

Confronting the Challenges in Teaching English to D-Gen Learners in Engineering Colleges



A.Hajira Banu, P.Catherine Benita, A.Visva Sangeetha, S.Kayalvizhi

Abstract— With the rising demand to incorporate technology in ESL classrooms, a study has been made among the English language teachers of engineering colleges in Dindigul District in the Southern Tamilnadu. In order to keep pace with the escalating advancements in this society, teachers need to upgrade themselves with the latest trends in the domain of ELT. One needs to go for alternate teaching methodologies like blended learning, flipped classroom or mobile assisted language learning to reach out to the D-gen learners. (digital generation). By and large, English teachers should dynamically evolve from just being teachers of English to the dimension of being a language trainer. It is high time that the language teachers realize the need to decentralize the conventional classroom set up where the shift changes from teacher centric classroom to learning centric classroom. The paper analyses the prevailing scenario of how well the modern technology is used for effective learning outcome in ESL classrooms and the need to train language teachers to integrate technology in teaching.

Keywords: Blended learning, technology, learning-centric, incorporate, decentralize, industry 4.0.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of a language teacher does not end with delivering the prescribed curriculum to students. The end result is not just getting a good percentage of result in the written examination. The prime responsibility is to make them communicate in English professionally. Though most of the students manage to deal with their chit-chats effortlessly, they stumble when it comes to carry themselves in a formal setting. There is a sea change in the learners' approach towards learning. They are no longer the ones who fit in the traditional framework of acquiring knowledge. It is high time that the language instructors restructure the channel of taking language acquisition to ESL classrooms.

Background of the study

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Gone are the days when merely an engineering degree with a good CGPA and project record would fetch a decent position for the engineering graduates with a reasonable package. With the mushrooming of engineering colleges, and buzzing engineers coming out year by year, employability continues to be a challenge or has even become a threat to the present engineering graduates. Interviews are becoming more of an elimination process than of selection. The industries

have raised the bar of expectation from the applicants. According to The Future of Jobs Report by World Economic Forum, the industry 4.0 insists on engineers possessing a skill set consisting of complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making, service orientation, negotiation, cognitive flexibility to be industry -ready. It is obvious that language performs the necessary base to build on all the other job skills specified in the Future Jobs Report. Developing any of these skills ultimately begins and ends up with the exploitation of right language. Be it negotiation, problem solving or critical thinking language lays the foundation. A person who has mastered the art of speaking has it all in today's context. The placement of engineers is thus shouldered to a great-extent to the language teachers. It has become a bound responsibility of the language teachers to fill the skill gap that continues to be a threat in finding a suitable job for today's engineers.

These digital native students cannot learn anything which they do not enjoy. To make learning enjoyable, technology has to come for our rescue. Hence the need to imbibe technology in teaching language is brought to limelight in this paper.

II. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire method is carried out in this research. English language teachers working in engineering colleges in Dindigul District in the Southern Tamilnadu were selected for this study. Questionnaires were distributed and the opinions were analyzed.

III. DISCUSSION & RESULTS

Technology has gradually crept into the language classrooms and invades a large measure of learning space. It has its own badge of honour in ESL classrooms. It has become a cog in the wheel in taking the language learning to the next level. Though language teachers are highly resourceful and motivated, unless they incorporate innovative tools and techniques of the day in teaching, they will never be able to kill the monotony of classroom teaching.



Honestly, many language teachers who are strong grammarians and are rich in diction miserably fail when it comes to usage of technology. Our age old practices of teaching in class room do not suffice in kindling interests among today's young learners who spend most of their waking hours engulfed in gadgets. Creating an interest in learning and sustaining it is possible only if we use the appropriate medium and tools to make our classrooms effective centres of learning. We are fortunate to have many software and applications, i pads, pod casts and infinite portals are at hand ready to be used in classroom. The first most important thing is how adept are today's language teachers in handling these modern technological resources?

This paper is an outcome of the findings from the survey conducted among the English language teachers of Dindigul district in the southern Tamilnadu. Based on the responses from the English language teachers, it is inferred that more than a handsome number of faculty of engineering colleges in this region feel that usage of technology undoubtedly enhances classroom teaching. Though it is felt by many that the know-how's of technology in classroom is a strength for the teachers, a minimal percentage of teachers find it a huge threat to them. The main reason could be due to the fact that many of today's learners are so advanced and even outsmart teachers in dealing with gadgets. There are diversified opinions about consumption of time depending on their level of understanding about putting technology to use.

