English Mass Media: The World-Wide Knowledge Bank for Learners

S. Sreejana

Abstract: In the present scenario, English is considered to be a mandatory language professionally and officially all over the world. Almost all the people have a tendency to have good English communication skills. English is the most common foreign language also. Therefore in every walk of life, it has become mandatory for the students to have good English communication skills. The paper focuses on how Mass media helps the students acquire English language fast. The most common list of media that was widely used 20 years ago is broadcast, film, print media, audio recording and reproduction. While these mediums played a huge role in bringing about the transformation that we are witnessing across the world, the current game changer has been the Internet. The paper emphasizes on how the usage of internet helps the learnersto have English language competency and how mass media acts as world-wide knowledge bank for students.

Key words: Communication skills, Mass media, English language.

I. INTRODUCTION

Before the age of internet and mass media, if a student needed any information, they get it through books after so many researches. But in recent times, if the students need any information, there is too much information available around on the topic they are in search. The biggest turnaround in making this happen or the key contributor establishing this set up is internet and mass media. Today's college students (which consist of Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials) are exposed to all types of technologies in many aspects of their lives (Browning, Gerlich, &Westermann, 2011). While the advancement in technology has impacted every field across the universe, one of the main things to benefit out of that is must-see media. As a result of this, technology advances. One of the key developments that are observed is the increase in types of medium that are available to the current generation for the development of English Communication skills.

II. AREA OF STUDY

For this study, 120 students are taken as samples. The students are from the first year Engineering and technology. They are from varied background. 53 % of the students are from rural areas and 47 % of the students are from urban areas.
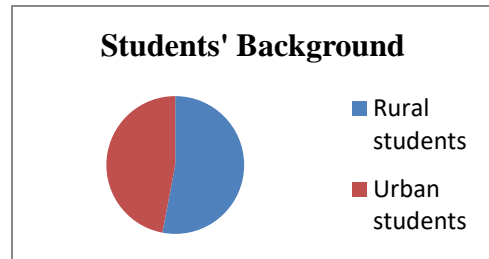
Fig:1 Students' background

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The students' language competency is analysed based on their usage of mass media technologies. A questionnaire has been given to the students in order to understand about their usage of mass media. Various questions like the type of mass media that the students prefer the most, the type of mass media that is reliable and easy to use, the usage of newspapers, magazines, radio, television and internet, frequency in reading newspapers and magazines, the social media platform the students use the most are asked to the students through questionnaire.

IV. FINDING

It has been noted that 12% of the students like reading, 6% of the students like to listen to radio, 34% of the students like to watch television and 48% of the students like to use internet. It is the usage of internet which is used more when comparing to that of listening to radio, reading newspapers and magazines and watching television.
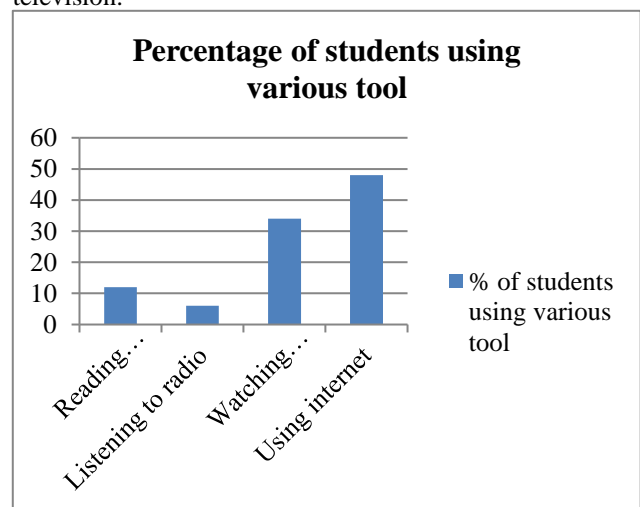

Fig:2 Percentage of Students using various tools

Television as learning tool

In the recent times, kids started watching television programmes exclusively. 34% of the students say that they like to watch television in improving their English language skills. It is noted that the television programmes help the students to pick up English conversation skills and new words at ease. They are able to use new phrases and words by watching English programmes and use them in daily conversations.

In order to develop English speaking skills, television programmes in English help the students to acquire more number of vocabulary and new phrases.

The analysis shows that watching movies helps the students acquire English language. Since interest lies in movies for most of the students, the interest makes the students acquire language skills automatically without any stress. Moreover, movies are the one that provides real time conversations with natural terminologies and flow of speech for the students learning English as a second language.

Newspaper as a learning tool

It has been analysed and found out that 12% of the students are interested in reading newspapers in order to improve their English Communication skills. Students with reading as habit are seen to be exposed to more vocabulary and hence there is continuous learning. Students with better vocabulary are found to understand the concepts easier and seem to be successful in expressing their ideas. This is often found true with the case of students interested in book reading. It has been noted that the students with English as a mode of education have the tendency to read English newspapers and thereby improve their English communication skills furthermore.

