subject of medium of instruction and become second language subject in curriculum. The traditional English language learning has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of advance technology and the era assigns new challenges and duties to the modern students. Andreas Lund (2006) stated that there is a strong tradition of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) addressing materials, software packages and technologies that aid and promote cognitive development and linguistic performance [1]. This also emphasizes that, learners must pay more attention about technologies how they are connected with social and cultural practices. In a nut shell, the teaching methodology has seen a sea-change in imparting education. Autonomous learning allows learners to study on their own accord without depending on the presence of teachers, classrooms, and even curriculum. This type of learning is essential to be instilled among language learners due to the nature of the subject which requires rich exposure to the language. English language learning can be subdivided into two forms of learning processes, namely the formal and informal learning stages. Formal learning is a learning process defined by regulations and predetermined outcomes usually bounded by a physical class set-up, instructions, a fixed learning path and a specified timeframe. The formal learning can continue with traditional classroom environment, whereas, informal learning may depends on learner's special choices through online learning. In informal

learning, learners have chance to miss the structural language. However, learners can learn updated vocabularic language on their own. This form of learning can improve the individuality among learners [2].

In this scenario it is the accountability of a modern teacher to understand and bring the digital world into the classroom with tools like internet, social networking sites, LCD projectors, interactive software, digital imaging, audio and video creation tools, on-demand video libraries and laptops. These technologies can help the teacher to create new teaching methods and avoid abscond information in the classroom.

The new technologies have expanded the possibilities for distributed communication and interaction. Technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change. Social networks can project the teachers ideas, views, and methods with new dimensions. Before adopting the digital communication teacher should learn the proper usage of Social networks. The digital communication is minimizing the space between teacher and student to interact not only in the classroom but entire day. The enormous technical complexity of the Internet has expanded to include thousands of networks, millions of computers, and billions of users across the world [3]. The Social network, Face book, and Twitter are occupied the heart of the learners and bought autonomy in learning English language to students.

These tools can modify the future, and fulfill the dream of students. Technology is expected both to enhance language instruction in the classroom and to extend language education beyond the physical classroom. Over the years, educational institutions have been focusing more on standardizing the learning goals based on a fixated teacher-

oriented performance assessment thus in a way renouncing the traditional notion of education which inspires informal learning through formal guidance [4].

This paper sets out to understand the factors that determine language learners' have autonomy in learning the English Language through formal and informal platforms.

2. Literature Review

Institutions has moved from the conventional applications to the innovation utilize within the classrooms. It is presently an set up truth that the utilize of innovation encourages educating and learning in dialect classrooms. The world gets to be increasingly associated, classroom encounters ought to reflect those same changes since today's students' profiles are very diverse from the prior ones [5].

The define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system [6].

In terms of materials utilized by the understudies, SNSs bring a distinctive viewpoint to the setting of instruction. It gives an opportunity for both teachers and learners to be uncovered to the dialect through bona fide exercises and materials, and in this way can advance constructivist learning through significant communication [7].

The the online social organizing locales not as it were spur the Net-generation learners to utilize significant learning materials, but moreover let the learner encounter the true utilization of a dialect in communication [8]. The utilize of SNSs for dialect educating puts an accentuation on utilizing the target dialect as a asset for building interpersonal connections that separates it from conventional approaches to dialect learning instructional method and gives an opportunity for victory. In this way, dialect securing will be advanced to a awesome degree [9].

Formal English Language Learning

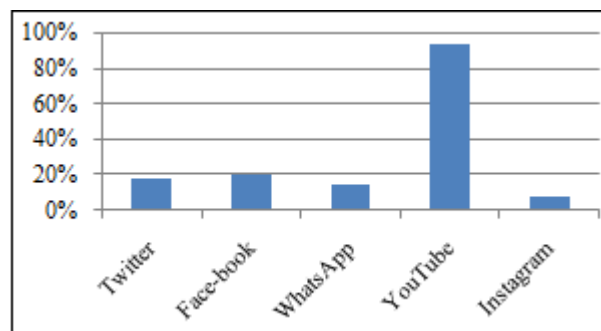
For the last decades the internet has occupied the major area in the class-room for gathering and scattering the information. Before the Internet period, authentic materials were already available through radio, television and newspapers; students could speak or correspond with native speakers and communicate with teachers or fellow students by postal mail or telephone, and practice with CD-ROMs. By this process both the teacher and the student will be benefitted from the Internet information. The Internet exponentially increases the dimensions of quantity, speed, and accessibility in learning. The teacher is supposed to assign computerized voice based lessons to students to improve pronunciation, pitch, clarity, and rhythm. [10] The technology has increased its trends to identify spelling mistakes, possible corrections and to develop all L R S W skills. The authentic material should be sent to all parts the of world. Formal learning is a learning process defined by regulations and predetermined outcomes usually bounded by

a physical class set-up, instructions, a fixed learning path and a specified timeframe.