Some teachers who patronize traditional teaching methods are still not able to break the conventional shell and adapt the latest trends in teaching methodology .They have an aversion towards modern tools which hinder them from updating themselves .In the survey, it is found that some of the colleges do not have adequate facilities to experiment the technology enhanced teaching and learning. It is also found that a high percentage of the teachers are not aware of the websites or learning portals in language teaching .On the whole, the study uncovers that the language teachers accept the fact that an in-service training is an ineluctable need of the hour to become learning facilitators rather than just being information providers.

Table showing the responses of the respondents.

S.No	Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
1	Do you think that the use of technology in hands as classroom learning?	25	3	2
2	Do you think using technology in class is time consuming ?	26	2	2
3	Do you think knowing how to use Technology properly is a strength for a teacher?	6	24	0
4	Are you intimidated and threatened by technology?	22	5	3
5	Do you think using technology is not so appropriate in language classes?	9	13	8
6	Do you stay updated with the websites which can help students practice their English?	14	12	4
7	Do you use technology in your class?	18	12	0

8	Does your college provide upgraded facilities that enhance smart learning?	15	11	4
9	Is student involvement in a smart class comparative higher?	10	20	0
10	Do you think inservice training is required to update yourself in technical expertise?	27	1	2

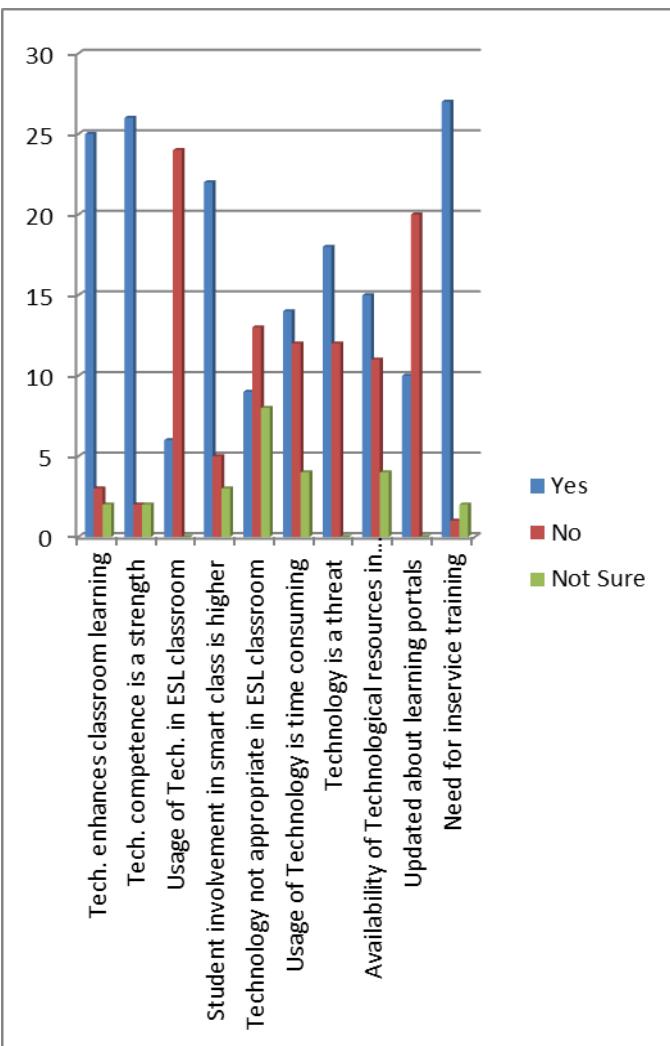


Chart representing the results of the survey

IV. CONCLUSION

Recent research on the challenges faced by the language teachers who deal with the digital generation students, has proved that using technology as a potential tool will be a defining ideal in language teaching. Technology has become an integral part in every walk of our life. When everything around us is getting ahead with the advent of technological advancement, we would stay far behind if we fail to integrate innovative tools and techniques into language teaching. Hence the need is felt to augment teacher training for effective usage of technology in language teaching. This study substantiates that the pressing demand of the hour is to make language instructors technically effectual to bring transformation in teaching-learning methodology.



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