Radio as a learning tool

Listening to radio has become a passive one in the present scenario. Only 6% of students have the habit of listening to radio programmes in order to improve their English Communication skills. It has noted that radio programmes that are readily available are not in English mode. Rather, most of the programmes are in vernacular language. It has been found that there are only minimal programmes in English in the recent times. They tend to listen to radio for the events happening around and in turn listen to music. Therefore, in therural region, there is a minimal usage of radio as a learning tool of English language. Also it has been noted that internet usage is less among most of these students since they lag internet facility.

Internet as a learning tool and a Pool of Resources

48% of the students use internet as a tool to improve their English communication skills. It has been noted that the students improve their language automatically. As educators look for ways to engage and motivate students, social media technologies are becoming a viable supplement to the traditional learning environment (Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs, & Meyer, 2010).

Due to the drastic development seen across all the walks of life, the board was addressed as global village but now it seems that a different name can be coined, preferably as William Shakespeare addressed, as a stage, because whatever is happening around us, the whole world is brought in front of us as if it is happening in our backyard.

Irrespective of the field like science, technology, sports, art, architecture and so on, whatever details are needed in any field, a detailed explanation is currently available in the mass media where internet plays a major role. Also, educators are examining the combination of distance education delivery with instructional social media, thus, providing new approaches to teaching and learning that blend pedagogy and technology (Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010; Lee &McLoughlin, 2010; Veletsianos& Navarrete, 2012).

The collaboration between different mediums have also made it much easier to access different medias, if not through one but through the other. On a daily basis the students use desktop computers, laptops, e-readers, tablets, and cell phones to actively engage in social networking, text messaging, blogging, content sharing, online learning, and much more (Cassidy, Griffin, Manolovitz, Shen, &Turney, 2011). As documented in recent research, students and faculty are using these emerging technologies and platforms in all facets of their daily lives, specifically social media (Browning, et al. 2011; Chen &Bryer, 2012.

V. RESULTS

Television, radio, newspapers and internet are the mass media that are used by the students. It has been noted that internet is used more by most of the students in the present generation when comparing to that of newspapers, radio and television. Radio is the one that is less used by the students for developing their English communication skills. Since there is less English language usage for the students in radio, it is not much used by the students. Through internet, the students tend to read more; they tend to watch videos which help them to acquire language skill more easily. Internet Mass media has become as an alternate guru for the students in the present scenario.

VI. CONCLUSION

With the increase in student population and the decrease in students to teachers' ratio, it is very important to have a suitable medium that can fill in the gap that is created because of this raise. It would be apt to say that everyone is a student in one form or the other and our learning requirements vary drastically. For everybody, it is not easy to find a suitable guide and therefore various resources available in the mass media can act as an alternate guru in that aspect. While the media community by itself is taking initiatives to take knowledge across, the government is also playing an active role in simplifying the task. The teaching community is finding ways to work that can effectively knit a web which takes valid information across the students group. At the same time, parents and students are also playing their part in having resources that will help them in accessing these mediums just a click away. On the whole, it can be said that mass media has been the real game changer for the current generation. If it is effectively used, it will take them to greater knowledge base and intellect and act as the world wide knowledge bank for the learners.

REFERENCES

1. Brady, K., Holcomb, L., & Smith, B, The use of alternative social networking sites in higher education settings: A case study of the e-learning benefits of Ning in education. Journal of Interactive Online Learning, 9(2), 151-170, 2010.
2. Browning, L., Gerlich, R., &Westermann, L, The new HD classroom: A "Hyper Diverse" approach to engaging with students. Journal of Instructional Pedagogies, 1-10, 2011.Retrieved from: http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/10701.pdf.
3. Cassidy, E., Britsch, J., Griffin, G., Manolovitz, T., Shen, L., &Turney, L, Higher education and emerging technologies: Student usage, preferences, and lessons for library services. Reference& User Services Quarterly, 50(4), 380-391, 2011.
4. Chen, B. &Bryer, T, Investigating instructional strategies for using social media in formal and informal learning. The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 13(1), 87-100, 2012.
5. Ebner M., Lienhardt, C., Rohs, M. & Meyer, I, Microblogs in higher education—a chance to facilitate informal and process-oriented learning. Computers & Education, 55, 92-100, 2010.
6. Veletsianos, G. & Navarrete, C, Online social networks as forming learning environments: learner experiences and activities. The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 13(1), 144-166, 2012.

AUTHORS PROFILE

Dr. S. SREEJANA, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Science and Humanities (English), Kumaraguru College of Technology, Chinnavedampatti, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu – 641 049