Benefits of website Technology:

- Direct Instructions
- Indirect Instructions experimental Learning
- Independent Study
- Interactive instructions

In India the software are developed with formal setting to learn English language. Schools and higher educational institutions are teaching English language through renowned software's. The software's like Ginger spelling correcting



Bar graph: Usage of SNS to learn English Language

Technology, Internet ESL journal, Language Software like Globarena, English Mastery, English Pronunciation Dictionary(EPD), Rosetta Stone and many more which are open and free to learn a language individually. These soft wares are recommended by the educational institutions and utilized by the students. The formal use of Telegram app is endorses better communication by permitting teachers and students to exchange dialogues, express ideas and work on tasks collaboratively without prejudice. Telegram use encourages active roles in English language teaching and learning [11].

Research on the potential of blogs for enhancing second language acquisition has been growing since the start of this century [12]. The ELT teachers have adopted this sort of technology to educate and update the levels of students. The positive side of blogs, researchers have described that blogs are more successful in improving communicative writing skills among students.

The research says that the formal English language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, listening, writing, speaking, and reading can develop through Social Networking Sites such Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and even with WhatsApp platforms [13].

Informal English Language Learning

One of the other aspects of information technology is websites. Today, the world becomes a global village. Present generations are learning the language through websites in a short period. The website technology contains a number of methodologies according to English language. To the present generation teachers may gather the information and it also provides ideas for classroom plans and, very important, tips for disadvantaged or advanced students. Every so often, the technology is minimizing the usage of books and provides clear instant information [14].

YouTube is an exciting web device. It is one of the popular visual website which can help the students to promote themselves into communication in a dynamic manner. In order to stay abreast of global trends of engaging in the use of technology to transfer knowledge, language classrooms in India are also undergoing sea-changes where teachers are being compelled to incorporate technology into their teaching methodology. Social networking has become a common communicative system in today's society, especially among young adult students. There are several activities that can be done to teach English and learn English by using Face book. First lessons will post to read and write, and a text or link to pointed on webpage [15]. In the present scenario the education is learning through online process like Social networking, Face book, Blog and Twitter. Students can discuss the text by sharing ideas, understandings the difficulties, or asking questions and posting comments with each other. More over social network for the purpose of fulfilling the basic activities as: learning through collaboration, questioning, improving discussion skills, sharing education and learning materials.

Skills can also be promoted by social networking sites among the students to make them to write daily conversations. Secondly, to teach to writing, teachers can also ask students to write daily news, reviews and post it on Face book. The other students can comment or make correction on it. Twitter is another social network tool that provides communication every time and everywhere. The network Twitter allows the user to send text based messages, called tweets with a maximum length of 140 characters [16]. Users always update it by posting comments. The users can see all posted tweets, and can judge the quantity and frequency of their tweets using the date stamp. Participants stated that this function helped them monitor their activities. For instance, when participants noticed that the last tweet was made three days ago, they realized they had not studied for some time, and started making an effort to make time for study. They reflected on the tweet content as well. As they were reflected from the tweet records they viewed the content of their activities. When they realized that they had continuously used only vocabulary building apps, for example, they directed themselves to work on other skills such as reading or listening [17].

Some recorded their test scores, in order to compare previous scores with new ones. The record of tweet logs help the participants to visualize their learning activities; their comments and tweet logs shows that how they monitored and regulated their learning by using social media. By this process, users can help each other, solve the problems faster, and access the sites easily.

Social networking sites can also assist the students in:

- Project work
- Team work
- Self-evaluations
- Language modulation
- Organizing and planning
- Brainstorming
- Advertising
- Newsletters

Teachers and students can communicate with the experts and gain information. Blogger is another free blogging tool from Google to learning English Language. Students can use it to keep diaries, write stories, and reflect on classes [18]. Teachers can easily leave comments and students can develop communities. Here teachers are facilitators to provide space for discussion, and in the end teacher should also give feedback to get things right. This paper sets out to understand the factors that determine language learners' have autonomy in learning the English Language through web sites [19].

3. Conclusion

This paper focuses on the sources, which are available in technology. Technology is one of the best resource for teachers to share knowledge with students. It can improve learner autonomy. A mixture of both formal and informal languages is important for the continuance of society as it stands. Despite of technological and societal changes the language learning is a key to convey the message in meaningful form. Both formal and informal language can learn through technological aspects. The Twitter, Face-book, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube can help the all levels of students to learn English language. The composing, tuning in, lexicon, and inquire about exercises might be started and joined through SNS since it may move forward students' composed communication abilities as well as their expository, collaborative, and social organizing and interaction abilities

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